

Request for Proposals

Requestor: Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Project: Ohio Agriculture Center State Fair Exhibit
Scope: Exhibit Design and Set Up
Issue Date: Sept. 29, 2025
Bidder Meeting: Oct. 8, 2025, 3:30-5:30 p.m ET
Question Deadline: Oct. 13, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET
Proposals Due: Oct. 31, 2025 by 5 p.m. ET
Work Period: Dec. 1, 2025-August 31, 2026
Budget: \$1,400,000 with optional add-ons



Introduction

The Ohio Agriculture Industry is looking for an exhibit designer to bring its ideas to life for the new Ohio Agriculture Center at the Ohio State Fair. The industry strives to offer families a one-of-a-kind experience to create memories and traditions with Ohio Agriculture.

The new facility is a 177,000-square-foot, multi-purpose building. The industry has 75,000 sq. feet of temporary space in the Exhibition Hall and 3,000 sq. feet of temporary space in the Dining Hall. The new Ohio Agriculture Center building will be complete in 2025, and will need to be programmed for the 2026 Ohio State Fair, which will take place July 29-August 9, 2026. The working theme for the exhibit is "Ohio Agriculture: Bigger than Life!"

The steering committee for the exhibit planning includes: Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio Department of Agriculture, OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, Ohio Expositions Commission. The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is the lead entity for implementation and has engaged Shift•ology Communication as the exhibit project manager.

We are looking for a partner to

- Help create a-ha moments through hands-on, immersive activities that don't feel like education
- Share Ohio agriculture's story with a unified voice relevant to every person, every day, everywhere
- Connect fairgoers to other ag parts of the fair -- from the food pavilion and food industry to the natural resources area

Project Goals

The temporary exhibit should be geared towards fairgoing families representing all ages and generations, geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds. They will have a wide range of exposure to agriculture (very little to actively employed and engaged in farming). At the end of the fair, we will measure our success by attendance, engagement and increased knowledge among guests.

The exhibit will consist of two main components, and we are looking for an exhibit partner to work on both parts to create one cohesive experience:

1. Main Exhibition Hall with up to 6 physical exhibit “anchors”
2. Dining Hall Exhibit Area to highlight Ohio’s specialty crops and the Ohio Proud program

An outline of the components is provided along with further descriptions of the vision for each item.

Please Note: The exhibit is temporary in nature and must be able to be completely installed and torn down for each year’s fair. All components will go into storage.

Project Scope

The selected Vendor will be a full-service partner responsible for the following tasks:

1. Exhibit Planning, Design and Fabrication

- 1.1. Exhibit layout and planning:
 - Exhibition Hall:
 - Layout and spatial configuration of 75,000 sq. ft. rectangular space in the main exhibit area.
 - Conceptual design and engineering of a new, custom Ohio State Fair exhibit with 6 exhibit zones for a seamless, combined fairgoer experience.
 - Development of production drawings and floor map for main exhibit space.
 - Dining Hall:
 - Layout and spatial configuration of 3,000 sq. ft. rectangular space in the main dining hall.
 - Development of production drawings and floor map for main dining hall space.
- 1.2. Graphic design and production:
 - Layout and production of all signage and graphic panels based on supplied creative direction, logo files and brand guidelines.
 - High-quality printing, display and finishing of graphics.
- 1.3. Project management:
 - Project management for exhibit production.
 - Coordination of all logistics, including show forms, shipping, installation and dismantle (I&D), and storage.

- Coordination with owner's representative on behalf of Ohio Farm Bureau and Ohio Department of Agriculture.
- Weekly status meetings with owner's representative.
- Regular status updates and communication with owner's representative.
- Monthly status meetings with Ohio Farm Bureau, ODA and owner's representative.
- 1.4. Fabrication of all exhibit components, including structures, fixtures and finishes. (See further details below.)
 - Create a cohesive fairgoer experience through the entire main exhibit space.
 - Build temporary structures in 6 zones that facilitate a multi-step experience, which will be anchored through those zones.
 - Build temporary structure(s) that highlight Ohio's specialty crops, as a way to preview the main exhibit space.
- 1.5. Exhibit management and storage:
 - Long-term, climate-controlled storage of the exhibit properties.
 - Inventory control and pre-show preparation for Ohio State Fair event.
- 1.6. Logistics:
 - Handling and shipping of the exhibit to and from Ohio Expo Center and State Fair.
 - On-site supervision and management of I&D at key events in collaboration with OFBF staff. This includes being present or available during the fair to oversee set-up, monitor operations and troubleshoot any issues such as breakages or malfunctions.

