



Human Centered Design Consultant Request for Proposals

RFP for HCD Consultant Release: December 16, 2022
Submissions Due: January 17, 2023
Target Contract Start Date: Mid-February 2023

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Purpose of RFP

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (National Fund) seeks to engage an expert to co-design a multi-region effort to advance more equitable and human-centered workforce services and training programs. The selected consultant will assist the National Fund in refining the structure, objectives, and standards for the project; document key learnings; and expand the capacity of National Fund network to drive and support sustainable human-centered design (HCD) approaches. This consultant will help ensure that the regional HCD projects achieve a consistent level of quality by directly facilitating local HCD projects and/or by providing technical assistance to local staff and site-specific consultants on the HCD objectives and standards established by the National Fund.

Background

About the National Fund. The National Fund’s mission is to collaborate with workers, employers, and communities to advance a skilled workforce, promote good jobs, and invest in equitable outcomes. We lead a dynamic national network of over 30 regional workforce collaboratives that convene cross-sector stakeholders and align resources toward shared goals. We also connect employers to peer learning and coaching for effective and equitable job quality and career advancement practices. We believe that access to ideas, inspiration, and resources at a national level is key to advancing outcomes at a local level.

The National Fund is a recognized leader in establishing and scaling effective strategies that improve workforce and workplace outcomes. In addition, our regional workforce collaboratives — philanthropic funders, public workforce development boards, United Ways, and other workforce organizations — wield considerable financial, political, and/or social capital resources to promote economic prosperity in their local communities. Together, we strive to eliminate structural racial inequities by working towards three goals:

- All workers have resources required to thrive.
- Race does not dictate employment outcomes.
- All jobs are good jobs.

In 2019, the National Fund established a [solutions framework](#) that provides our network with a theoretical approach and practices to improve outcomes for workers of color, businesses, and communities. We approach workforce challenges through four solutions:

- Equip Workers for Success
- Activate Employers to Make Jobs Better
- Change Systems to Improve Outcomes
- Co-Invest for Impact

National Fund & HCD. Centering worker voice in the design of workforce programs and workplaces is an essential practice change for achieving all three of our long-term goals. From 2020–2022, we worked with five of our collaboratives to help employers use HCD to engage their employees to improve workplace practices. Through these efforts, we released a guide in early 2022, [Designing a Human-Centered Workplace](#), to help other employers and industry partnerships utilize this effective approach.

With generous support from The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, we seek to establish or expand efforts to bring HCD to workforce services, training programs, and systems across our network. Several regional workforce collaboratives have redesigned programs through a human-centered lens, and many others have expressed interest in adopting this approach. We believe that workforce services and human-centered designed training programs are more likely to offer equitable pathways to good jobs and careers, helping to ensure that race does not dictate employment outcomes. Additionally, centering job seekers and workers has the potential to help local leaders

recognize and respond to systems that keep workers from the resources required to thrive in their careers.

The National Fund will support up to five regional workforce collaboratives to adopt a human-centered approach that advances equitable outcomes by redesigning key services and programs. Participating collaboratives will receive a flexible grant, customized consultation, support, and peer learning opportunities to use HCD to improve at least one program or service. Selected collaboratives will participate in a brief planning phase followed by an implementation phase that is approximately 12 months in length. The National Fund's selected HCD consultant will help ensure that the planning phase builds and assesses the capacity of local sites to move to implementation.

During the planning phase, the National Fund and HCD consultant will determine the most effective structure for HCD facilitation and technical assistance, which may be one HCD consultant for all sites, the National Fund's HCD consultant working with one or more site-specific HCD consultants, or a different structure. The capacity of the HCD consultant and selected collaboratives, the presence of existing relationships with site-specific HCD consultants, and the philosophy and experience of those experts will inform this decision. If it is determined that the collaborative will work with a site-specific consultant, the National Fund's HCD consultant will be involved in the selection and engagement process.

Key Objectives/Scope of Services

- Build capacity of National Fund staff to lead and support its network to adopt human-centered approaches to training and workforce services beyond the project period. (Any training or curriculum developed for National Fund staff to implement with members of its network will be branded and owned by the National Fund).
- Provide training to regional workforce collaboratives, including those not selected for the project, to establish a baseline understand of human-centered design and how it can drive equitable workforce outcomes.
- In partnership with the National Fund, refine the structure, objectives, and standards for the project. Ensure that the project is aligned with the National Fund's mission, strategic goals, racial equity & inclusion values, and commitment to trauma-informed practices. Connect to and build upon the National Fund's existing knowledge and frameworks to help articulate and document the National Fund's approach to HCD. See the following related National Fund resources for reference:
 - [Advancing Workforce Equity](#)
 - [Designing a Human-Centered Workplace](#)
 - [A Trauma-Informed Approach to Workforce](#)

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- Co-design and co-facilitate proposal preparation workshop for collaboratives interested in applying for the opportunity.
- Assist in developing a Request for Proposals, proposal review, and selection of collaboratives that will participate in the project.
- Co-develop and implement plan to support selected collaboratives during the initial planning phase and help create criteria for moving collaboratives to the implementation phase.
- Provide training, technical assistance, and coaching across the local projects to ensure a high-quality standard for HCD that centers equity and results in tangible improvements to workforce training and services.
- Oversee and verify that local sites have the capacity (knowledge, expertise, time, and skills) required to adopt a human-centered mindset, embed human-centered practices into their organization(s), and design and test prototypes for program improvement.
- In partnership with the National Fund, support the development of project learning objectives in alignment with the National Fund's theory of change and emerging learning agenda. Ensure that collaboratives and site-specific consultants (if applicable) understand and successfully collect and report information to support documentation of learning across the project.
- Develop content for one written product, to be released and branded by the National Fund, that highlights key learnings and promising practices identified through the project.

