

Request for Quotes for Strategic Planning Consultant

Questions and Answers Document

RFQ Submissions Due to lvarner@interfaithservices.org: 1/12/26 by 11:59pm PST

1. Question: We are interested in submitting a proposal but before we do, we wanted to know if we are someone you will consider or if you are looking for local groups.
 - *Answer: Yes, Interfaith Community Services (“Interfaith”) is accepting/considering proposals from respondents outside of the area, including out of state.*
2. Question: It is often helpful for us to have a brief conversation with the organizational leadership before drafting a proposal, as it helps clarify the scope and ensure we are meeting the needs of the client. Might you be open to a call prior to us submitting?
 - *Answer: We will not be holding meetings with interested respondents prior to submission but we are accepting questions until the end of the day on Monday, 12/15/25. Please submit any questions directly to lvarner@interfaithservices.org. Answers will be posted to our website by 12/19/2025. Answers can be located towards the bottom of the following web page once posted: <https://www.interfaithservices.org/about-us/reports-and-financials>*
3. Question: As evidenced in the draft 2025 –2028 Strategic Plan Framework, you have done some good thinking on priorities for the upcoming strategic plan. Are these already confirmed, or do you anticipate considering these along with other potential strategies and priorities? In other words, how much do you expect us to build on the existing 2025–2028 draft Strategic Plan Framework versus reassessing assumptions and proposing new strategic directions?
 - *Answer: The draft 2025–2028 Strategic Plan Framework reflects preliminary thinking about our priorities and provides a starting point for the strategic planning process. While we believe the framework is directionally sound, it has not been finalized. We anticipate that the selected consultant will both build upon this existing framework and critically assess its underlying assumptions.*

We expect the process to include meaningful stakeholder engagement and analysis, which may result in reaffirming the current priorities, refining them, and/or identifying additional or alternative strategic directions. In short, the framework is intended to guide the work, not constrain it, and we are open to thoughtful revisions that strengthen the final strategic plan.

4. Question: What governance challenges or questions motivated the RFQ's request for an analysis of the current governance framework and needed changes?

- *Answer: Interfaith benefits from a highly engaged Board of Directors and, in recent years, has placed increased emphasis on the role of board-level committees in supporting effective governance. As the organization continues to grow and evolve, we recognize the importance of regularly assessing our governance framework to ensure it remains aligned with our mission, strategic priorities, and operational complexity.*

Through the strategic planning process, we are seeking an objective analysis of our current governance structure, policies, and practices to identify opportunities for clarification, strengthening, and alignment. This includes evaluating roles, decision-making processes, committee structure, and governance policies to ensure they effectively support organizational accountability, sustainability, and long-term impact.

5. Question: Are there specific expectations or preferences for the final plan's format—especially the public-facing version—so that we can design and budget for deliverables that meet your communication needs?

- *We are seeking a concise strategic plan that clearly outlines priorities, goals, and measurable outcomes. The final deliverables should be suitable for external communication and sharing with the broader community. While a single plan that meets the needs of both internal and external audiences would be ideal, we are also open to a two-tiered approach—such as a comprehensive internal plan accompanied by an abbreviated, public-facing version. We do not have a strong preference on format, as long as the materials are clear, accessible, and support effective communication and implementation.*

6. Question: Do you have a sense of how many interviews and focus groups you would like conducted throughout the process? And how many individuals you anticipate completing the survey?

- *Answer: Interfaith is a membership-based organization with a broad and diverse set of stakeholders, including more than 150 faith communities, nearly 300 staff, over 2,000 volunteers, more than 5,000 donor households, and partnerships across all levels of government. We also serve more than 23,000 clients annually across multiple programs and jurisdictions.*

Given this scope, we are seeking a stakeholder engagement approach that is inclusive, representative, and cost-effective. Rather than prescribing specific numbers of interviews, focus groups, or survey respondents, we expect respondents to propose a thoughtful engagement strategy that appropriately balances depth, breadth, and feasibility across these stakeholder groups.

7. Question: Do you expect to hold interviews and/or focus groups in-person? If so, approximately how many? How many of the strategic planning committee meetings or other staff/board meetings do you expect to be held in-person?

- *Answer: Like the approach described in Answer 6. above, we are not prescribing specific numbers of interviews, focus groups, or meetings to be held. We are open to a combination of in-person and virtual engagement methods. However, we recognize that not all stakeholders are able to participate virtually, and it is important that the engagement approach includes multiple, accessible avenues for participation.*

We expect respondents to propose a balanced and inclusive engagement plan that considers accessibility, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness when recommending the mix of in-person and virtual meetings, interviews, and focus groups.

8. Question: What is the formal approval process for the strategic plan? Will the board be approving a strategic plan as part of this engagement?

