

Working with Interpretive Consultants

Interpreting Iowa's Scenic Byways: October 7-8, 2009

Do you need a consultant?

- How much can you do yourself? Are you providing the research? The writing and storylines?
- What can the consultant do that you cannot do in-house?
- Define what you hope to achieve?
- Develop a Request for Proposal – Have it reviewed by someone who has experience with proposals.

What are your Project Deliverables?

- Develop a written contract that specifies exactly what will be done, how, and when. Agree on the approval process.
- Will the consultant guarantee materials?
- Develop a timeline for meeting with the consultant at regular intervals. Set periodic goals and checkpoints
- Agree on fees in advance of the work. Agree in advance on payment schedules.
- Will the consultant be available for phone call follow-ups after the work is completed?

Use Experienced and Proven Consultants

- What experience does the consultant have on similar projects?
- Refer to agency lists of recognized consultants.
- Request references on other projects and then check them.
- Request resumes of the individuals who will be working on your project.
- Be sure that the people you interview will be doing the work.
- Are the consultants members of professional organizations?

Be sure that you can communicate with the Consultant

- Find someone who will work for you and will keep you informed and involved in the process.
- Ask for a face to face interview. If the consultant can't explain their role and your project effectively then it probably won't get better later. You need to feel comfortable with them not overwhelmed by jargon or their expert insights.