



RFP Issued by:

Center for Excellence in Nonprofits (CEN)
330 Twin Dolphin Drive, #151
Redwood City, CA 94065

RFP Issue Date: January 23, 2024

Submission Deadline: February 9, 2024 at 5:00pm

Project Budget: \$20,000

I. Introduction

The Center for Excellence in Nonprofits (CEN) invites qualified strategic planning consultants to submit proposals for our upcoming strategic planning initiative. CEN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Redwood City, CA, dedicated to empowering nonprofit leaders through continued learning and fostering inclusive spaces. We seek a strategic planning consultant with expertise in nonprofit leadership and a strong commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, access, and liberation (IDEAL) principles.

Who We Are: CEN has a rich history dating back to its founding in 1994 by Dean Morton, a former Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Hewlett Packard, and Bob Daw, previously associated with the United Way. Their vision was to create a platform that would empower nonprofit leaders and organizations with the knowledge and resources needed to effectively lead their missions. CEN has committed to the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, access, and liberation (IDEAL), which have become integral to both its operations and the content of its programming.

What We Look for in a Consultant: We value strategic planning experience as well as responsiveness and alignment with our IDEAL values. We seek a consultant who can employ effective tools and activities to distill our collective thoughts into a manageable strategic plan, tailored for internal tactical use and a public audience.

1. **Experience:** A minimum of 3 years of strategic planning experience or a comparable experience working with organizations of similar size and mission to CEN.
2. **Responsiveness:** We seek a consultant who can adapt to our unique needs and changing circumstances—attuning to our organization's dynamics, challenges, and aspirations. A responsive consultant quickly takes care of our concerns and proactively identifies opportunities and potential roadblocks. They should be available to engage in open and

timely communication, fostering an agile partnership that is responsive to emerging insights and needs.

3. **Alignment with IDEAL Values:** Our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, access, and liberation (IDEAL) principles is at the core of everything we do. We seek a consultant who not only understands but fully embraces these principles. This entails more than just an acknowledgment; it means integrating IDEAL values into their approach and recommendations. A consultant who shares our commitment to IDEAL will better guide us in developing strategies that are not only effective but also socially responsible and equitable. They should have a proven track record of helping organizations like ours distill complex ideas and diverse perspectives into manageable and actionable strategic plans. This plan should be thoughtfully tailored to serve our internal tactical needs and our desire to effectively communicate our vision and goals to the public.

II. Organizational Priorities

CEN has identified priorities for our strategic planning initiative which include but are not limited to:

1. Enhance organizational capacity and sustainability which includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Implement Succession Planning for both the board and staff
 - b. Assess the CEN Membership Program
 - c. Evaluate board operations
2. Evaluate CEN's position and direction within the nonprofit landscape, both locally and beyond
3. Strengthen fundraising and funder relations, including building out board operations and fundraising commitment calendars
4. Clarify the evolving meaning of IDEAL within CEN
5. Explore opportunities to deepen engagement with local nonprofits and consider strategies for national and international engagement.

III. Desired Strategic Planning Process

- Facilitate learning and meaningful conversations within and between the board as well as CEN's constituents.
- Foster collaboration and rapport among board members
- Achieve alignment on CEN's mission, vision, and strategies, promoting deeper and more intentional approach to the work of leadership and staff

IV. Expected Outputs



We anticipate the following outputs from this strategic planning initiative:

- Comprehensive environmental scan data, including qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- A detailed report tailored for internal use ~~and one to be released to the public~~

V. Expected Outcomes

Our expected outcomes include:

- A deeper understanding of how funders perceive CEN, as well as the views of community members, partners, and the public.
- Consultant insights on whether to expand local nonprofit engagement and how to approach national and international engagement.
 - A structured process for the organization to assess the best strategic approach and next steps.
- Clarification of organizational priorities and identification/filling of gaps

VI. Proposal Submission

Interested consultants should submit their proposals by February 9, 2024 at 5:00pm Pacific to chair@cen.org. Please include the following in your submission:

1. Cover Letter: Introduce your consulting firm, outline your understanding of the project, and highlight your relevant experience.
2. Proposed Approach: Detail your strategic planning methodology, including how you will address our organizational priorities and goals.
3. Experience: Provide information on your experience with similar nonprofit strategic planning initiatives, particularly highlighting your work with IDEAL principles.
4. References: Include contact information for at least three references from past clients.
5. Budget: Present a detailed budget proposal outlining your fees and expenses for the entire project.

VII. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Alignment with CEN's mission, vision, and values.
2. Demonstrated experience with nonprofit strategic planning, especially in relation to IDEAL principles.
3. Clarity and comprehensiveness of the proposed approach.
4. Responsiveness and professionalism.

VIII. Questions and Clarifications



All inquiries and requests for clarifications regarding this RFP should be directed to chair@cen.org.

IX. Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting proposals is **February 9, 2024, at 5:00pm Pacific**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

X. Selection Process

CEN will review all received proposals and may conduct interviews with shortlisted candidates. We reserve the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate modifications with any proposer.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and partnering with a consultant who shares our commitment to advancing nonprofit excellence through strategic planning.

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