

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: NONPROFIT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Submission Deadline: Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 2:00 PM EST
Submit PDF Via Email: RFP@thefoodtrust.org

PURPOSE

The Food Trust (TFT) has initiated a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify a qualified consultant to guide and execute a strategic planning process with our Board of Directors and staff to produce a three- to five-year strategic plan.

TFT seeks a consultant who demonstrates strong understanding in nonprofit structure and operations, excellent facilitation skills and proven experience with nonprofit strategic planning. In addition, consultants should be knowledgeable about healthy food access and nutrition education initiatives nationally, the local and national nonprofit/public health landscape, and government and private grant programs. Experience with community engagement and participant-centered practices is highly preferred.

ABOUT THE FOOD TRUST

TFT's mission is **to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions**. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, we have developed a comprehensive approach to improved food access that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food.

With nearly three decades of experience, TFT is a regional and national leader in developing innovative strategies to increase food security and improve community health. TFT gears its programs primarily to under-resourced communities, with a focus on families with children. The organization currently serves more than 500,000 people annually and employs 65 staff members. In addition to direct programming, TFT advocates for local, state and federal public policies that improve access to nutritious, affordable food and nutrition education, as well as strengthen and sustain family farms and regional food systems. While much of our work is focused in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, we work on numerous partnerships and technical assistance projects at the national level.

SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES

The project is expected to include the design and execution of a strategic planning process that meets the criteria outlined in this RFP, including project management, facilitation, budget for implementation, and support structure for plan implementation. The three- to five-year strategic plan is targeted for 2022-2026.

TFT envisions the scope of work to be completed in three stages. Work completed in each of the stages must be summarized in a report to the Board of Directors and staff of TFT. We expect that the work will be completed by October 2021.

Stage 1: Preparation & Assessment

This stage requires the consultant to research and report the following in preparation for the strategic planning process. Items to be considered include:

- Review organization's history and overall organizational assessment through SWOT, followed by a gap analysis to evaluate opportunities and/or challenges
- Conduct an environmental scan benchmarking the organization in alignment with other food insecurity/food access/public health/community development organizations with a similar focus, regionally and nationally
- Conduct interviews, surveys and focus group polling to receive partner, stakeholder and community input (should include but not be limited to current, past and potential funders)
- Assess the current and future direction of the field, specifically private foundation investment trends, emerging research, government programs and policy efforts

Stage 2: Strategic Plan Creation

At this stage, the consultant helps the nonprofit identify strategic goals and creates an actionable strategic plan. The plan will include:

- An executive summary
- A comprehensive plan that identifies:
 - Shared Mission and Vision
 - Proposed priorities, innovative strategies, synergistic approaches, etc.
 - SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-limited) Goals
 - Opportunities for including staff, leadership and the Board (e.g., staff retreats, Board retreat, leadership strategic planning meetings, etc.)
 - Objectives and tactics
 - Early action items to demonstrate progress, create momentum and buy-in
 - Listing of responsible parties and roles
 - Metrics and measurable outcomes
- Optional components of the plan could include:
 - Resource Development strategies
 - Recommendations for enhancement of current financial, technological and human capital
 - Communication strategies

Stage 3: Implementation & Evaluation

This stage requires the consultant to provide oversight of the implementation and evaluation process. This process should include:

- Follow-up sessions with nonprofit leadership to gauge the progress of the implementation at 3- and 6-month points after plan delivery
- Continued identification of early action items
- Review of metrics to determine effectiveness of implementation

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- All submissions must be electronic, standard-size (8.5" x 11") pages.
- General Information, Narrative, Qualifications & References and Project Plan & Budget sections (see below) must not exceed 8 pages total; word count should not exceed 4,000.
- Attachments & Supporting Documents must be type-written. Include additional attachments as needed.
- Faxed or mailed copies will NOT be accepted.
- Submissions will be kept on file.

CLOSING SUBMISSION DATE & INQUIRIES

Proposals are due by Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 2:00 PM EST.

All submissions must be sent to RFP@thefoodtrust.org. Electronic submissions must not exceed 15 megabytes; a link to the file may be provided in lieu of an attachment. An email acknowledgement of each submission received will be sent to the applicant.

All bidders are invited to attend a bidder conference on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, 2:30-3:30 p.m. EST; please [register](#) in advance. Attendance at the bidder conference is preferred but not required. The conference will include a brief overview of the RFP as well as time for questions. Following the conference, these questions and the corresponding answers will be posted to our website, www.thefoodtrust.org.

Additional inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to RFP@thefoodtrust.org.

All proposals received by the deadline will undergo a preliminary screening. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted for review and rating. Any proposal may be disqualified if it deviates from the Proposal Format (see below).

