



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
FOR
TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER OPERATOR**

**Issue Date: APRIL 1, 2025
Response Due: FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025**



A. INTRODUCTION

This is a Request for Information (hereinafter “RFI”) notice, a market survey for information to be used for preliminary planning purposes in support of the City’s decision-making process regarding the future governance of the City-owned Torpedo Factory Art Center, located at 105 N. Union St., Alexandria, Virginia (hereinafter known as “TFAC”). The purpose of this RFI is to ascertain the interest and capacity of potential operators to lease, manage and operate TFAC. This is not a solicitation (e.g. Request for Proposal, Request for Qualifications), and no contract will be awarded from this request.

The City is seeking information from potential operators that have a proven combination of experience, financial capacity / credit worthiness and expertise in the management, operation, and marketing of successful art centers with the ability to manage artist studios, galleries, arts programming, and facility rentals.

B. SCOPE OF REQUEST

The City is requesting information from qualified and experienced arts management teams, including: experience with arts programming, management and facility operations, financial capacity, and community engagement.

Based on the information received, the City may issue a solicitation to operate TFAC through a lease or management agreement with an arts management team.

As a part of a future potential lease or management agreement, the operator shall accomplish the following:

1. Lease, manage, operate, and maintain the TFAC to the highest art center industry standards and in the best interest of the City. Ensure that the facility is kept clean, secure, and in good working order;
2. Maximize community-wide economic impact by involving artists and the arts community and all sectors of the local community in the business and employment opportunities that become available as a result of operating TFAC;
3. Work collaboratively with the City to ensure that TFAC is maintained, visitor friendly, and operates efficiently;
4. Work closely with the City's Office of the Arts to promote and market TFAC to visitors, residents, group tours, and rental clients;
5. Work collaboratively to provide an array of community-oriented cultural, educational, and entertainment events that promote TFAC's mission; and
6. Support and maintain the artistic mission of TFAC.

C. BACKGROUND

1. TFAC website: <https://torpedofactory.org/>
2. TFAC Fact Sheet (shown in Attachment)
3. TFAC stakeholder task force: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/arts/project/torpedo-factory-art-center-stakeholder-task-force>
4. 2018-2021 Vibrancy Plan for TFAC: <https://torpedofactory.org/vibrancycreation/>

D. UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATION

As a regionally serving art center, several unique components are required for the operation of this business.

1. Displays and information that celebrate the history of the building as a Prewar Munitions Facility with Historic Value;
2. Juried Artist Selection Process;
3. Managing Leases of Multi-Tenant Art Center, Including Artists, Galleries, and Other Arts and Community-Based Organizations;
4. Unique Marketing and Collaborative Initiatives;
5. Alexandria Archeology Museum will continue to operate at the TFAC;
6. City use of space for arts programming and special events based on an agreed upon schedule;

7. To the extent City’s current leases with various tenants extend beyond the period of City-led operations, the new entity will be required to take over the terms of those leases.

E. COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Long term commitment to TFAC being an art center;
2. Collaborative partnerships with Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Visit Alexandria, and the Alexandria arts community;
3. City supports initiatives that make the art center self-sustaining;
4. Collaboration on Citywide marketing initiatives to increase arts tourism;
5. In addition to the arts center, clients may rent event spaces like the Grand Hall for events.

F. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Questions regarding this notice as well as submittal of the response shall be sent electronically in PDF format via email to torpedofactory@alexandriava.gov **on or before 4 p.m. eastern time, Friday, May 16, 2025**. This RFI is posted on <https://www.alexandriava.gov/TorpedoFactory>. Respondents should check this website for any updates. To receive email notifications if updates are posted, fill out this form:

<https://www.research.net/r/TFAC-RFI>. Responses should not exceed 10 pages. Any front and back covers, title pages/separation tabs, table of contents, and appendices (e.g. marketing materials, financial statements) can be excluded from the 10-page limit. Generally, submissions are subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, in accordance with VA. Code § 2.2-3705.6, certain information **may** be excluded from disclosure if it contains proprietary information. **If the respondent wishes to keep some information as confidential, the submittal must clearly indicate and label the information as “confidential”**. The City will review and interpret the submission to determine whether protection from disclosure under FOIA may apply.

2. Responses should be submitted in accordance with the following instructions:

a. Response shall include the following:

1. Contact Information

- a. Organization Name
- b. Contact Name
- c. Contact Phone
- d. Contact Email

2. Cover Letter

- a. Organizational Mission and Alignment with that of TFAC
- b. Interest in the TFAC
- c. Governance / Management Structure
- d. Arts Programs Experience, Applicability and Approach to TFAC Operations
 - i. Studio artists / galleries (leases)
 - ii. Arts programming / education
 - iii. Other relevant program experience

3. Financial Capacity / Credit Worthy
 - a. Audited Financial Statements
 - b. Evidence of Credit Worthiness (e.g. letters from banks, etc.)
 - c. Fundraising experience
 - i. Capital campaigns
 - ii. Annual support for programs and operations
4. Management / Operations Experience
 - a. Accounting / Financial Management
 - b. Property / Tenant Management
 - c. Facility Rentals / Events
 - d. Retail
 - e. Marketing
 - f. Concessionaire / Partner Agreements as appropriate
5. Community engagement experience
6. Feasibility Questions:
 - a. What information would be helpful from the City to inform a future response to a potential solicitation?
 - b. What requirements would prevent you from responding to a potential solicitation?