2. Objectives and Requirements

- 2.1. Strategic objectives: The primary goal of this exhibit is to entertain and educate fairgoers. The design should be visually engaging, maximize space and create a memorable visitor experience.
- 2.2. Program details:
 - Main Exhibition Hall: The core footprint is 75,000 sq. ft which will be divided into 6 zones with several potential configurations for the overall and component spaces. The zones need not cover the same amount of space.
 - Dining Hall: The core footprint is 3,000 sq. ft. that will highlight Ohio's specialty crops, as a way to draw fairgoers to the main Exhibition Hall.
- 2.3. Design requirements:
 - Visual identity: The exhibit must align with brand standards, including color palette, fonts and logo usage. A brand style guide and co-branded elements will be provided.
 - Interactive elements: We are interested in integrating interactive features such as animatronics, lighting, dynamic motion, augmented reality and immersive creation in the main exhibit area. Please provide specific recommendations and costs.
 - Exhibition Hall components: The design must incorporate the following elements, and each zone may vary in footprint and scale:
 - 1 enclosed immersive seasons exhibit zone
 - 1 tractor simulator dynamic motion experience or V/R zone
 - 1 drone weed attack game zone
 - 1 weather experiment station zone with rainbow making feature and water play area

- 1 waiting area display zone with creature comforts for Animal Birthing Area (Design and fabrication of the Birthing Zone is not part of this request.)
- 1 interactive Ohio map display
- 1 resource center countertop and literature display
- 1 sales counter with merchandise display(s)
- 4 selfie stations
- Signage
 - 1 Grand Entrance Gateway
 - 1 Secondary Entrance Gateway
 - 10 Entrance and Exit Wayfinding signs
 - 5 hanging Display Zone signs
 - 5 Display Zone entrance signs
 - 20 standing sign(s) and display units
 - 50 educational sign(s) of various sizes
 - 20 directional sign(s)
 - 1 donor wall (with ability to update each year)
- Crowd control
 - Crowd control barriers
- Lighting, flooring, walls and audiovisual equipment (screens, wiring, etc.)
- Dining Hall area components: The design must incorporate the following elements, and each zone may vary in footprint and scale:
 - 1 portable stage to host cooking demonstrations highlighting Ohio's various agriculture commodities. We would prefer this stage to be easily transported on a daily basis during the fair so we aren't committed to daily programming every day of the fair.
 - 1 retail general store that highlights the Ohio Proud program through the Ohio Department of Agriculture and allows fairgoers to purchase products from the program.
 - 1 interactive exhibit to highlight Ohio's specialty crop production.
 - Signage
 - 1 banner highlighting the Ohio Department of Agriculture
 - 1 sign highlighting Ohio Proud retail area
 - Crowd control
 - Crowd control barriers
 - Lighting, flooring, walls and audiovisual equipment (screens, wiring, etc.)
- 2.5. Technical Support and On-Site Technical Staffing
 - Audiovisual components
 - Screens
 - Sound equipment
 - Lighting
 - Technology
 - A/V Staffing

3. Description of Main Exhibition Hall Display Zones

- 3.1. Exhibit layout and planning:

