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Partners for Rural Transformation

Request for Proposals:

Communications and Fund Development Campaign Consulting Partner

Create Merged Campaign Model via Communications Efforts and Strategies to Secure Investor Capital for Six Community Development Financial Institutions working in Persistent Poverty Regions

Responses due by: August 31, 2022

Background

Perhaps nowhere else in the United States is the structural exclusion by place and race more self-evident than in persistent poverty America. Of the 395 persistent poverty counties, 8 out of 10 are non-metro – home to nearly seven million people. Additionally, almost all rural majority black, Latino, and Native American counties are persistently poor. Notably, a significant overlap exists between persistent poverty and the nation’s highest county unemployment rates and unbanked households. Likewise, a strong relationship between persistent poverty and low health outcomes also occurs. Eighty-five percent of the nation’s persistent poverty counties rank in the bottom half of counties in health outcomes in each respective state as measured by the County Health Rankings.

Guided by a vision of a future where persistent poverty no longer exists, six Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) located in and serving regions with a high prevalence of persistent poverty have been working together for several years to advance the vision through the Partners for Rural Transformation. Collectively, the Partners for Rural Transformation serve 75% of the nation’s persistent poverty counties with a diverse set of development finance approaches informed by the voices and priorities of local people. Over the last ten years, the partner CDFIs have deployed over \$2 billion and have changed the lives of millions of people.

Purpose of Request for Proposals (RFP)

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a consulting partner(s) (herein “consultant”) who will assist the Partners for Rural Transformation (herein “PRT”) in creating robust communications campaigns with the ultimate development of increased investor capital investment. The consultant will conduct basic public relations research upon identifying current and potential

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<https://storiesofruralamerica.com/>



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communications strategies on proposed models, provide feedback surrounding the possible expansion of PRT communications methods, and create promotional materials and techniques to guide PRT to attract and secure appropriate investor capital. These strategies are optimally enhancements of existing PRT social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#)) and websites ([ruraltransformation.org](#) and [storiesofruralamerica.com](#)) efforts and themes to shape our fund development exertions.

Communications x Fund Development Structure Consultation

Support PRT in creating a series of compelling “mini-campaigns” – communications strategies focused on a selection of generalized social issues tailored to the persistent poverty rural American perspective and plight. These strategies should be leveraged, or assisted in part, by the current influence of the [Everything Else: Stories of Rural America](#) story map. Development of successful campaigns will include the following:

1. Evaluating the capacity of PRT’s current communications and fund development structures in relation to properly leveraging our reach and investment potential
2. Creating sustainable campaign analysis tools to 1) determine the most effective methods for potential investors; 2) create a diversified communications profile to support the capitalization and visibility of PRT’s six CDFIS, and 3) track campaign results and metrics
3. Providing regular feedback and support to the Development Working Group on case materials as they are developed.
4. Providing meaningful feedback regarding the long-term operation of PRT Communications and Fund Development.

Scope of Work

PRT seeks a consultant with experience and expertise in marketing and communications planning (print, digital, and social media strategy), media relations, and overall evaluation of communications efforts. The work will require close coordination and cooperation with PRT’s Director, Jose Quinonez, and PRT’s Project Manager of Communications and Fund Development, Essence Smith.

Our primary goals are to: raise the profile of PRT and effectively communicate PRT’s mission, create effective communications campaigns to attract a bevy of focused investors, and educate those outside of our similar industries about the work of PRT and rural America.

Deliverables

- A minimum of three (3) online-based mini-campaigns relating to a series of social issues applicable to and/or specific to persistent poverty rural America



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- A minimum of three (3) investor demographic/interest profiles to support the appropriate number of mini-campaigns
- At least one strategy to increase the visibility/leverage the impact and potential of [Everything Else: Stories of Rural America](#) story map.
- A comprehensive and strong statement detailing coordination between proposed communications strategies and attraction of investor engagement and capital.
- Campaign Co-Creation
 - Bring our Stories of Rural America to the next level by elevating its presence across existing and upcoming channels. Addressing misconceptions about rural poverty with real stories grounded in lived experiences will be key to advancing PRT's community engagement and wealth strategies and creating a narrative of opportunity for people living in persistent poverty areas.
 - Influence key decision-makers with a narrative that replaces the widely accepted, inaccurate, and incomplete storylines about persistent poverty areas (PPAs) that currently prevail.
- Serve as the accelerators for change and advance a strong and cohesive new narrative by:
 - Create New Narrative: Conduct an alignment of analysis across partners, develop baseline surveys to articulate the existing dominant narrative, and develop digital media for civic and political engagement to communicate the new narrative.
 - Design Narrative Interventions: Conduct collaborative research and analysis to identify key audiences, and find ways to amplify the narrative. Develop training and peer-to-peer learning, and conduct capacity-building and movement-building activities to introduce and adopt the new narrative.
 - Deploy New Narrative: Commission papers from leading thinkers to effectively deploy the new narrative in many places to many audiences.
- An asset-based narrative in the form of a white paper, or toolkit about “investment risk” in persistent poverty counties, developed in partnership with PRT members and for an external audience, employing the narrative that investing in persistent poverty counties is an “investment opportunity”.
- A creation of a dependable media contact list of reporters and writers with relevant beats and subject matter.
- An in-depth branding exercise based on PRT's current mission, profile, and individual CDFI projects/products designed to be incorporated into PRT's external posture.
- An increased recognition of PRT's brand and mission amongst stakeholders, potential investors, and tertiary consumers (based on research and metrics) in the realm of projecting the PRT voice to external channels ([see PRT Forbes EQ flight](#)).
- A training with PRT's Fund Development and Communications Working Group teams to fully educate on the campaigns, branding, and any further media updates, in an effort to keep all Partners consistent with content.



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Proposals

Respondents should propose a consulting plan, timeline, and budget. The proposal will also discuss the plan for working with the CDFI partners, appropriately addressing the challenges of working with a nationwide group of rurally located stakeholders. Each proposal should include the following sections:

- Cover letter
- Proposed project design and timeline with proposed benchmarks and deliverables
- Statement of qualifications of key staff who will be executing the project including:
 - Background working with nonprofit organizations/CDFIs and in persistent poverty communities
 - Experience creating communications strategies campaigns, especially linking them to fund development efforts
 - Resume and/or C.V. of each member of the consulting team
- Estimated budget (including fees and expenses)
- A minimum of two (2) samples of similar and relevant work
- References from a minimum of three previous clients for similar and relevant work

Strong consideration will be given to applicants with diverse consulting teams based in or that have experience working in rural communities and regions of persistent poverty. The budget allocated to this project is \$100,000.

Project Period: October 3, 2022 – January 1, 2023

Timing:

- Proposals will be accepted beginning August 1, 2022
- Closing date is August 31, 2022
- Successful applicant will be notified before September 14, 2022

Proposal Submission/Questions

Proposals should be submitted as single .pdf documents via email by close of business (5pm Eastern Time) on August 31, 2022. Partners for Rural Transformation/Fahe is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Please direct proposals or questions to Essence Smith, Project Manager, Communications and Fund Development (essence@pfrt.org) copying Jose Quinonez, Director, Partners for Rural Transformation (jose@pfrt.org).

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