



## **Request for Proposals (RFP) – STRATEGIC PRIORITY REFINEMENT**

February 2022

### **I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

**Purpose of the RFP** - Deaconess Foundation (“Deaconess” or “Foundation”) is seeking proposals from consultants/agencies/firms to provide strategy refinement and facilitation services to ensure the Foundation’s public policy priorities are inclusive and reflect the wisdom and vision of the community in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois. The consultant/agency/firm will design and facilitate a community and participant-centered equity-driven process that will yield recommended public policy priorities that will guide Deaconess’ advocacy, policy development, organizing, and investment efforts.

**Deaconess Foundation** builds power in pursuit of a just future for children and families through racial equity and public policy change. The Foundation invests in the health and well-being of children and their communities, engages our region around the plight of youth, and advocates for systemic change. A ministry of the United Church of Christ, Deaconess has invested more than \$85 million to improve the health of the St. Louis community since 1998 and believes healthy, hope-filled futures for children benefit the entire region. The Foundation’s grantmaking footprint includes St. Louis, St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Charles and Franklin Counties in Missouri and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois. Additional information about the Foundation at [www.deaconess.org](http://www.deaconess.org).

### **II. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The scope will be finalized with the selected respondent. The anticipated scope of work includes, but is not limited to, the following:

#### **A. Data Collection**

1. Review Foundation’s value statements, public policy priorities, strategic plans, historical and current investment, engagement, and advocacy efforts and consult with Foundation staff to inform project plan, guide data gathering, and validate overall objectives.
2. Develop, implement, and facilitate customized outreach methods, activities and strategies that will be effective in elevating individual and community voice and inclusion to refine and/or revise the Foundation’s public policy priorities.

Such approaches can include resident polling, focus groups, personal interviews, engagement at community events, youth, church group or other target group outreach activities, opinion surveys, interactive voice memos, and other creative yet effective multi-dimensional techniques, including the use of a variety of media, activities and methods to capture, focus and engage residents in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois. Special emphasis should be placed on accessibility for differently abled individuals, neurodiversity, youth, young adults, social service providers, advocates, healers, organizers and community members who are not typically engaged in civic or community dialogue.

3. Conduct an ecosystem scan to identify the gaps in progressive civic infrastructure (e.g. year-round voter registration and engagement, lobbying organizations, digital organizing, shared narrative strategy, etc.) in Missouri and Southern Illinois.
4. Summarize and synthesize data findings.

#### **B. Analysis**

1. Assess the Foundation’s impact on advancing change aligned with its current public policy priorities. The current public policy priorities are:
  - a. Health Care - All children of the St. Louis region should have universal access to comprehensive mental, physical and dental care, supported by a trauma informed care approach, a network of school-

based health centers and the benefits of Medicaid expansion.

- b. Economic Mobility - Families in the St. Louis region should be able to achieve economic stability within one generation in an environment marked by fair chance employment practices, family-supporting wages and asset-building supports.
- c. Justice and Equity - All children of the St. Louis region should receive just treatment under the law, with specific emphasis on contact with the state's systems for juvenile justice and foster and adoptive care.
- d. Early Childhood Education - All children of the St. Louis region should enjoy full access to quality early childhood care and education from birth to Pre-Kindergarten.

2. Analyze and validate data collected.

### C. Results Compilation for Action

1. Provide a detailed summative document of key findings and themes.
2. Articulate recommended modifications to the Foundation's public policy priorities based on the findings.
3. Articulate indicators of impact and success for each recommended public policy priority.
4. Articulate recommended modifications to the Foundation's strategic priorities and values that will guide the organization that *may* arise as a byproduct of this community and participant-centered process to refine the Foundation's strategic priorities

## III. PROPOSAL CONTENT

The Consultant/Agency/Firm will be responsible for preparing an effective, clear, and concise proposal. In no more than twenty (20) pages, proposals should include the following information. Please provide the information in the order requested to facilitate an equitable and efficient review of the qualifications of each organization.