- Layout and spatial configuration of 75,000 sq. ft. rectangular space, including exhibit elements, traffic flow and waiting areas
- Floor plans are provided
- 3.2. Zone 1 Exhibit design and fabrication of Seasons of the Sun
 - Create a sensory experience while people are learning about the breadth and depth of Ohio Agriculture through the seasons and through the years. Imagine walking through each of the seasons of agriculture showing things like what farmers/farms do in the winter, spring, summer and fall. The focus will be on the seasonality of agriculture, the variety of commodities and specialty crops grown in Ohio, the many things farmers do throughout the year, careers related to agriculture production, horticulture, food-to-table, animal care, environmental stewardship, advancements/evolution, families and local food production.
 - This self-guided, enclosed, walk-through exhibit includes audio-visual stories, videos, light effects, blasts of cool and warm air, and smells (think Christmas Trees).
 - Participants enter into an enclosed zone where Fairgoers will be hit with all five senses and a lot of simple, memorable information as well as an experience that leaves them wanting more and feeling good about Ohio farmers.
 - It should take about 10 minutes to experience this zone.
- 3.3. Zone 2 Exhibit design and fabrication of Life-Size Combine Simulator Dynamic Motion Experience
 - Think “Mission: Space” where you line up in the queue and learn about the preparation involved in space travel. But instead, you’ll line up in the queue to learn about the preparation involved in seed selection, planting, growing and harvesting crops.
 - Include virtual reality and dynamic motion experience to allow visitors to experience a ride in the driver’s seat during Fall corn and soybean harvest in Ohio.
 - Include hydraulics/animatronics), audio excitement, physical movement (bumping across land), turning at the end of the rows. Riders will see yields and dump grain into the grain cart, where it’s hauled off to the elevator.
 - It should take about 2 minutes to experience this zone, plus wait time.
- 3.4 Zone 3 Exhibit design and fabrication of Drone Attack Weed Game
 - Create a fun arcade game experience featuring the precision of drone technology.
 - The game should allow participants to shoot down weeds with a drone. (As agriculture gets more precise, so does weed control. You’ll reduce pesticides and protect water and soil by being on target.)
 - Participants will have the opportunity to fly a remote control drone with a mission to attack “weeds.” (For example, these could be plastic evil-looking weed-like figures that can be shot down with a laser.
 - If they win the game, they receive a prize. If they don’t, they still win a prize. There could be multiple players at a time (think, the horse race game on the midway).
 - Design and fabricate in a self-contained unit for easy set-up and tear-down.
 - Consider taking advantage of the 30 foot ceilings to allow families to experience something dramatic overhead whether they are the ones “flying” the drone or just watching the game. Nets could be rigged to ensure the safety of fairgoers below. This

could potentially include an infrared heat map in advance of the game play to create context for the players.

- It should take about 3 minutes to experience this zone, plus wait time.
- 3.5 Zone 4 Exhibit design and fabrication of Weather Experiment Station Zone
 - Engage fairgoers in an immersive and participatory experience making the weather to better understand how water and weather are essential to everything about agriculture.
 - Create a space where families can make their own rain, wind and tornadoes inside a clear climate test chamber.
 - Make-a-rainbow station where fairgoers can create a rainbow using water, light, mirrors and prisms. The rainbows can span the width of the building to surprise the participant and every person nearby.
 - Water play area. Create a supervised play area with water tables that mimic the Great Lakes, the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and Port of New Orleans. This should include real features like topography, locks and dams, and barges.
 - It should take about 5 minutes to experience this zone, plus wait time; Supervised play could be longer.
- 3.6 Zone 5 Exhibit design and fabrication of Birthing Center Waiting Area
 - The Ohio Veterinary Medical Association will have a portion of the same building where there will be a live animal birthing center for farm animals. We will not be directly responsible for the programming of this component. However, we see an opportunity to use the space leading to the area and the waiting room as an educational experience. The main feature of this area is the opportunity for fairgoers to witness the miracle of birth of a baby animal.
 - Create a path and waiting area surrounding the birthing center using “creature comforts” such as cow mats/mattresses, barn misters, fans and ventilation.
 - Showcase creature comforts in various aspects of livestock production, such as incubator hatching areas along the way, milking stations where you can take part in putting the milkers on a life-sized cow.
 - Create a biosecurity area to demonstrate farmer procedures to protect animal health in and out of the barns.
 - This zone can be experienced at the pace of the fairgoer as they wait for birthing.
- 3.7 Zone 6 Exhibit Design and fabrication of Interactive Ohio Map Display
 - Fairgoers love to see themselves in their own counties and experience hometown pride while at the Ohio State Fair. Much like the “Map Room” at the Ohio Statehouse, the county-named benches at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources park, we want fairgoers to explore their home county – and the rest of Ohio.
 - Engage fairgoers in an impressive and interactive experience showing Ohio’s variety of agricultural products by county. The map may be projected onto a large portion of the floor or wall. This could be accompanied by kiosks or buttons that allow fairgoers to switch maps and learn more about various aspects of Ohio agriculture, such as geography, topography, climatology, product processing, county-by-county statistics and points of pride.
 - Include plenty of opportunities for selfies with people standing “in” their own county.
 - This zone can be experienced at the pace of the fairgoer.