Submission Instructions and Requirements

If you are interested in serving as the National Fund's HCD consultant for this project, submit the following required information to Brittany Corde at bcorde@nationalfund.org by **8:00pm ET Tuesday, January 17, 2023**. Submissions must be no longer than five pages, single-spaced total, excluding budget.

Questions about the RFP

Please submit questions about the RFP to Brittany Corde at bcorde@nationalfund.org. We will attempt to address questions in a timely manner, however, please allow three business days for a response. Note that the National Fund is closed from December 23rd through January 3rd, and we will not be checking or responding to emails during this time.

Required Information

1. **Overview of Qualifications.** Tell us why you/your organization is well-equipped to meet the objectives of this grant. Include the following information in your overview:
 - a. Outline previous experience leading and facilitating HCD projects and providing HCD training. Be sure to include HCD projects focused on workforce development services, training programs, and service delivery systems. Identify key lessons learned from previous projects that have informed your approach. Share evidence of your HCD expertise and skills.
 - b. Identify guiding principles or frameworks that you have used for previous HCD projects and whether you would apply them to this project.
 - c. Describe your experience centering racial equity in HCD and similar projects and with trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.
 - d. Describe your project management skills and tools, including how you successfully navigated delays or obstacles in previous project(s).
 - e. List of personnel to be assigned to the project, with a summary of their qualifications.
 - f. If applicable, identify other current HCD projects you are currently supporting.

2. **Proposed Approach & Activities.** Describe the key activities you will implement to achieve the objectives listed above. Your proposed approach and description of activities will be considered tentative, and the selected HCD consultant will finalize a workplan in collaboration with the National Fund. Include the following information in your proposed approach and description of activities:
 - a. Proposed timeline and project milestones for the planning and implementation phases.
 - b. Your recommended structure for HCD facilitation and technical assistance, which may be one HCD consultant for all sites, the National Fund's HCD consultant working with one or more site-specific HCD consultants, or a different structure. Provide your rationale for this recommendation.
 - c. How you propose to assess the readiness of the selected collaboratives to move from planning to implementation phase.
 - d. How you propose to provide training and technical assistance to the collaboratives and their site-specific consultants (if applicable).
 - e. How you propose to collaborate with the National Fund and collaboratives to document lessons learned.
 - f. Estimated total number of hours you expect to dedicate to the project on a weekly or monthly basis for both the planning phase and the implementation phase.

3. **Budget.** Provide a deliverables-based budget and the associated costs (e.g., completion of planning phase and a suggested dollar amount). The National Fund reserves the right to negotiate the final amount of the budget to ensure we are working within the limits of our grant funding.

4. As stated above, the National Fund will engage the selected consultant to finalize the project's structure, including using multiple local consultants for site-specific support. Please indicate whether your/your organization has the desire and capacity to provide direct support for collaboratives. Our consultant selection will not depend on their response to this question. Please do not include the costs of providing direct support to sites in your budget.

Follow-Up Information or Meeting

The National Fund may request additional information or a follow-up conversation with applicant.

Selection Criteria

After submission of proposals, the selection committee, comprised of key National Fund staff, will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

<p>Qualifications</p>	<p>Must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive experience guiding groups through human-centered design processes to improve program design and delivery. • Demonstrated expertise in HCD methodology and principles and effectiveness in implementing HCD. • Excellent organizational, project management, facilitation, and communications skills. • Demonstrated commitment to centering racial equity and inclusion in HCD approaches. <p>Nice to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with workforce service or training organizations, especially leaders of systems. • Familiarity with trauma-informed, resilience-building practices in human service delivery.
<p>Proposed activities and budget</p>	<p>Must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulates how the proposed activities will support key objectives of the grant. Proposed activities reflect a realistic allocation of resources to perform the proposed activities. • Clearly centers racial equity and inclusion in the proposed approach. • Budget is reasonable and aligned with the proposed activities. • Expresses an understanding and enthusiasm for the collaboration and partnership required for this project.

National Fund Contract Process

Following an agreed upon budget, the selected HCD consultant or organization will need to provide the following to Brittany Corde at bcorde@nationalfund.org:

- Current W-9.
- Name, e-mail address of project leads.
- Name, e-mail address of signatory authorized to approve contract.

National Fund staff will send a draft contract for your review. Our standard contract template can be found here: [National Fund Professional Services Agreement](#) (please NOTE the language included in this contract template is for reference only and is subject to change).