- *Answer: Interfaith's Board of Directors will formally review and approve the strategic plan as part of this engagement. In addition, a Strategic Planning Taskforce—comprised of board members, staff, and other key stakeholders—will be actively involved throughout the planning process to provide input, guidance, and feedback prior to board approval.*

9. Question: Is there an anticipated or desired completion date for this engagement or for the approval of the strategic plan?

- *Answer: Ideally, the strategic planning process will inform Fiscal Year 2026 budget development, with key insights available by June 30, 2026. However, final Board approval of the strategic plan is expected by September 30, 2026.*

10. Question: Has a budget range been established for this project?

- *Answer: A specific budget range has not been established for this project. Proposals will be evaluated based on overall quality, qualification/experience, approach, and cost-effectiveness following the Evaluation Criteria in the RFQ.*

11. Question: Given Interfaith's rapid growth (from \$12M to \$30M and 263 FTEs) and the broad scope across housing, behavioral health, workforce development, and social enterprise, **are there 1–2 strategic tensions or priority decisions** (e.g., scale vs. depth, real estate growth vs. operating capacity, regional leadership vs. internal consolidation) that leadership is most eager for this plan to address?

- *Answer: The strategic planning process must take into account both current and anticipated conditions in the environment in which Interfaith operates, including potential impacts to funding resulting from federal and other public policy changes. We are interested in strategies that sustain the organization into its next phase of growth while building upon past successes.*

Growth may be a priority, but only to the extent that it deepens service impact, strengthens operational capacity, and enhances Interfaith's regional positioning. We are open to recommendations regarding business or strategic levers that the consultants believe Interfaith is uniquely positioned to leverage within the sector. Conversely, if there are areas in which the organization should consider scaling back or no longer investing, we welcome that candid and thoughtful dialogue as part of the process.

12. Question: The RFQ references a **draft 2025–2028 Strategic Plan Framework developed by executive staff**. Should proposers assume this framework is: a directional hypothesis to be pressure-tested, a partial foundation to be refined, or an internal working document that may be substantially reimagined through stakeholder engagement? Understanding this will help calibrate the level of redesign versus refinement expected.

- *Answer: We do not view these options as mutually exclusive. The draft 2025–2028 Strategic Plan Framework is intended to serve as a starting point that may be pressure-tested, refined, and, where appropriate, reimagined through stakeholder engagement. We welcome proposals that thoughtfully balance*

validation of existing assumptions with the identification of opportunities for refinement or new strategic directions.

13. Question: Interfaith's mission and values emphasize dignity, social justice, and serving marginalized communities. **How does the organization define the role of equity, inclusion, and access in this strategic planning process**, and are there **any federal, state, or other funding requirements or limitations** that proposers should be aware of when exploring DEI-related strategies, language, or metrics within the plan?

- *Answer: Equity, inclusion, and access are core considerations in Interfaith's strategic planning process and are closely aligned with our mission and values.*

As an organization that partners with federal, state, and local funders, Interfaith must ensure that strategies, language, and metrics are responsive to and compliant with applicable funding requirements, when possible and not in conflict with Interfaith's mission and values. Given evolving policy environments, Interfaith is seeking to intentionally diversify its funding sources and to expand its donor base to support the organization's continued sustainability.

14. Question: The final deliverables include an analysis of the current governance framework and recommended changes. Can you clarify the Board's openness to:

- changes in committee structure or charters,
- shifts in Board vs. management role clarity, or
- adjustments to how the Board monitors strategy implementation over time?
- *Answer: As organizations grow and evolve, their governance structures must also adapt to effectively support the nonprofit's work. While significant progress has been made in recent years to strengthen and elevate the role of the Board, we recognize that effective governance is an ongoing process. Board leadership is particularly interested in continuing to shift the Board's focus toward more strategic oversight, while appropriately delegating operational and preparatory work to board committees. Additionally, we welcome candid feedback on any board practices that may no longer be serving the organization or the Board effectively, with the goal of continuous improvement and stronger governance overall.*

15. Question: The RFQ calls for engagement with **clients, funders, staff, Board, and community partners**. Are there particular stakeholder groups whose voices have historically been underrepresented — or whose input leadership is especially interested in elevating — as part of this process?

- *Answer: While Interfaith consistently seeks to center the voices and lived experiences of the clients we serve, we recognize opportunities to further elevate and strengthen client input within this strategic planning process. In addition, Interfaith has significantly expanded its partnerships with local governments in recent years, and engaging these partners meaningfully will be an important component of the planning effort.*

16. Question: Do you have a preference for a local vendor vs. national?

- *Answer: Interfaith does not have a preference as to a local or national vendor.*