ICOM international council of museums United States

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Association Management & Operational Support Services

UNITED STATES NATIONAL COMMITTEE – INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS (ICOM-US)

CONTACT: Gretchen Ehle, Executive Director
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Association Management Services

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Submit to: Gretchen Ehle, Executive Director | gehle@icomus.org

1. ABOUT ICOM-US

The United States National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-US) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization dedicated to connecting American museum professionals and institutions with the global museum community. As the U.S. National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), ICOM-US promotes international cooperation, professional exchange, ethical museum practice, and the protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

Our international network

Founded in 1946, ICOM is a nongovernmental organization headquartered in Paris, France, with longstanding formal relations with UNESCO. In May 2025, ICOM and UNESCO renewed their Memorandum of Understanding, reaffirming cooperation in cultural heritage protection, education, and professional exchange.

ICOM promotes and protects tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage through research, conservation, preservation, and communication. Its global network includes more than 67,000 members across 137 countries and territories, 121 National Committees, 35 International Committees, seven Regional Alliances, and 22 Affiliated Organizations. Its work encompasses professional and ethical standards, international collaboration, combating illicit trafficking, emergency response, and museums' role in society.

Our mission and membership

ICOM-US connects American museums and museum professionals with the global museum community through international collaboration, professional exchange, ethical leadership, and advocacy. It facilitates U.S. participation in international museum activities, represents American members within ICOM, and advances the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.

ICOM-US serves working and retired museum professionals, students, and institutions in all 50 states and U.S. territories, with approximately 4,200 individual and 140 institutional members. ICOM-US membership includes international ICOM membership and access to global professional networks, conferences, resources, International Committees, and applicable museum admission benefits. Further information: icomus.org and icom.museum.

Governance and relationship with ICOM

ICOM-US is governed by an elected Board of Directors and led by an Executive Director. As an independently incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ICOM-US maintains responsibility for its own governance, finances, membership administration, communications, and programming while operating within ICOM's international membership and governance framework.

ICOM's General Secretariat, headquartered in Paris (ICOM Paris), administers the international organization, coordinates the work of its committees, maintains global membership systems, and implements policies established through ICOM's governing bodies.

ICOM-US works closely with the General Secretariat on membership registration and renewals, dues reconciliation and remittances, member credentials, International Committee affiliations, reporting, and other administrative requirements. Membership administration therefore requires coordination between ICOM-US's domestic membership systems and ICOM's international systems and procedures, including adherence to established policies, deadlines, and reporting requirements.

Organizational priorities

ICOM-US is entering a period of renewed growth and organizational development. With an Executive Director now in place, the organization is strengthening its administrative infrastructure, membership engagement, communications, and financial oversight while expanding opportunities for programming and international collaboration.

Priorities include membership growth and retention; participation in International Committees; educational programs and exchanges; relationships with National Committees across North America and beyond; and collaboration with U.S. associations including American Alliance of Museums (AAM), American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), Association of Children's Museums (ACM), and Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC). These priorities reflect ICOM-US's commitment to strengthening its role as a bridge between the U.S. museum community and the international museum field, while creating greater opportunities for members to participate in professional networks, programs, and initiatives.

ICOM-US seeks an association management partner that can provide dependable, responsive, and transparent administrative support while accommodating the organization's evolving needs and international responsibilities. The selected partner will be expected to work collaboratively with the Executive Director, support effective governance and financial stewardship, deliver excellent member services, and provide the operational capacity necessary to support the organization's continued growth.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

ICOM-US is governed by an elected Board of Directors consisting of 22 members, including its officers, and is supported by an Executive Director and five standing committees. The Board meets four times annually, typically twice in person and twice virtually. Committees meet throughout the year to advance organizational priorities, including governance & finance, membership, programming, communications, and international relations. The contractor will support calendars, meeting logistics, materials, records, elections, and administrative follow-up, as further detailed in Exhibit A. The Executive Director is the

principal day-to-day contact and establishes priorities; the Board and Treasurer retain their respective governance and financial oversight roles.