4. Description of Dining Hall Area Display

- This 3,000 sq. ft. area is in the heart of the Taste of Ohio Café (Dining Hall). Surrounded on all sides are Ohio's agricultural commodities selling fresh products, whether that is fresh deviled eggs, pork chop on a stick, a ribeye sandwich, or a refreshing glass of Ohio wine. This 3,000 sq. ft. can be divided into three different rooms, but we are looking to create one cohesive experience within it, highlighting the following:
 - A portable demonstration stage where we could host cooking demonstrations highlighting Ohio's various agriculture commodities. We would prefer this stage to be easily transported on a daily basis during the fair, so we aren't committed to daily programming every day of the fair.
 - A retail general store that highlights the Ohio Proud program through the Ohio Department of Agriculture and allows fairgoers to purchase products from the program.
 - An interactive exhibit and educational area highlighting Ohio's Specialty Crops.
 - Educational information for all ages when it comes to the Ohio Wine program (Ohio Wine will be sold in the Dining Hall). This will weave in aspects of urban agriculture, as most fairgoers live in an urban setting.

5. Description of Resource and Merchandise Areas

- 5.1 Resource Center countertop and literature display
 - Create a counter and literature display to host the Ask-a-Farmer area. This area will be programmed and staffed by OFBF.
- 5.2 Merchandise Display area
 - Create a sales counter with merchandise displays for exhibit-branded merchandise. Needs to be large enough for up to 5 t-shirts/sweatshirts, 3 hats and various other items, as well as a sales area.
 - This area will be programmed and staffed by OFBF.

Items Outside Scope

These items are considered outside the scope of this proposal and will be managed as listed:

- Staffing. On-site staffing for the exhibit will be managed by Ohio Farm Bureau – with the exception of technical support. Non-tech support exhibit staffing is not part of the budget provided in this RFP.
- Theme design and creative direction.
- Subject matter expertise. OFBF and partners will provide technical expertise, as needed, related to drone technology, combine simulation, climate and other components.
- Fundraising for the exhibit will be conducted by the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of the partners in this project.

Budget

The budget for the entire project is \$1,400,000. Vendors may propose add-ons for optional ideas that exceed the base budget as we may have the opportunity to conduct further fundraising.

Timeline

Issue Date: Sept. 29, 2025

Bidder's Meeting: October 8, 2025, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Question Deadline: Oct. 13, 2025 at 5 p.m.

