



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS  
**EQUALITY**

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROGRAMMATIC & OPERATIONAL  
STRATEGIC PLANNING

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS EQUALITY, INC.**

*“Connecting the LGBTQ Community”*

Arthur Beeghly LGBTQ Resource Center  
179 N. Church Ave., Ste. 101  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

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## SUMMARY & BACKGROUND

Northwest Arkansas Equality, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, established in 2006, which serves as a center for community education, advocacy, resources, and programmatic services designed to support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community of Northwest Arkansas.

While Arkansas is a socially conservative state, over the past decade the northwest region shows considerable progress across these pillars of work, with the most recent Northwest Arkansas Pride celebration seeing participant numbers of over 22,000 people. Building on this momentum, and to continue meeting the growing visibility and demand for services, NWA Equality is undergoing a process of evaluating and improving programs and operating methods.

The organization's headquarters are in downtown Fayetteville, Arkansas, and led by a seven-member board of directors, small staff, and rotating pool of volunteers.

### **Organizational services include:**

- Free and confidential HIV testing;
- LGBTQ support group services, information, and resources;
- Social events and activities;
- Arkansas LGBTQ Archives
- Annual events of Northwest Arkansas Pride

NWA Equality is currently accepting proposals for a consultant to assist in an organizational analysis and quantification of impact across our program portfolio to inform and craft a new 3-5-year strategic plan for more effective service delivery.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) serves to solicit proposals from candidates, conduct an evaluation based on the criteria listed herein, and select the candidate who can best serve as a thought partner in strategic design.

The True Northwest Arkansas grant, a collaborative effort between the Walton Family Foundation, Walmart Foundation, and the Arkansas Community Foundation, assisted by the services of Converge Consulting of New Orleans, provides funds and support for this project.

## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

This RFP represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals are due **September 30, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. CST**. An official agent or representative of the company must sign proposal submissions. All complete bids shall be accepted for review, however, there is a preference to bidders who are locally-accessible to the Northwest Arkansas region.

### All proposals must include:

- Narrative of project scope;
- Illustrative project timeline;
- Topline budget;
- Outline of qualifications of consultant, including examples of demonstrable success with similar strategic planning efforts with other clients;
- Two professional references.

An organization or individual submitting a proposal must clearly state their intent to subcontract any work to meet the requirements contained herein. Additionally, all costs included in proposals must be all-inclusive, including any subcontracted work. Any proposals which call for subcontracting work must include a name and description of the organizations vetted for contract services.

Costs itemization shall include an explanation of all fees and costs.

Negotiations of contract terms and conditions shall commence upon selection of the elected bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions shall be subject to review by Northwest Arkansas Equality's legal counsel and shall include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.

# PROJECT PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION

## PROJECT PURPOSE

NWA Equality is evaluating the resources and programming offered to better serve the community. As such, we are looking to draft a formal strategic plan with short and long-term goals, and milestones.

We are at an unprecedented point of visibility, support, and growth, and we anticipate this process will help triage program expansion and better capture data and impact. Currently, indicators of success are captured on an ad-hoc basis, a process we would like to formalize under a logical framework. It is the goal of this undertaking that we will have a blueprint to help inform and organize our operations for the next 3-5 years, including but not limited to regional service expansion and business development/fundraising.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

NWA Equality is seeking consulting services to provide input in three core areas:

- Assessing the impact of our current **programs** in the community at large and help us create a tailored strategic plan aligning these programs with our mission, capacity, and budget;
- Refining our external **communications** to better tell our story with the right narrative. The consultant would provide insights into approaches that other similar organizations are taking, in addition to serving as a thought partner on innovation in this space;
- Analyzing the current donor landscape and providing recommendations to inform our **development** and fundraising and partnerships, in addition to any structural or organizational adjustments that may be necessary to better situate NWA Equality for greater funding eligibility.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of this project includes general impact, communications, and business development for NWA Equality.

The selected bidder is responsible for planning and conducting a thorough community impact assessment and analysis of NWA Equality's current programmatic portfolio, in partnership with the NWA Equality board of directors, key staff and volunteers, and providing a detailed report and recommendations. This work may include insights and thoughts on operations and governance, the focus of this work should be heavily skewed on service delivery. While the specific activities and approach undertaken by the consultant are negotiable, they must align with the above project description and fall within the scope outlined herein.

Expected outputs from a successful project should include, but not limited to:

- Queer community needs evaluation (e.g., locale-specific events, youth, etc.) overlaid with current programming and a gaps assessment;
- Logistical framework, with indicators, laddering up into NWA Equality's mission;
- Communications plan for external storytelling;
- Landscape assessment of applicable donors and a set of recommendations to inform a fundraising strategy;
- Strategic plan distilled from the information in the above outputs, to inform forward action and changes to be undertaken by NWA Equality over the next 3-5 years, with recommended milestones and measurement indicators.

The selected bidder shall work with the NWA board of directors to define a work plan and the appropriate form of deliverables under these outputs.

## RFP & PROJECT TIMELINES

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TIMELINE

All proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than **5:00 p.m. CST September 30, 2019**.

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from **October 1** until **October 15, 2019**. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this two-week window, the bidder(s) will be notified.

The selection decision for the winning bidder will be made no later than **October 19, 2019**.

Bidders who are not selected will be notified by email no later than **October 31, 2019**.

Upon notification, the contract negotiation with the selected bidder will begin immediately. Contract negotiations will be completed by **November 15, 2019**.

### PROJECT TIMELINE

Project initiation phase must be completed by **December 1, 2019**.

Project planning phase must be completed by **December 15, 2019**. Project planning phase will determine the timeline/schedule for the remaining phases of the project.

Full project activities should span no more than **six (6) months**, with exceptions taken into consideration on a situational basis.

## BUDGET

All proposals must include projected costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope. Costs should be stated as one-time or non-recurring costs (NRC) or monthly recurring costs (MRC). Pricing must be listed for each of the following items in accordance with the illustrative format below:

<b>Project Initiation and Planning</b>	NRC	MRC
<b>Community Impact/Needs Assessment</b>	NRC	MRC
<b>Donor Landscape Assessment</b>	NRC	MRC
<b>Communications Research</b>	NRC	MRC
<b>Report Development</b>	NRC	MRC
<b>Travel (if/as applicable)</b>	NRC	MRC

All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal. Budgets should reflect appropriate activities for a maximum ceiling of **\$15,000.00**, not to exceed six (6) months of work.

## BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders shall provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Description of experience in organizational planning, program M&E, and communications;
- List of how many full-time, part-time, and contracted staff in your organization;
- References and testimonials from 2-3 past clients;
- Anticipated resources you will assign to this project, as well as any you will need from NWA Equality's board of directors;
- A nascent work plan;
- Timeframe for completion of the project;
- Project management methodology.

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

To ensure consideration for this Request for Proposal, your submission must be complete and include all the following criteria for evaluation:

Overall proposal suitability: proposed project(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner

- **Organizational Experience:** Bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope outlined above.
- **Previous Work:** Bidders will be evaluated on examples of their work pertaining to strategic planning and analysis, as well as client testimonials and references.
- **Technical Expertise and Experience:** Bidders must provide descriptions and documentation of staff technical expertise and experience.
- **Value and Cost:** Bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their project(s) based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project.

Bidders must submit their proposal to [info@nwaequality.org](mailto:info@nwaequality.org) with “Strategic Planning RFP Proposal” in the subject line by **September 30, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. CST**.

Questions on project parameters or other RFP components may also be directed to [info@nwaequality.org](mailto:info@nwaequality.org).