

## **REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST (RSOI) FOR A PROJECT TO BE INITIATED THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS (CESU) NETWORK**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Special History Study- The Sandburgs' Views and Roles Related to African Americans and Civil Rights

**INTRODUCTION:** Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the National Park Service (NPS) and coordinated by Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (CARL). The project involves the development and production of a special history study that uses research and critical analysis to document Carl and Lillian Sandburg's views on and relationships with African Americans and the struggle for civil rights. These resources will enable CARL to develop interpretive and educational programs that expand understanding of the Sandburgs and connect visitors with African American history and culture.

This project requires a principal investigator(s) with a deep knowledge of American history and literature, with a focus on the African American experience and civil rights, as well as prior experience researching, writing, and producing government reports, especially as related to NPS interpretive histories, historic contexts, or theme studies.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

This opportunity is open to non-federal members of the CESU National Network. Information on the CESU National Network can be accessed at <https://www.cesu.org>.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of a special history study is the collection, presentation, and evaluation of historical research pertaining to a specific event or theme that is related to the history that has occurred within the boundaries of a national park unit and/or its surrounding area(s).

The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (CARL), established in 1968 in Flat Rock, North Carolina, commemorates the life of Carl Sandburg (1878-1967), the writer and Pulitzer Prize winner known as the "Poet of the People." Sandburg's important body of work includes writing on American race issues, including the 1919 Chicago "Race Riots. He also advocated against segregation of the US military and Red Cross blood donations and was involved in "Negro Day" at the 1933 World's Fair.

In 1965, Carl Sandburg was the first White person awarded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Silver Award for his lifelong commitment to social justice as "a major prophet of civil rights in our time."

While there is awareness of some of Sandburg's history related to race and civil rights, there has been little written on the topic, summarizing and analyzing this information. Also, there has been little investigation of Sandburg's wife, Lillian Steichen (1883-1977), to determine what can be known about her own views on race and civil rights.

The study will examine Sandburg's writings on race including poetry, newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and correspondence; the Sandburgs' relationships with African Americans; their relationships with Black and White civil rights activists; and the Sandburgs' political views (including Socialism), paying attention to how they evolved and influenced their civil rights views and participation in the movement.

However, this study seeks to not only understand the Sandburgs' views on race and civil rights but understand African American perspectives of the Sandburgs. To this aim, the study will also look at representations of the Sandburgs in African American publications including newspapers and Carl Sandburg's influence on African American writers. For instance, Harlem Renaissance writer, Langston Hughes, referred to Sandburg as his "guiding star."

The study will provide the NPS and the general public with information that will fill in crucial research gaps and will be invaluable for park interpretation and will be used to update park home tours, park waysides, and online exhibits.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ANTICIPATED WORK:**

The special history study will be a multi-chapter monograph, including all research, analysis, writing, photograph selection, and layout and design. The final study shall be print-quality PDF and must be Section 508 compliant ([Section 508 | U.S. Department of the Interior \(doi.gov\)](#)) in a manner suitable for publication and which is understandable to members of the public, NPS professional and management staff, as well as to a scholarly audience. This study will document the concepts, research procedures, and the logic behind findings that lead to the conclusions and recommendations. The study will cover all elements identified in the Scope of Work and any revisions made and approved through the outline, draft(s), and final report submissions. The project will culminate with a Transfer of Knowledge Session, a presentation of findings for associated communities, park staff, and for management use.

Deliverables shall also include, but not limited to:

1. Survey and inventory of sources and previous research related to the Sandburgs and race and civil rights within the Park's and other archival collections.
2. Inventory and critical analysis of Sandburg's writings that reference topics of race, African Americans, and civil rights.
3. Research into how Sandburg's upbringing in Galesburg, IL, a town with established connections to the Underground Railroad and early racial progressivism, may have influenced his views.
4. Research into Sandburg's service in the Spanish-American War (1898) and how this may have influenced his views on race and civil rights.
5. Research on the Sandburgs and the NAACP.
6. Research on the Sandburgs' participation in socialism, and the relationship of socialism to the civil rights struggle.