ICOM-US uses Personify MemberClicks (MC Professional) for membership management, dues payment collection, and website administration. Membership service encompasses new applications, renewals, inquiries, credentials, member communications, and regular reporting. Coordination with ICOM Paris adds international dues pass-through, currency conversion, cross-system reconciliation, and credential fulfillment. The contractor must operate MemberClicks at transition; an immediate platform migration is not contemplated.

ICOM-US uses QuickBooks for accounting and financial reporting. The association-management firm initiates bill-payment requests, which the Board Treasurer approves and pays directly through ICOM-US's bank bill-payment system. ICOM-US manages its organizational email accounts through Microsoft 365 using the @icomus.org domain. A separate general-inquiry inbox is maintained by ICOM Paris under the @icom.museum domain. ICOM-US uses Zoom for member meetings and webinars and maintains an active presence on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, owned by ICOM-US.

Regular operations include email newsletters and notices, website and social media updates, webinars, professional programs, the annual membership meeting, Board activities, and events associated with the AAM Annual Meeting and other museum gatherings. Qualified accounting services must be available through the respondent or a disclosed partner, although ICOM-US may independently retain an accountant.

ICOM-US collects annual membership dues, comprising the amount payable to ICOM Paris and a separately identified national surcharge supporting ICOM-US operations. Membership follows the calendar year; unless a member specifies otherwise, payments received after September 30 apply to the following year. The contractor will reconcile member records and amounts due to Paris, prepare the required membership reports using ICOM's prescribed templates, and prepare remittance documentation for Treasurer approval and payment. For 2027, dues must be remitted in Euros from ICOM-US's bank account, together with the paid-up member list, no later than April 1. The contractor will coordinate Paris-supplied membership cards and annual stickers and their distribution through the approved mail house.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT

ICOM-US requests proposals from association management firms capable of delivering excellent member service and reliable administration. The selected contractor will execute approved work in membership management, communications, financial coordination, Board and committee administration, technology, and programs. The Executive Director retains strategic, editorial, and programmatic leadership; the contractor is responsible for operational delivery. Detailed duties appear in Exhibit A; annual operating volumes and assumptions appear in Exhibit B.

Firms may propose full-service management or identify clearly priced service components. Every proposal must address accounting capability and coordination, whether accounting is performed in-house, subcontracted, or contracted separately by ICOM-US. Proposals may not assume a mandatory replacement of MemberClicks or other core systems during onboarding.

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND REQUIRED RESPONSE

To support rapid, comparable review, respondents should follow the order below, use concise answers, and submit a completed scope compliance matrix. Existing sample reports and standard policies may be appended rather than rewritten.

- Firm profile, comparable nonprofit membership clients, and understanding of ICOM-US's international operating complexity.

Scope compliance matrix: Address each service bullet in Exhibit A and mark it INCLUDED, LIMITED, OPTIONAL, or EXCLUDED. State included quantities, staffing assumptions, lead times, required ICOM-US inputs, third-party dependencies, exclusions, and any additional fees.

- Membership service approach, specific MemberClicks or comparable experience, and demonstrated capacity for Paris coordination, currency conversion, dues reconciliation, and credentials.
- Named proposed personnel, role allocation, approximate capacity, supervisor, backup coverage, client loads, subcontractors, and turnover contingency.
- Communications, website, social media, email/productivity systems, security, data ownership, and service reporting approach.
- Accounting personnel qualifications, internal controls, approval workflow, sample anonymized financial reporting, and separate accounting price.
- Program and meeting support approach; included annual quantities versus separately priced on-site/large-event work.
- Transition approach aligned with the procurement schedule, including staffing, required inputs, continuity safeguards, training, dependencies, and fees.
- Itemized fee schedule and first-year/steady-state totals; three comparable references; insurance, conflicts, subcontractors, and proposed contractual exceptions.
- Accreditation and professional credentials: State whether the firm holds current AMC Institute accreditation under the ANSI/AMC Institute Standard of Good Practices for the Association Management Industry. If accredited, provide the most recent accreditation or reaccreditation date and evidence of current status. Identify relevant credentials held by proposed account personnel, including Certified Association Executive (CAE), and relevant professional memberships. Briefly describe the firm's quality-assurance, financial-control, records-management, and business-continuity practices; firms without AMCI accreditation should describe the documented standards and independent reviews used to support these practices.