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must follow this format, in this order:

1. **General Information**
 - a. **Contact information:** Name of consultant/firm, address, phone number, email address and website.
 - b. **RFP source:** How did you learn about this opportunity?
2. **Narrative, Qualifications & References**
 - a. **Opening:** Your approach to strategic planning.
 - b. **Qualifications:** Relevant work activities, expertise, knowledge and strategic planning experience. Experience should include specific examples of similar related nonprofit work. Please note any prior experience assisting foundations

with their strategic priorities in the area of work related to TFT.

Some key qualifications that will be considered:

- i. Education (degree(s) and/or certificate(s))
 - ii. Experience in successfully developing strategic plans
 - iii. Knowledge of collective impact or collaborative strategic initiatives
 - iv. Strong facilitation skills
 - v. Experience in creating a neutral environment for obtaining input
 - vi. Experience in gathering and utilizing data to drive the strategic process
 - vii. Ability to constructively challenge key stakeholders
 - viii. Experience in inspiring others to think innovatively
 - ix. Project management and change management experience
 - x. Experience with community engagement and participant-centered practices
 - xi. Familiarity with the core programs at TFT (preferred but not required)
- c. **Your Team:** Information about all team members who will be involved with the project, including names, email addresses, title, tenure, experience and education.
 - d. **References:** Three client references (please include each individual's name, address, phone number, email address and relationship to the bidder).

3. **Project Plan & Budget**

- a. **Work Plan:** Detailed work plan, to include:
 - i. Major stages and milestones
 - ii. Specific activities to be conducted at each stage
 - iii. Timeline for the activities to be conducted at each stage
 - iv. List of milestones and deliverables tied to the activities to be conducted at each stage
- b. **Budget:** Detailed project budget (including estimated hours, and proposed payment schedule as it relates to project milestones and deliverables).

4. **Attachments & Supporting Documents**

- a. **Work samples:** At least one sample of a previously completed strategic plan. Portions may be redacted to protect private information as needed.
- b. **Supporting documents:** Attachments may also be included.

EVALUATION, NOTIFICATION & TIMELINE

Scoring Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following weighted criteria: qualifications, scope of work, work plan and budget.

Notification of Selection

TFT will seat the RFP Selection Committee. The evaluation process will include individual committee member evaluation and rating of each proposal, followed by committee discussion and ranking of proposals. After preliminary rating and ranking of proposals, interviews may be scheduled with finalists, particularly if two or more proposals are closely rated and/or more information is needed. References will be contacted for all finalists.

The final recommendation of the RFP Selection Committee will be submitted for approval by the TFT President & CEO and is not subject to appeal. All applicants will receive written notification of TFT’s decision regarding their proposal, and an announcement of the applicant awarded the project will be posted on the TFT’s website, www.thefoodtrust.org.

Additional information may be required from the selected applicant prior to the awarding of the project. TFT reserves the right not to select an applicant for project implementation if, in its determination, no qualified applicant has applied or is sufficiently responsive to the service need.

In the event that no proposal is selected, TFT may elect to either not develop the service pending further analysis of alternatives to meet the expressed need, or issue a new RFP to attempt to expand the pool of potential respondents.

Timeline

Monday, December 21, 2020	Release RFP
Tuesday, January 12, 2021, 2:30 p.m. EST	Bidder conference; register here
Wednesday, January 27, 2021, by 2 p.m. EST	Deadline for receipt of proposals
Monday, February 1 to Friday, February 19, 2021	Internal committee to evaluate proposals and select finalists
Monday, February 22 to Thursday, February 25, 2021	Interviews with highest-ranking applicants, if applicable
Monday, March 1 to Friday, March 5, 2021	Notify the selected applicant; notification of project award posted on TFT website; startup contract signed

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Ownership and Confidentiality

All intellectual property will become the property of TFT. All data remains the sole property of TFT. The consultant shall agree to keep information related to this process in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract and any confidential business information or proprietary information that has been gathered on this project.

If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, the bidder must indicate this in the relevant sections of the response.

2. Cost of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by TFT.

3. Reservation of Rights

TFT reserves the right to request or negotiate changes in a proposal, to accept all or part of a proposal, or to reject any or all proposals. TFT may, at its sole and absolute discretion, select no provider for these services if, in its determination, no applicant is sufficiently responsive to the

need. TFT reserves the right to withdraw this RFP and/or any item within the RFP at any time without prior notice. TFT reserves the right to disqualify any proposal, which does not adhere to the RFP guidelines. This RFP is being offered at the discretion of TFT. It does not commit TFT to award any contract.

4. Conflict of Interest

Applicants agree that they or their employees do not currently have, nor will they have, any conflict of interest between themselves and The Food Trust. Any perceived or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed in the proposal. The following individuals or entities are ineligible to be a TFT vendor, and therefore may not submit a proposal:

- TFT employees, Board members and their family members