- A. Name and Contacts - Include consultant's/agency's/firm's complete name and contact information. If this is a collaborative effort with another or other consultants/agencies/firms, or if any of the work is subcontracted to another party, please provide the same information for all consultants and indicate who will be the lead consultant.
- B. Consultancy/Agency/Firm Profile - Provide a brief description of the size of the consultancy/agency/firm and the composition of professional staff by level.
  1. Include the racial/ethnic and gender demographics of your consultancy/agency/firm and its leadership. Indicate any regional or national resources available to the local team.
  2. Describe the recent experience of your consultancy/agency/firm in working with comparable organizations: faith-based, grantmaking, engaged in advocacy, nonprofit, etc. Provide the names of organizations and contact information for 501(c)(3) organizations and foundations for whom you have worked within the past three years.
  3. Deaconess believes that diverse and inclusive teams lead to better outcomes. Describe your consultancy's/agency's/firm's efforts to recruit, retain and support professional people of color.
- C. Qualifications - Provide number of years the consultancy/agency/firm has been in business and its qualifications and experience performing similar ecosystem/environment scans, community-centered public policy priority setting and/or refining tasks. Include information on the consultancy's/agency's/firm's ability to manage a project in partnership with management, adaptiveness and experience in providing coaching and training support to staff teams.
- D. Workplan - Describe the work plan for the strategic priority g process, including key milestones, timetable for completion of specific tasks, the personnel needed to complete tasks, and expectations for support and assistance from Deaconess.
- E. Quality - Briefly describe the consultancy's/agency's/firm's system of quality control to ensure that the work is adequately performed.
- F. Communication - Describe your consultancy's/agency's/firm's approach to communications with Deaconess throughout the engagement and for ongoing support.
- G. Key Personnel - List staff directly assigned to this project, including name, job title, duties and responsibilities and relevant experience. Please include the racial/ethnic and gender demographics of the team working on the account.
- H. Conflict of Interest - Describe any existing or potential relationships with board members or employees of

Deaconess Foundation that could impact your consultancy's/agency's/firm's independence by creating an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

- I. Fees – Provide a standard fee schedule (hours rates, or other fee schedule) for the personnel who would be assigned to this project. Included an overall not-to-exceed fee for the services described above. The fee is to be inclusive of all out-of-pocket expenses. Describe your billing rates and procedures for technical questions and break down hourly rates by management level.
- J. References – Provide at least three current references for similar types of projects. Briefly describe the scope of your work for these references, the year completed, and a contact name and telephone/email for each one. (This information may be included with Item 'C' above.)
- K. Additional services – Feel free to provide information on additional services that you believe would be pertinent and align with Deaconess' operating and capacity goals.

#### **IV. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Each proposal received will be evaluated and a determination will be made if it meets the minimum requirements. Failure to meet these requirements will be a cause for eliminating the proposal from further consideration.

Deaconess reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any technicalities, informalities and irregularities, to accept or reject all or part of the proposal, and to be the sole judge of the suitability of the proposals offered.

Evaluation of the proposals will be made by Deaconess Foundation staff. In addition to evaluating written proposals, oral interviews will be requested.

Proposals will be evaluated generally on the following criteria, which is neither weighted nor prioritized:

- Qualification and experience of the respondent's organization and staff;
- Understanding of the work to be performed and scope of services available;
- Knowledge of best practices, latest standards and innovative solutions;
- Respondent's alignment with Deaconess mission, vision and values, including racial equity;
- Individualized service approach, and
- Effective financial stewardship related to Fees.

#### **V. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND SELECTION TIMELINE**

Submission - The proposals must be received by March 4, 2022. Inquiries or questions regarding your submission may be directed to: Constance Harper, Director of Advocacy & Freedom Schools, at [info@deaconess.org](mailto:info@deaconess.org).

Please direct all inquiries to the Director of Advocacy and Freedom Schools only. Please do not contact any Board members. The failure to comply may result in disqualification.

Selection Timeline - Deadlines and Selection Timing are as follows:

February 25, 2022  
March 4, 2022  
March 23-24, 2022  
March 31, 2022

Final date for questions related to RFP  
Final date for submitting a proposal  
Presentations and Interviews  
Notification of Acceptance

## VI. COMMITMENTS AND CONDITIONS

- A. Racial Equity Commitment - Deaconess strongly encourages consultancies/agencies/firms owned and led by members of historically under-represented and undercapitalized groups, including African Americans, Latinx, Indigenous communities, women and small businesses to submit proposals, to participate as partners, and/or to participate in other business activity in response to this RFP.

Any consultancy/agency/firm awarded the contract agrees to use its best efforts to subcontract and employ individuals from and consultancies/agencies/firms owned and led by members of historically under-represented and undercapitalized groups, including African Americans, Latinx, Indigenous communities and women. Deaconess is an equal opportunity employer and requires its entire contractor to comply with policies and regulations concerning equal employment opportunity and community benefit.

Our fully articulated commitments to racial equity in governance and operations can be found [here](#).

- B. Withdrawal of Proposal - Proposals may be withdrawn before and after the RFP submittal deadline by submitting a written request to the Contact Person. Re-submittal before the RFP submittal deadline can be made. However, proposals may not be re-submitted after the deadline.
- C. Proposal Costs - All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the RFP shall be completely borne by the responding party to the RFP. All documents submitted as part of the RFP will become the property of Deaconess Foundation. Requests for specific material to be returned will be considered. Any material submitted that is confidential must be clearly marked as such.