Firms should disclose any significant dependencies on ICOM-US, Paris, mail-house providers, or outside specialists. ICOM-US may request a short finalist demonstration of member-service workflow and database/reporting capability.

5. COMPENSATION AND PAYMENT

Core services will be contracted at a fixed annual price, payable in 12 equal monthly installments. Invoices are submitted monthly and paid within 30 days following receipt and approval. Respondents must show monthly and annual core fees, first-year total including onboarding, and steady-state annual total. Identify staffing, overhead, software, and routine service volumes included in the base fee.

Accounting services must be priced as a distinct line item, even when delivered by the same firm. ICOM-US may contract separately with an independent accounting provider; in that case, the management contractor will coordinate timely exchange of approved information and reporting with that provider.

Separately price onboarding, software and subscriptions, optional IT, physical card/sticker fulfillment, postage and supplies, expanded conferences and events, on-site staffing and travel, special projects, sponsorship/development support, specialist services, additional communications production, and offboarding. Provide unit rates for work beyond included volumes, minimum charges, annual escalation terms, markups, commissions, and cancellation conditions.

Only reasonable, necessary, preapproved expenses will be reimbursed. No additional fee, subcontract, scope expansion, or other commitment may be incurred without prior written authorization from ICOM-US. Annual fees and scope will be reviewed in conjunction with performance and the approved budget.

6. STAFFING, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SERVICE STANDARDS

The contractor must assign a named account lead and sufficient qualified personnel for membership, finance, communications, meetings, and backup coverage. Staff vacancies or absences must not interrupt essential services. The Executive Director directs operational priorities; requests from officers and committees will be coordinated through agreed procedures. Financial approvals remain with designated ICOM-US officials; the contractor must maintain segregation of duties and auditable records.

The following are proposed negotiating baselines. Respondents should expressly accept them or identify specific alternatives, including definitions of business hours, holidays, time zones, urgent matters, and external dependencies.

- Member inquiries: human acknowledgment within one business day; resolution or substantive status update within three business days.
- Complete membership applications: processed or referred for decision within three business days.

- Fulfillment: approved mailing instructions issued within three business days once data, payments, supplies, and approvals are complete; physical dispatch deadline agreed with the mail provider.
- Routine website changes and email proofs: within three business days after receipt of complete approved content; scheduled distribution on the agreed date.
- Monthly financial package: by the 15th business day after month-end, with exceptions and missing inputs identified.
- Critical legal, financial, or security issues: immediate escalation; suspected material security incidents reported within 24 hours.
- Board packets: by the agreed deadline, normally seven calendar days before meetings; event reconciliations within 30 calendar days, noting outstanding invoices.
- Monthly dashboard: membership metrics, service response, deliverables, backlogs, risks, decisions needed, and proposed improvements.

The contractor will participate in at least biweekly Executive Director check-ins, monthly Executive Director/Treasurer financial reviews, quarterly performance reviews, and an annual evaluation. Repeated service deficiencies require documented corrective action. External dependencies must be logged with an owner and follow-up date.

7. ONBOARDING, CONTRACT TERM, AND TRANSITION

The anticipated initial contract term is 12 months beginning February 1, 2027, with renewal options subject to performance, budget, and Board approval. Incoming-provider onboarding is expected February 1–February 28, 2027, overlapping the outgoing provider's service period; full responsibility begins March 1, 2027. Respondents must confirm availability for this schedule and separately price transition support.

The selected contractor will agree a responsibility matrix and transition plan with ICOM-US, the outgoing provider, Paris, and other specialists as appropriate. The plan must cover MemberClicks, member correspondence, website and domain access, email and calendars, shared records, financial opening balances, merchant processing, physical mailing, outstanding commitments, training, testing, and written handover sign-off. ICOM-US must retain ownership and independent administrative access to all organizational data and accounts. No new bank or core database should be assumed necessary.