Proposals Due: Oct. 31, 2025

Firm Interviews: Nov. 6-11, 2025

Firm Selection: Nov. 14, 2025

Kickoff Meeting: Dec. 1, 2025

Renderings Delivered: January 31, 2026

Exhibit Pieces Built: March 31, 2026

Exhibit Display Signage Completed: May 31, 2026

Exhibit Set Up: July 15-26, 2026

Staff Training and VIP Sneak-Peak: July 27-28, 2026

Exhibit Oversight: July 29-Aug. 9, 2026

Exhibit Tear Down: Aug. 10-14, 2026

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

1. **Agency Overview:** Company background, size, and relevant experience. Provide a brief history of your firm, including size, volume of business, locations, and number of years in business.
2. **Statement of Understanding:** Provide a statement showing your comprehension of the goals and importance of the project.
3. **Project Approach:** A description of your process and how you will meet project objectives. Include recommended approaches to project management, design, construction, signage, setup, tear-down and storage.
4. **Examples of Past Relevant Work:** Particularly projects involving Fair exhibits and large interactive displays, as well as results and outcomes achieved. (Provide links and/or examples.)
5. **Proposed Timeline:** How do you plan to meet the project deadlines?
6. **Cost Proposal:** Itemized cost breakdown for each zone and deliverable. Please separate labor and materials. You may include itemized add-on options.
7. **Team Members - Role on this project and qualifications.**
8. **References - Please provide name and contact information for three references of previous clients with similar projects.**
9. **Insurance and Liability Statements - Please list any general liability insurance, errors and omissions insurance, and any umbrella policies you have, including policy limits.**

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Demonstrated understanding of project objectives.
- Creativity and quality of past work.

- Experience working with large entertainment exhibits.
- Ability to meet deadlines within the budget.
- Cost-effectiveness and value.

Submission Instructions

Submit proposals electronically (PDF preferred) to:

Melanie Wilt, Shift•ology Communication

Project Consultant/ Owner's Representative

c/o Kari Griffith, kari@shift-ology.com

All proposals must be submitted by 5:00 PM ET on October 31, 2025

Bidder's Meeting Details

A bidder's meeting will be held on October 8, 2025 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. on the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds. Each interested party may send up to two representatives. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the project, see the actual Ohio Agriculture Center (still under construction) and ask questions about the physical space and layout.

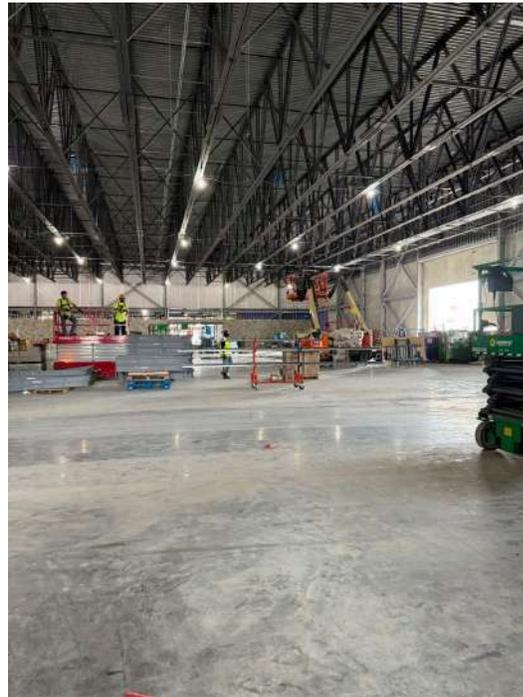
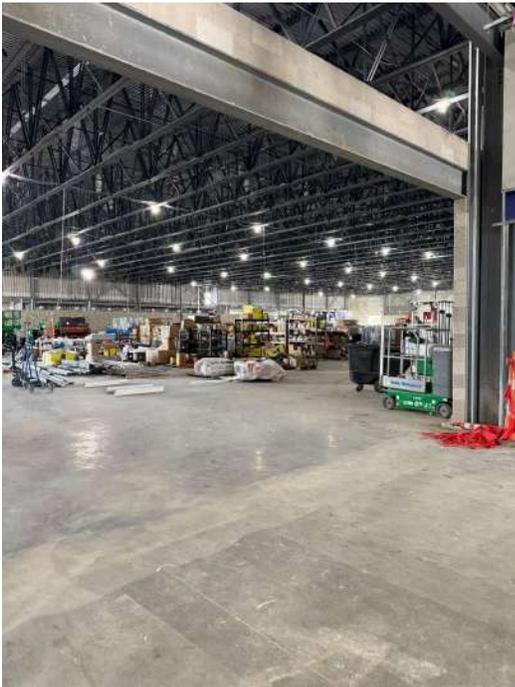
Specific directions and parking instructions will be posted at <https://ofbf.org/bidder-resource-page/>.

