



1100 Victors Way, Suite 10

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

734.769.2900

Fax 734.769.2950

www.skilledwork.org

Request for Qualifications: Racial Equity Consultant

1.1 Purpose of the RFQ

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) is seeking a consultant to design a racial equity organizational theory of change process that will permeate all aspects of the organization including both internal operations and client facing projects. CSW is one of seven organizations awarded an Advancing Racial Equity in Workforce Development grant from the Associated Black Charities, Workforce Matters, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation¹. This award provides CSW the resources to focus and commit to becoming more intentional about this work through raising awareness of organizational behavior in relationship to racial bias and by developing shared organizational approaches.

The selected consultant will support and provide guidance on the following activities between January 2020 and June 2020:

1. Explore if, where and how structural racial bias exists within CSW organizational systems, including mission, values, proposal/client interactions, hiring practices, culture, etc.;
2. Develop strategies and tools to address internal organizational issues as identified in the self-assessment provided to grantees by Associated Black Charities (staff have already taken assessment and responses compiled); and
3. Develop strategies and tools to improve CSW's ability to work with communities of color.

1.2 CSW Background

CSW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, founded in 1991, that partners with foundations, government, business, and community leaders to serve as a catalyst for transformative change across economic, workforce, education, and community development research, policy, and practice.

Over the past several years, CSW has focused significant time and effort on working in-depth in several communities across the country to build collective agendas for shared prosperity. This work has included a wide range of stakeholder engagement, research, leadership development, convening, capacity building, policy advocacy, and evaluation – all aimed at reimagining everything about work and learning as a means to increase economic opportunity and sustainable prosperity for vulnerable people, companies, and communities. CSW's work is nationwide.

¹ For more information see the press release at: <http://www.abc-md.org/news-1/2019/7/18/advancing-racial-equity-in-workforce-development-grantees-announced>)

Equity is a core value that drives much of our work, but to date has focused on socio-economic inequities. As an organization, CSW has not emphasized a specific focus on race, deferring instead to general equity statements and vision, despite the communities we work in often being stratified by race. Additionally, communities we serve are increasingly eager to improve data disaggregated by race, address structural racism barriers at the systems level, and address the impacts of a rapidly evolving economy on communities of color. Our organization requires a deeper understanding of racial inequities to gain insights into the assumptions, worldviews, values, and biases which are outcomes from structural and systemic racism. Our team members are multigenerational and come to CSW from diverse careers in the private sector, state and local government, community-based organizations, and higher education. Our team members are also spread from coast to coast with diverse work concentrations and approaches. As a result, our institutional knowledge of racial equity is highly asymmetrical across our organization.

CSW has recently undergone a leadership change and is currently articulating and implementing new strategies to drive how we work. Fortunately, this project will take place concurrently with finalizing reframed strategies and during a time of organizational reflection and reexamination, providing an opportunity to have a significant impact on our internal processes and how we work.

CSW is based in Ann Arbor, Michigan and consists of 13 full-time staff, most of whom work virtually, with 6 staff located outside of Michigan. CSW is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors that includes executives from community colleges, universities, community-based organizations, foundations, and government. CSW's board is comprised of three committees: Governance, Finance & Audit, and Strategy. CSW is led by President & CEO Larry Good and the board chair is Christopher T. King. More information on CSW can be found at www.skilledwork.org.

1.3 Scope of Services

The selected consultant will conduct as well as provide strategy and design support related to the activities outlined in the RFQ purpose. This also includes:

- Assisting with laying the foundation for staff to engage in this work (through education on definitions, norms, and language as well as helping set expectations to create a climate of respectful and open dialogue during this process);
- Designing a process to do meaningful work with staff members in a virtual setting (limited resources to meet in person);
- Developing a potentially long-term, deeper working relationship with CSW that will provide opportunities to work together across other projects as we increase our commitment to racial equity in our work going forward; and
- Identifying other resources to support these internal goals and strategies beyond the length of this project.

1.4 Contract Term and Pricing

The period of performance under this contract will be for **six months and not to exceed \$10,000**. We recognize that our budget is limited as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and that the work presented will require more time and resources than those laid out in this RFQ. However, we hope that this initial project will serve only as a starting point for this work, and that there will be opportunities to engage this consultant in both future internally funded organizational work to expand on this project as well as

external awarded projects. This grant and this new partnership will allow us to more authentically increase our work in communities of color. We hope that the results of this work, however, will not only advance the work we conduct in communities of color but will have an impact that spans across all our work.

1.5 Responses

Interested consultants should send a 3-page maximum letter of interest with the following elements by December 2:

- Brief background on the consultant or firm;
- Description of experience working with organizations on similar racial equity projects;
- Approach to the project in the role as coach and consultant to support organizational change with special consideration paid to the virtual nature of our work. Please identify in your approach what areas from the purpose you plan to address and with what intensity, including specific milestones. (This may include attachments, which will be not subject to the page limit, of work products or project models from previous engagements.);
- References for three clients from the past five years of work; and
- Cost proposal. Please note that for consultants not based in Michigan, travel costs to Ann Arbor will need to be included. Please also note that if any educational materials are needed in your approach that are not open source, those costs will also need to be included.

Please submit proposals by email to lagood@skilledwork.org by **5:00 PM EDT on December 2nd, 2019**.

For questions, please contact Larry Good at lagood@skilledwork.org.