8. EVALUATION AND CONTRACT EXPECTATIONS

Evaluation will consider member-service quality; association and database experience; ability to manage international dues and Paris coordination; financial controls; named staffing and continuity; communications and event execution; technology/security; transition readiness; references; and transparent total cost and value. MemberClicks experience is advantageous but not mandatory if a credible pre-start proficiency plan is provided. Proposals requiring immediate platform replacement do not meet the baseline.

The Executive Director will coordinate evaluation and make a recommendation; Board members may provide structured advisory input, and final selection and contract approval rest with the Board. ICOM-US may interview finalists, request demonstrations, contact references, negotiate terms, or reject all proposals. Lowest price will not necessarily determine selection.

Evaluation will consider current AMCI accreditation, relevant credentials of proposed personnel, and demonstrated quality-assurance practices. Accreditation is preferred but not required; firms without accreditation must demonstrate appropriate documented controls and service standards.

Final terms will address confidentiality; service deliverables; organizational ownership and access independent of billing disputes; data protection and incident response; suitable general, professional, cyber, crime/fidelity and legally required workers' compensation insurance; conflicts and subcontractor disclosures; corrective action; termination; reasonable continuity notice; and usable transfer of records and credentials. No automatic renewal or unauthorized commitments.

9. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

RFP issued	November 5, 2026
Written questions due	November 18, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Eastern
Consolidated answers issued	November 23, 2026
Proposals due	December 11, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Eastern
Finalist notification target	December 18, 2026
Finalist interviews	January 4-8, 2027
Selection/Board approval/contract target	By January 22, 2027
Onboarding begins	February 1, 2027
Outgoing provider overlap ends	February 28, 2027
Full operational responsibility	March 1, 2027

Submit searchable PDF proposals electronically to Gretchen Ehle, Executive Director, at gehle@icomus.org. Pricing and scope matrices may additionally be submitted in editable format.

Questions must be sent to the same contact; material clarifications will be shared with all participating respondents. Firms should state any assumptions rather than defer basic pricing decisions to post-selection discussions.

EXHIBIT A — ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The following duties form the baseline scope. The contractor operates under the Executive Director's direction and coordinates with designated officers, committees, Paris, and authorized outside providers. In its response, the firm must identify for each category whether the service is included, limited, optional, or excluded, with quantities and assumptions.

A. Membership management and member services

- **MemberClicks database and membership processing:** Operate existing MemberClicks database; process applications, renewals, reinstatements, category changes, and institutional contacts; maintain clean, complete records, permissions, histories, and member profiles; reconcile transactions; generate regular membership dashboards; monitor recruitment, renewal, lapse, and retention trends.
- **Member-facing service:** Monitor designated email, phone, website forms, and member channels; respond courteously and accurately; maintain inquiry tracking, templates, and escalation procedures; resolve or report issues; ensure coverage during absences and peak renewal periods; proactively identify recurring service problems.
- **ICOM Paris liaison and international dues**: Maintain operational communication with the General Secretariat; reconcile domestic/international member records and dues; track payments due to Paris; document currency conversions, exchange-rate sources, fees, approvals, and remittances; resolve status/payment discrepancies; support International Committee affiliations and reporting.
- **Cards, stickers, and fulfillment:** Coordinate receipt of credentials supplied by Paris; validate mailing lists; work with approved mail house; track distribution, returned mail, replacements, and exceptions; maintain fulfillment records and timely member updates.
- **Member reporting:** Provide monthly membership totals by category, new applications, renewals, lapses, retention, unpaid accounts, inquiry backlog, unresolved issues, Paris reconciliation, and fulfillment status.

B. Accounting and financial management

- **General bookkeeping and controls:** Maintain approved accounting records; accounts payable/receivable; record dues, contributions, sponsorships and program income; reconcile bank, merchant, and membership transactions; maintain supporting documentation; track international obligations; enforce segregated preparation, approval, and payment responsibilities.
- **Financial reporting and planning**: Prepare monthly financial statements, budget-to-actual and variance reporting, cash-flow information, and Treasurer/Board packages; support annual budget development and flag discrepancies or emerging risks.
- **Compliance and specialists**: Coordinate annual nonprofit filings, insurance renewals, independent reviews/audits, and approved tax or legal advisers; maintain compliance records. Disclose what is performed by licensed/qualified professionals and what is separately priced.
- **Independent accounting option:** If ICOM-US selects a separate accounting provider, supply complete source records and timely administrative coordination without claiming authority to approve transactions. Where ICOM-US retains a separate accounting provider, that provider will perform the

agreed bookkeeping and financial-reporting functions; the management contractor will supply source records and administrative coordination without duplicating those services.

