



## **Senior Communications Consultant**

The Aspen Institute [Forum for Community Solutions](#) (FCS) is seeking a Senior Communications Consultant (the consultant) to develop communications strategies and perform a wide range of communications activities. The consultant is the primary communications person at FCS, and supports all internal and external communications activities. The consultant reports to the Managing Director of FCS.

The initial period of this contract will be one year, with the potential for extension. The funding available for this position is \$7,500 per month (plus expenses for any required travel), with the understanding that this contract will entail about 30 hours per week of work on average. FCS has its main office in Washington DC, but the consultant may be located anywhere in the US. FCS will consider individuals or firms for this SOW.

The consultant must have considerable prior experience across a broad range of typical non-profit communications activities, and must have led communications strategy development processes in the past. Prior work on the issues that FCS focuses on, and/or work in social justice-related communications is a bonus, but not required. Women, people of color, and other minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Resume and materials are due by January 15, 2021; we prefer the consultant start no later than March 2021. No emails, calls or questions, please.

### **FCS Communications Goals:**

We seek to have these impacts with our communications work:

- Use communications to meet the mission and goals of the organization.
- Be a part of the narrative change happening in the US on social issues related to our mission; build narrative change as a strategy for social change.
- Promote and get the word out about our own work and the work of our partners and of the networks we manage; increase understanding of our organizational purpose and the programs we conduct.
- Communicate based on our organizational values and in ways that promote our organizational values.
- Expand reach of our messages to new audiences.
- Support fund raising goals; increase our ability to raise funds for our programs and to regrant to communities and partners

## **Consultant Activities**

### **External (Public) Communications:**

**Manage Publications/Reports Process** – Copy/Proof, Find/Select images if needed, manage approval process, manage designers, publish and promote new reports. 5-10 reports per year.

**Blogs & Resource Pages** – Write or coordinate others to write blogs to amplify our work and partner work, increase timeliness/freshness of resources such as OY/Covid resource page

**Website Updates & Maintenance** - minor updates to site as needed; post new reports, events, etc.; Manage maintenance contract/process; Lead periodic content and look refresh process; track metrics

**Blog Cross-Posting** – get FCS content posted to related/partner organization blogs

**Email List Newsletters / List Management** – Monthly short newsletter with generalized content to our email list; support other email list one-off announcements as needed; Maintain 'core' email lists in email list platform; Track metrics

**Social Media** - Ongoing posting – at current level of effort – mostly Twitter and occasional Facebook and Instagram; Revise/update overall SM strategy; consider value of LinkedIn as an option; Track metrics

**OYF Convening-Related Communications (2 per year; currently virtual):** Pre- and post-event communications to attendees and public

**FCS Digital Events:** promote digital events through SM, email newsletters, etc.

**Press Relations/Earned Media** – get FCS into national and/or local media

**Design:** lite graphic design to enhance social media, newsletters, presentations, blogs and website (if consultant is not a designer themselves, increase use of graphics artists to increase visual impact of all FCS comms assets)

**Branding/Style guides:** potential update and codification

### **Internal Communications & Strategy:**

**FCS Communications Strategy:** lead FCS team in creating an organization-wide comms strategy/plan; create sub-plans for social media and website content refresh

**Coordinate with AI Comms staff** - work with AI central comms team to create awareness of FCS content across AI-run comms platforms (web, SM, newsletters, Ideas magazine, etc.)

**Organizing Communications** – Codify management of communications assets (Twitter, Instagram, Google Analytics, etc.); manage and organize comms-related access internal file share for FCS staff/consultants to access

**Maximize cross-posting/utilization of FCS content:** Re-use of content from our events, written publications, etc. for resharing, retweeting, etc. in multiple ways. Maximize content from convenings; support turning convening sessions into blogs, etc.

**Speech/presentation writing:** assist FCS leadership by writing/co-writing for speaking engagements.

**Create visual presentations** for FCS leadership

**Document management and promote use of comms-related tech tools:** use of alternates to email; document management; project-mgt software options

### **Program-Communications Integration:**

**OYF Site-Level Comms outreach/coordination and uplift of more local stories:** increase reach of OYF and movement wide comms by creating and maintaining contacts at site level. Includes lifting up the work that key partners are doing on issues we care about that are adjacent to our work but not in our specific wheelhouse (like defunding police or women's health).

**OY Movement-level Comms Coordination:** liaison with other Opportunity Youth (OY) movement lead orgs to create more efficient and informative national presence re: OY

**OYF Site-Level Comms TA:** provide templates, guides, other supports to Opportunity Youth Forum site comms people to increase their comms capacity. Promote/help increase narrative change as a specific comms strategy at the network and site levels.