ATTACHMENT: TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER FACT SHEET

The **Torpedo Factory Art Center** (TFAC) is currently managed and operated by the City of Alexandria through its Office of the Arts. TFAC offers community arts programming and events produced by the city, manages a jurying process and leasing for artist studio space, art galleries and arts organizations, and provides marketing and promotion of TFAC and its tenants. Anchor building tenants include the City's archeology museum operated by the Office of Historic Alexandria and The Art League, which provides community arts education for children and adults.

Building History

Located on the City's Old Town waterfront, TFAC was once a naval munitions plant that produced torpedoes during World War II. After the war, the factory was used to store congressional documents, Smithsonian dinosaur bones, and Nazi trial records. The City of Alexandria bought the building from the Department of the Navy in 1969. In 1974, the Torpedo Factory Art Center opened as a renovated part of the factory, featuring artist studios, galleries, and an archeology museum. The building was renovated again in 1982–1983, gutting and rebuilding it with a new ventilation system and central heating. While the management and operations of the building have changed over the years, operated by various city departments and by a private non-profit, the business model has remained relatively unchanged for decades.

Building Use and Program of Spaces

As shown in **Table 1**, TFAC totals 77,000 square feet (SF) of building area. Arts and cultural space (including artist studios, art galleries, The Art League, and the City Archeology Museum) accounts for 63% of total SF or 48,000 SF. The Grand Hall (5,900 SF or 8% of total SF) and the Overlook and River Rooms (3,300 SF or 4% of total SF) are available for rent to private groups for events. The remaining space in the building is for management and circulation, approximately 25% of total SF.

Table 1
Program of Spaces in SF
Torpedo Factory Arts Center

Program Areas	Square Feet (SF)	Percent to Total
<i>Public Programs</i>		
Individual Studios	32,758	43%
The Art League	6,996	9%
Grand Hall	5,946	8%
Galleries	4,632	6%
Archaeology	3,630	5%
Overlook and River Rooms	3,305	4%
Total Public Programs	57,267	75%
<i>Building Support</i>		
Circulation/Building	18,429	32%
Building Management	1,078	2%
Total Building Support	19,507	34%
Total Square Feet	76,774	100%

Source: City of Alexandria and SmithGroup.

Operating Budget

TFAC, as an “enterprise” operating fund of the city, targets breakeven operations where revenue and expenses are balanced. As shown by data in **Table 2**, the TFAC budget averaged \$975,400 between FY 2022 and FY 2024. This amount does not represent the entire cost of management and operations. The city provides building maintenance and services and administrative services (HR, accounting, IT, etc.) through other city departments that are not reflected in the TFAC fund budget. The range for these additional costs is estimated to be approximately between \$150,000 to \$250,000 for a total TFAC operating cost between \$1.15 and \$1.25 million.

Earned Revenue

TFAC averaged \$977,700 in earned revenue between FY 2022 and FY 2024, as shown by data in **Table 3**. Artist studios are leased for three (3)-year terms with publicly subsidized rent of \$17.39 per square foot inclusive of utilities and property taxes in FY 2024 (\$17.91/sf in FY2025). Rent is increased annually at 3 percent. Rental of studio and gallery space accounts for 70% of earned revenues in FY 2024. Other sources of revenue are facility / event rentals and retail.

Table 2
Operating Expenses Trend, FY22 through FY24
Torpedo Factory Arts Center

Types of Expenses	FY22	FY23	FY24
<i>Personnel Costs</i>			
Salaries and Wages	\$330,235	\$243,725	\$222,643
Taxes Fringe and Benefits	88,902	51,492	51,774
Total Personnel	\$419,136	\$295,218	\$274,416
<i>Non-Personnel Costs</i>			
Services (Professional and Temporary)	\$164,874	\$286,659	\$372,828
Utilities	162,163	187,843	189,822
Custodial Services / Supplies	77,169	101,318	112,903
Supplies / Office / Other	33,057	56,581	76,072
Advertising, Printing and Binding	30,400	25,075	29,404
Building and Improvement Maintenance	28,256	1,317	1,713
Total Non-Personnel	\$495,919	\$658,792	\$782,741
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$915,055	\$954,010	\$1,057,157

Note: Does not include approximately \$150,000 to \$250,000 in expenses an organization would need to pay in property taxes for common areas, other city services such as bookkeeping, HR, AR/AP. City is self insured and so no insurance costs included.

Source: Torpedo Factory Art Center / City of Alexandria, VA, and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 3
Revenue Trend, FY22 through FY24
Torpedo Factory Arts Center

Source of Revenue		FY22	FY23	FY24
Recreation Activities	1/	23,023	0	1,197
Class Fee Program	2/	81,056	15,746	3,919
Rental Fees	3/	2,812	137,258	253,716
Rental of Property	4/	756,633	740,505	741,226
Gifts and Donations		468	10	0
Miscellaneous		468	937	108
Gift Shop Sales	5/	52,946	64,858	56,345
TOTAL REVENUE		\$917,405	\$959,313	\$1,056,510

1/ Recreation activities include beer and wine revenue from events.

2/ Class fee programs are revenues generated by the Target Gallery, such as application fees and commissions on sales which offset curatorial costs and honoraria.

3/ Revenue from private events renting space in the Torpedo Factory.

4/ Long term lease revenue for artist studios, galleries and non-profit arts organizations.

5/ Gross retail sales.

Note: Fiscal Year (FY) is the year ending June 30.

Source: Torpedo Factory Art Center / City of Alexandria, VA, and ConsultEcon, Inc.