C. Communications, website, and member engagement

- **Email newsletters and campaigns:** Maintain approved email accounts, lists and segmentation; format, proofread, schedule, distribute, and measure approved newsletters, renewal notices, announcements, and program communications; monitor deliverability, preferences, and inquiries.
- **Social media:** Schedule and publish approved posts across identified channels; monitor messages and comments for member-service issues; route policy or substantive inquiries to the Executive Director; provide engagement reporting and recommend practical improvements.
- **Website:** Maintain and update existing website and MemberClicks-related content; publish approved news, events, leadership information, forms, and links; troubleshoot routine issues and coordinate technical specialists; protect access and security.
- **Editorial division of responsibility**: Executive Director supplies or approves organizational positions, strategic messages, and substantive content; contractor handles production and distribution. Original content writing, design campaigns, and major redevelopment should be clearly included or separately priced.
- **Productivity and communication systems:** Maintain organizational email, shared calendars, virtual meetings, shared documents, and user permissions within the existing Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, or other confirmed environment; ensure transferable organizational ownership.

D. Board, committee, and general administration

- **Board operations:** Coordinate four annual Board meetings (two in person, two virtual), calendars, invitations, venue/technology, packets, minutes or approved records, resolutions, officer/director rosters, terms, elections, onboarding, permissions, and follow-up.
- **Committee operations:** Maintain rosters and calendars; schedule meetings; distribute materials; support designated administrative tasks, records, and follow-up; provide relevant approved membership and financial information.
- **General administration:** Maintain organizational contact channels and correspondence routing; manage contract, insurance, subscription, and filing calendars; coordinate approved vendors; maintain policies, archives, procedures, and an annual operating/deadline calendar.
- **Governance boundaries:** Support governance processes without replacing the Executive Director, officers, legal counsel, or Board decision-making authority; do not sign contracts or commit funds without authorization.

E. Webinars, programs, and in-person events

- **Virtual programs:** Administer registration, invitations, reminders, speakers, technical rehearsals, webinar platforms, live support, recordings, follow-up, evaluations, and post-event reporting.
- **In-person meetings and programs**: Coordinate approved venues, catering, AV, attendee communications, registrations, materials, vendors, budgets, and reconciliation; identify on-site staffing/travel assumptions and costs.

- **Recurring activities:** Support annual membership meeting, Board/committee activities, webinars, AAM Annual Meeting-related programs, and authorized international activities, within defined annual quantities.
- **Optional expanded work:** Separately price larger conferences, receptions, international delegations, sponsorship-supported events, special projects, and additional on-site staffing.

F. Technology, security, and records

- **Data and access:** Maintain secure account administration, multi-factor authentication where available, password controls, role-based permissions, prompt access removal, confidential records, backups, and recovery procedures.
- **Ownership and portability:** ICOM-US owns all membership, financial, communications, and organizational data and controls domains, systems, accounts, and credentials; provide usable exports and orderly handover without withholding access over a billing dispute.
- **Incident management:** Escalate security, legal, and financial concerns promptly; document incidents, remediation, and dependencies; coordinate approved technical specialists.

G. Staffing, continuity, and reporting

- **Dedicated team:** Identify named account lead, membership support, finance specialist, communications/website personnel, events support, supervisor, and trained backup coverage; disclose subcontractors and assigned capacity.
- **Continuity and workflow:** Document recurring procedures; maintain current work queues and calendars; cover illness, vacations, and departures without service interruption; maintain agreed decision/escalation paths.
- **Management reporting:** Deliver monthly service dashboard and participate in biweekly Executive Director meetings, monthly financial reviews, quarterly assessments, and annual evaluation.