Project and RFP Updates

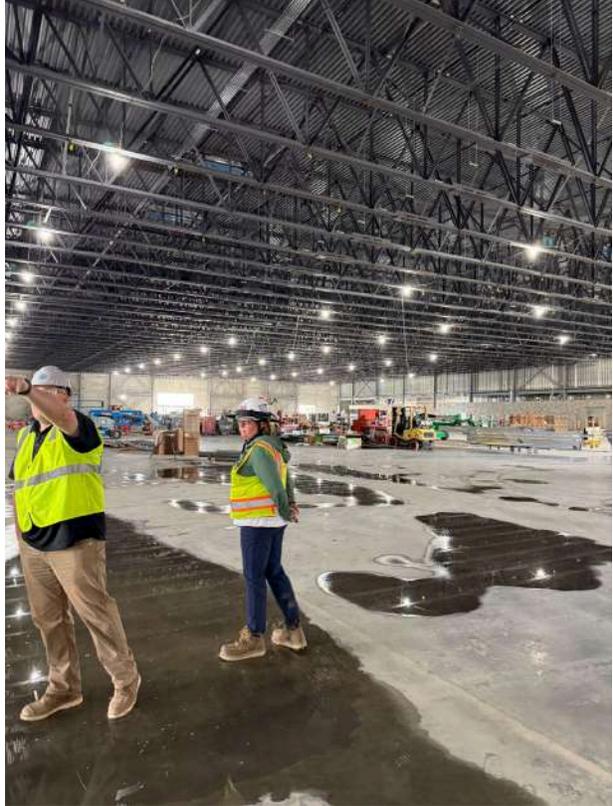
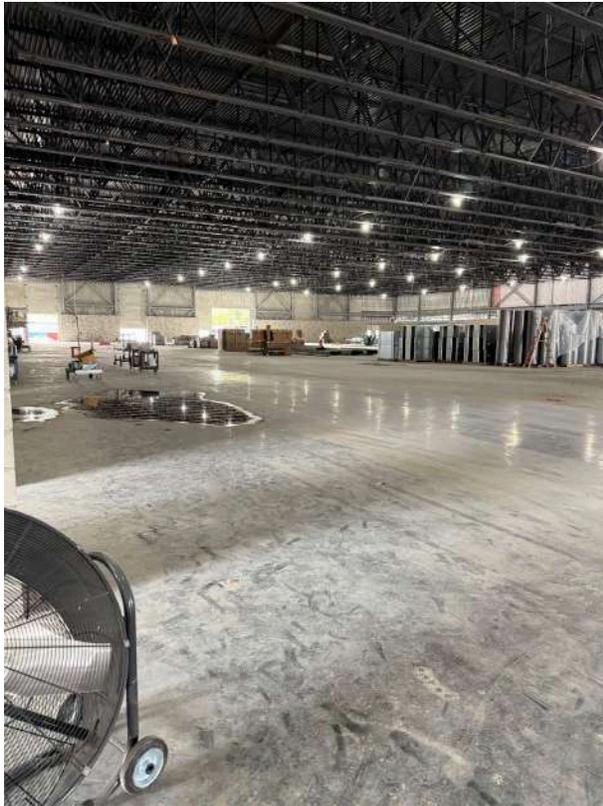
For updates on the project, question and answers, information on the bidder's meeting, please refer to the following website link: <https://ofb.ag/statefairexhibit2026>