7. Research on the influence of African American cultural forms and expressions on Carl Sandburg's writing.
8. Research on Carl Sandburg in African American publications.
9. Research on Carl Sandburg's influence on African American writers.

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST:**

The candidate selected will be required to work with the NPS to prepare a Statement of Work regarding the approach and research to be conducted. Status updates will be required each year of the agreement to demonstrate progress toward meeting project goals and objectives.

**Period of Performance:**

The period of performance for this Cooperative Agreement will be determined when the final proposal is selected, and an Agreement awarded. It is expected to extend 36 months.

START DATE: June 2024 (Tentative)

END DATE: June 2027 (Tentative, an extension of timeline may be possible)

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Sought:**

- Ph.D. in one of the following or a related field: African American Studies; U.S. History; American Literature, American Studies; Public History.
- Knowledge of U.S. history, particularly African American history
- Strong oral and written communications skills.
- Experience researching, writing, and producing reports and publications.

**Materials Requested For Letter Of Interest/Qualifications:**

Please prepare a summary of your vision for implementing this project

Should include:

1. Name; department, university or organization; CESU affiliation; and contact information.
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications including: a) Biographical Sketch; b) Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects - demonstrated results including published works; c) Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise. (Maximum length 2 pages, single-space 12 pt. font)
3. Project pre-proposal that summarizes strategy, approach, and special capabilities, timelines, roles and responsibilities of personnel, specific tasks to be conducted, and deliverables. Please be as specific as possible. (Maximum length: 4 pages, single-space 12 pt. Font)

**Funding:** The project will be funded up to \$ 122,610. This project will be administered by the

National Park Service through a Cooperative Agreement or Task Agreement upon mutual agreement on the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

A detailed study proposal and cost estimate is not requested at this time, however, the applicant should acknowledge that they will be able to perform the project within the financial ceiling stated for the project.

Project award will be subject to the availability of funds.

Budget items to include in consideration:

1. Personnel services
  - Principal Investigator
  - Other Project Staff
2. Supplies and equipment
3. Travel (travel costs must be factored into the budget; there is not a separate fund source for site visits and research trips)
4. Cost of analysis and report preparation, including editing and 508 compliance
5. Contractual (e.g. peer reviews, oral history transcription, etc.)
6. Overhead, Indirect, and In-kind costs as applicable
7. Other expenses

**Review of Statements Received:** Proposals will be evaluated based on the factors listed below and include the credentials of personnel, approach, and reasonableness of cost. Based on review of the Statements of Interest received, a principal investigator will be invited to prepare a full application including the required federal forms (SF424 series).

**Deadline:** The deadline for responding to this letter of interest is **Friday, April 12, 2024 by 5:00pm ET.**

PLEASE NOTE: A budget is not requested at this time.

**EVALUATION FACTORS:**

**FACTOR 1 – QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND PROJECT TEAM (40 points)**

Assessment of qualifications and experience as it relates to the requirements within the RSOI, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items. Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Manager (PM) must have experience that supports successful implementation of the effort. The applicant shall include a brief Statement of Qualifications (including):

- a. Biographical Sketch,
- b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
- c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,

d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add.

**FACTOR 2 – STRATEGIC THINKING/PLANNING APPROACH (35 points)**

Overall approach and strategy described/outlined in the proposal is responsive and aligns with the project's purpose and goals of the special history study as outlined in the RSOI. Discusses the proposed approach and techniques to accomplish the objectives. Methodology and soundness of the overall approach convey the applicant's understanding of the requirements of the solicitation and are sufficient for successful and timely completion of the special history study.

**FACTOR 3 – REASONABLENESS OF COST (25 points)**

Proposal cost demonstrates the ability to deliver efficient and quality services. The cost is balanced with respect to cost and fair and reasonable pricing in accordance with factors 1 and 2.

**CONTACTS:**

Letters of Interest should be directed to Carol Daniels, Senior Science Advisor, SFC-CESU, (Carol\_Daniels@nps.gov) by the closing date. Questions regarding the proposed scope of the project can be addressed to William Hunter, Regional Historian, Interior Region 2 (Legacy Southeast Region), William\_Hunter@nps.gov, (404) 450-5322.