EXHIBIT B — ANNUAL SERVICE VOLUMES AND OPERATING INFORMATION

The following historical figures and planning estimates are provided to support comparable proposals. Respondents must identify material assumptions, capacity limits, and pricing thresholds.

SERVICE / OPERATING FACTOR	BASELINE VOLUME OR INFORMATION
Individual memberships	Approximately 4,200 active for 2026
Institutional memberships	Approximately 140 active for 2026
New applications	Approximately 900 in 2025; 1100 anticipated for 2026 peak months (October – December)
Annual renewals	Approximately 2,500 during peak months
Member inquiries	Average 15 member emails per month (non-peak) with emails averaging 10-15 per day during peak renewal season (October – November)
Credentials fulfilled	Approximately 400 cards and 4500 stickers during peak renewal season; Approximately 150 replacement and new member cards and 300 replacement stickers fulfilled during non-peak season.
Member newsletters	Approximately 5 annually
Other email campaigns	Approximately 12 annually
Social channels and cadence	LinkedIn: 10 monthly Facebook: 12 monthly Instagram: 12 monthly
Website updates	Approximately 2-3 major website updates annually; additional 1-2 postings/updates monthly
Board members and officers	15 Voting Directors; 7 Ex-Officio Directors; 1 Technical Advisor. 3 Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer; ED serves as non-voting board member and Secretary
Board meetings	4 annually: 2 in person, 2 virtual
Standing committees and meetings	Executive Committee; Finance and Governance; Nominations; Member Experience and Programs; Global Engagement. Quarterly meetings and as-needed.
Annual membership meeting	Hybrid 1.5 – 2 hour all member meeting on the margins of the AAM annual conference. In-Person board meeting held during the same period.
Webinars / virtual programs	Approximately 12 annually, monthly via Zoom Webinar with 100-150 person attendance
In-person programs / AAM	Anticipated 2-3 in-person programs requiring 2-3 days onsite support.
Paris remittances	Via Bank Transfer Annually by April 1 for the current year; 1-2 additional transfers for new members.
Accounting transactions	Accounts payable: approximately 5–10 payment requests monthly. Membership receipts, merchant settlements,

	refunds, bank activity, and other accounting entries are additional.
Financial reporting	Monthly; annual budget
Technology stack	Personify MC Professional (Memberclicks); Quickbooks; Microsoft Office Suite; Zoom; Dropbox.
Performance reporting	Monthly dashboard; quarterly and annual reviews

Respondents must state material pricing assumptions and any volume thresholds. Changes in volume or scope will be addressed through documented review and mutual written agreement; routine coordination with the Executive Director, Board, and Paris should not be silently excluded.

EXHIBIT C — PRICING AND COMPLIANCE RESPONSE TEMPLATE

To simplify proposals during the holiday period, respondents may use the following compact schedule rather than preparing a bespoke pricing narrative. Attach a detailed fee schedule only where necessary.

Required pricing item	Vendor response
Core management fee	Monthly: $____ | Annual: $____
Accounting service (separate line)	Monthly: $____ | Annual: $____ | Provider: ____
One-time onboarding	Total: $____
Software / subscriptions	Included: ____ | Additional annual: $____
Physical fulfillment / postage	Basis and annual estimate: ____
Included events and on-site days	Quantities: ____ | Additional rates: ____
Optional services / hourly rates	Rate sheet attached: Yes / No
First-year total	All-in estimated total: $____
Steady-state annual total	Estimated annual total: $____
Offboarding / termination fees	Terms and amounts: ____
Escalation / minimums / markups	Disclose: ____

Scope compliance matrix: for each subsection of Exhibit A, indicate INCLUDED / LIMITED / OPTIONAL / EXCLUDED, with a short explanation of staffing, included quantities, exclusions, third-party dependencies, and any additional price. Firms may append their own equivalent matrix if every subsection is addressed.

Proposal preparation note: ICOM-US does not expect firms to develop a speculative strategic plan. The evaluation will emphasize practical member-service execution, reliable financial controls, continuity, and clear, defensible pricing.