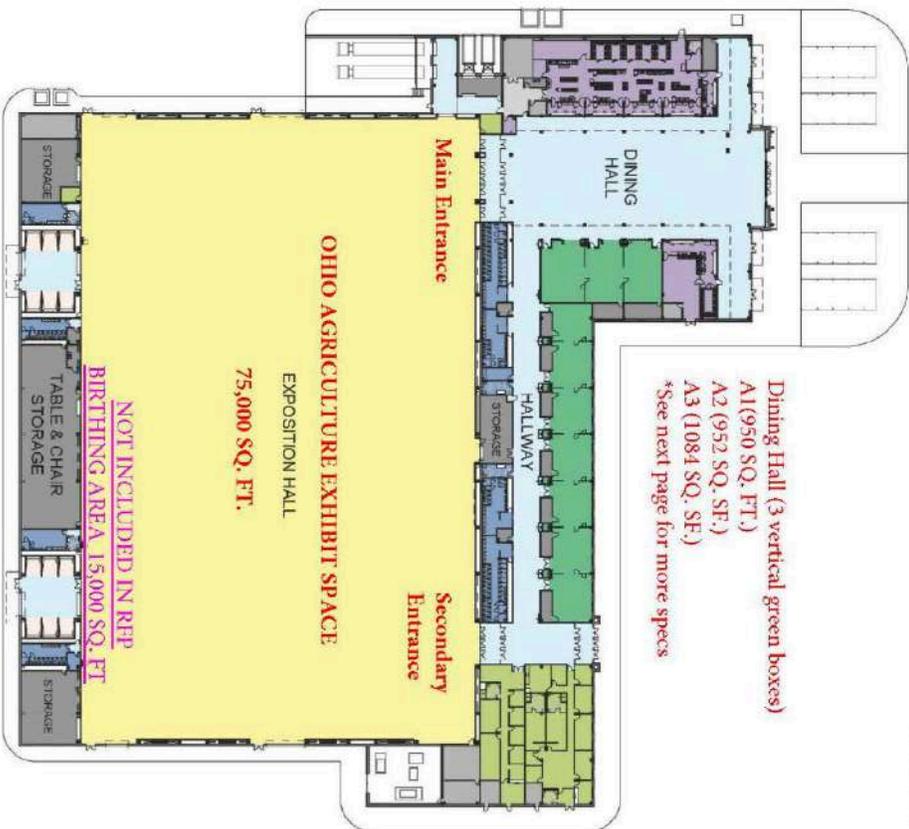
Resource Attachments

Please refer to floor plans and photos for size, scale and approximate measurements.



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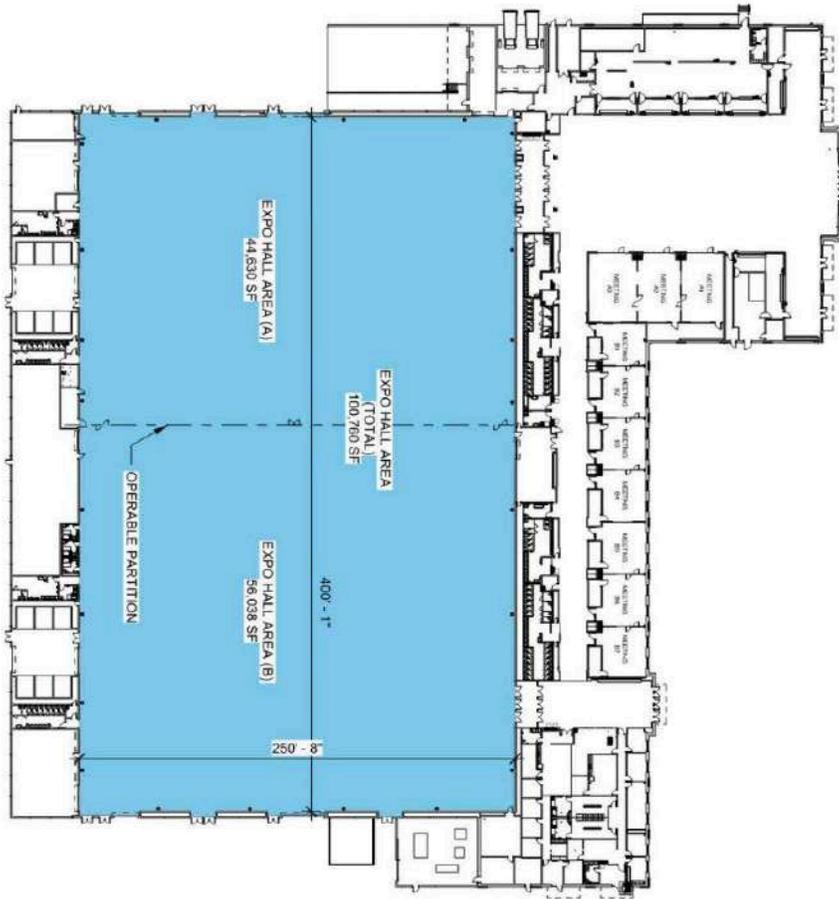