**Deliver on comms-related grant deliverables:** support in meeting comms-related grant deliverables

### **Qualifications:**

- Must have led multiple communications strategy planning processes, preferably for non-profit clients.
- Must have extensive prior experience and the skills needed to perform the full range of typical non-profit communications activities (described above), including having:
  - Exceptional writing, editing, and verbal skills. Ability to write effectively for a variety of different formats and for different intended audiences.
  - Project management skills: ability to work with a wide range of people on the FCS staff and at our partner and grantee organizations, to keep them focused on communications needs and tasks and on time

- Track-record of success working with new and traditional media
- Earned media/press relations experience
- Experience, interest and ability in working with program staff to support communications abilities of partner organizations
- Competence in the use of standard office software products: Excel, Word, PowerPoint; experience with Wordpress or similar web publishing platform; experience with standard email newsletter production platforms and list management.
- Some minimal graphic design/image manipulation skills. Position does not require advanced graphics/layout skills.
- Creative problem solver; innovator. Ability to translate program-related materials and activities into communications opportunities.
- Self-starter and self-managing

It is not required, but we would prefer a consultant with some familiarity with the issues FCS works on: place-based collaborations, the education and workforce needs of young adults ('opportunity youth'), equity, racial and economic justice.

#### **Contract Parameters:**

- 30 hours of work per week are expected, and the contract pays \$7,500 per month.
- The contract is for an initial one year commitment
- Individuals or firms may apply
- The consultant is the primary communications support for FCS; however, a Program Associate can provide 10 hours/week of assistance on basic communications tasks (eg. social media). FCS is a program of the Aspen Institute, and very limited additional supports may be available from AI communications staff, including report design and some graphics work.
- FCS has its main offices in Washington DC, but the consultant maybe located anywhere in the US. The consultant must already be allowed to work in the US.
- Infrequent travel to DC may be required if the consultant is located elsewhere. The consultant will be expected to attend our twice yearly major events (post-COVID), which are held in the Spring and Fall. Required travel expenses will be covered on top of the contract.
- The preferred start date is no later than February 2021; however, if a ramp up period would be needed to reach the full 30 hours/week, we are open to discussion on this point.

#### **Submission:**

To be considered, please submit the following to [Monique.miles@aspeninst.org](mailto:Monique.miles@aspeninst.org) no later than January 15, 2021:

- Your resume (include in your resume a link to any online portfolio you may have related to design or other visual work)
- A cover letter / narrative, that does not exceed three pages, that highlights:
  - Experience in performing the required activities
  - Experience creating organization-wide communications strategies: please briefly give at least two examples

- Any experience communicating about the core areas of focus of FCS (i.e. equity; social, racial, economic justice; advocacy; opportunity youth; education and workforce issues, collective impact; community engagement; etc.)
- What interests you about this specific consulting project?
- Confirmation of:
  - your available start date,
  - your bid for the work or acceptance of the stated maximum contract,
  - your understanding that 30 hours of work per week is expected, and
  - any other important considerations we should be aware of
- At least one example each of:
  - Writing sample: longer form, ie. an annual report or longer program description or program summary piece
  - Writing: short form, ie. a blog post
  - OPTIONAL: Design examples – a report or brochure; infographic or other illustration/graphic

NOTE: Attachments over 10MB are too large to be delivered through the Aspen Institute's e-mail system. Preferably, please send links to specific items in your portfolio, or use a service like Dropbox or Google Docs.

- Two references that can speak to your ability to perform the activities listed here, as well as conduct communications strategy processes.

If a firm (or group of individuals) is applying, a clear statement of division of duties within team members should be provided.

**No emails, calls or questions, please.**

### **About the Forum for Community Solutions and the Opportunity Youth Forum:**

The mission of the Forum for Community Solutions is to support community collaboration - including collective impact - that enables communities to effectively address their most pressing challenges. FCS works to accomplish this mission by pursuing four complementary strategies including: 1) building awareness by documenting and lifting up proven strategies and stories of success; 2) mobilizing stakeholders through knowledge and network development; 3) removing barriers by advocating for effective policy; and, 4) catalyzing investment by encouraging funder partnerships.

The Opportunity Youth Forum (OYF) is the first funding collaborative launched by FCS; its overall goal is supporting a network of nearly three dozen urban, rural, and tribal communities to design and scale multiple reconnection pathways that achieve better outcomes in education and employment for opportunity youth (young adults 16-24 that are neither in school nor working). By focusing on the development of educational and career pathways, the OYF seeks to interrupt the multi-generational cycle of poverty that undermines the vibrancy and economic health of communities. Two additional key goals of OYF are 1) to build strong evidence of success for utilizing a 'collective impact'

community collaboration strategy to build and deepen pathways for opportunity youth, and 2) to make the case for increased adoption of collective impact and community collaboration as an effective model for community change, and 3) to begin to scale what works within OYF and other communities through a policy/advocacy and communications/narrative change strategies that expands interest in and support of opportunity youth.

At the center of OYF efforts is an emphasis on youth led change; OYF collaboratives seek to authentically and meaningfully incorporate youth voice, decision-making and expertise in designing solutions to the challenges youth face. On the national level, FCS is deeply committed to advocating for policy and practice changes in partnership with opportunity youth, and has engaged former and current opportunity youth as thought partners since the launch of the initiative.

[www.aspencommunitysolutions.org](http://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org)

### **The Aspen Institute**

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. FCS has been a policy program of the Aspen Institute since 2012.

[www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org)