Dining Hall (3 vertical green boxes)
 A1 (950 SQ. FT.)
 A2 (952 SQ. SF.)
 A3 (1084 SQ. SF.)
 *See next page for more specs

- LEGEND**
- Multi-use Exposition Facilities
 - Administration
 - Meeting Rooms
 - Guest Facilities
 - Restrooms
 - Circulation
 - Food Service
 - Support Circulation
 - MEPT
 - Operations & Support

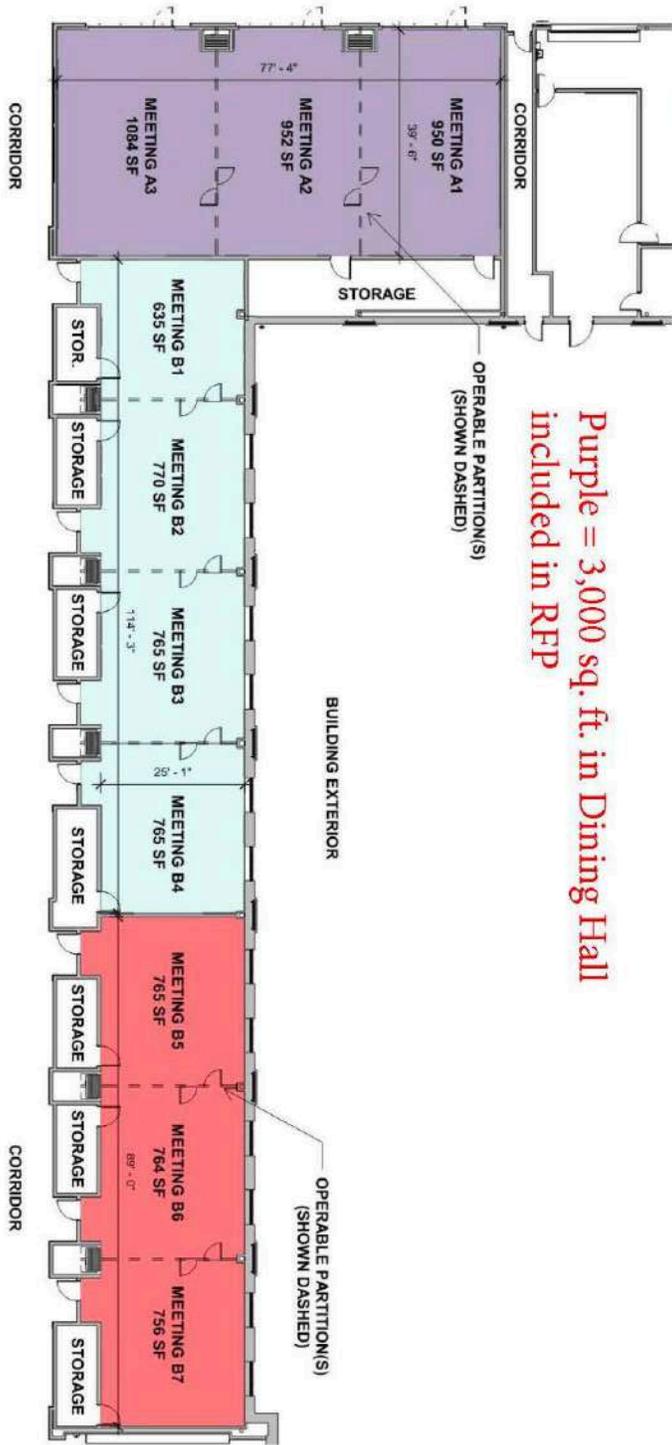


Ohio State Fairgrounds
ohioexpocenter.com



Meeting Rooms

Purple = 3,000 sq. ft. in Dining Hall
included in RFP



Ohio Expo Center &
State Fairgrounds
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