



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

Technical assistance in designing and conducting data collection from focal audiences and stakeholders to measure their use of SPLC's information and change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or intention related to three areas of SPLC's advocacy work:

- civic education and training resources to counter mis/disinformation and lack of information about elections and voting;
- data analysis "to track, monitor and hold accountable hate groups and extremists" for countering and preventing related harms; and
- civic education, policy reports, and litigation strategies aimed at decriminalization and criminal legal system reform.

Issued: Monday, April 29, 2024

Due: Friday, May 24, 2024, by 5 p.m. PST

Contact:

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1. Background and Purpose

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a nonpartisan national civil rights organization with offices in five southern states and the District of Columbia. Our organization has grown substantially over the last several years, with staff nearly doubling in size.

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

During the last three years, the organization has been prioritizing and deepening its work in key areas, launching new initiatives and increasing organizational alignment. By articulating five long-term goals, the SPLC expects to strengthen its organizational capacity along with an increase in the impact of its work in the communities we serve.

To better understand our contribution to these long-term goals, we are seeking a qualified research institution or subject matter experts to provide technical assistance in evaluating advocacy campaign communication and audience engagement. The technical assistance will advise and collaborate with SPLC staff in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) unit to refine their research plans to collect and analyze information from focal audiences and stakeholders to measure their use of SPLC's information resources and change in knowledge, attitude, and behavior or intention to act on matters related to elections and voting rights; countering and prevention of hate and extremism harms; and decriminalization and criminal system reform in the Deep South. The Center would like this technical assistance through November 1, 2024.

2. Who May Respond

The SPLC seeks a diversity of partners with expertise in evaluating civic engagement, advocacy campaign communications, and audience analysis. SPLC is seeking a technical assistance partner with expertise researching the effect of advocacy information or civic engagement communications on people's behavior (actions) and perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of such information. Prospective partners include but are not limited to small businesses and firms owned by women and people of color. In addition, we seek partners who have deep respect for and demonstrated expertise in:

- A. Serving the diverse and complex communities we represent and serve.
- B. Working with large and complex, social sector organizations with offices in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, and Washington DC.
- C. Engaging staff at all levels of our organization with respect; and
- D. Assembling an experienced, diverse team that includes qualitative and quantitative researchers with specialized expertise in evaluating community engagement, public health and safety information use, and advocacy communication.

3. About the SPLC

Founded in 1971, the SPLC is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan organization that envisions a world where everyone can thrive, and the ideals of equity, justice, and liberation are a reality for all.

Theory of change

To protect our democracy and the rights of exploited and oppressed communities in the South, we must ensure that governments and institutions are responsive to the needs, hopes, and futures of all. We must create a culture in the South that allows all residents to thrive. We must dismantle systems that oppress the most vulnerable and deny accountability for human rights violations. To achieve institutional effectiveness, we need to partner with and support communities that demand accountability and take action to achieve change. We recognize that there are many entangled barriers to these demands. The SPLC's role is to overturn and eliminate barriers and align ourselves with communities to demand and effectuate change.

We have identified five areas of work that offer the greatest opportunities to achieve our mission. We have the following long-term impact goals:

Organizational goal: Increase power and capacity for multi-racial, inclusive democracy in the South.

Four programmatic impact goals:

1. Strengthen democracy by increasing voter turnout, challenging voter suppression measures, and ensuring representational diversity.
2. Relegate white supremacy out of the mainstream, reduce its impact on American democracy, and prevent violent harms inflicted on Black and Brown people.
3. Reduce the incarcerated and detained population by decriminalizing and decarcerating Black and Brown people.
4. Eradicate poverty by expanding access to opportunity and eliminating racial economic inequality.

The Center selected eight impact goal indicators to measure its progress against these long-term goals. We are developing the tools and research design to measure each indicator.

This Request for Proposals focuses on three indicators and respective impact goals:

“1.4 Extent of people using SPLC’s civic education and training resources to counter misinformation, disinformation, and the lack of information about elections, voting, and other democratic participation.”

“2.2 Extent to which SPLC’s data analysis “to track, monitor and hold accountable hate groups and extremists” is used by allies and partners involved in countering and preventing related harms”.

“3.5 Increase in utilization of SPLC’s public education, policy reports, and litigation strategies for policy proposals, community-partner advocacy, and legal actions.”

The SPLC's efforts towards these goals involves civic education through a variety of media. This

includes research reports, feature stories, resource guides, community town hall meetings, webinars, videos, stakeholder trainings, information briefings with coalition partners, and community lawyering. SPLC's information resources are usually focused on key audiences in five Southern states (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS): Black and Brown communities, young voters, educators, policymakers, community interest groups, and attorneys for civil rights and legal aid.

Towards the first impact goal, strengthening democracy, SPLC aims to increase voter registration and turnout – including by decreasing barriers to the ballot. More broadly, SPLC aims to expand civic engagement of Black and Brown communities, while establishing SPLC as a go-to resource for voter education and resources. SPLC's information resources include voter guides (specific for each state), voter education materials for events (including modified voter guides and QR code palm cards), fact sheets to counter mis/disinformation during elections, and events to educate communities about election rules and voter rights.

Towards impact goal 2, relegate white supremacy out of the mainstream, SPLC is building community resiliency against dis- and misinformation and conspiracy theories. This involves engaging in civic education initiatives particularly in the South to counter political violence. SPLC's researchers detect warning signs through its research and using data science to track white supremacist actors across the digital frontier. SPLC's reporting exposes activities of extremist organizations and actors that inflict harm including coordinated voter suppression efforts. SPLC supports grassroots partners with resources to intervene early to prevent extremist violence.

Towards impact goal 3, reduce the incarcerated and detained population, SPLC conducts research and leads impact litigation. Advocacy focuses on reforming policies that lead to the incarceration of children and teens for minor crimes and school-related offenses. SPLC's research, litigation, policy advocacy, and community resources aim to promote rational policies and laws that keep communities safe while vastly shrinking the prison and detainee population and reducing the social and economic impact of mass incarceration on vulnerable communities.

4. Proposal Content: Qualifications, Scope of Work, and Budget

Responsive proposals must be submitted as a single PDF document, and include the following:

A. Statement of Qualifications

1. Provide a brief overview of your capacity to perform this research.
2. Detail your experience in providing technical assistance on evaluation and research to entities in the not-for-profit sector, as well as organizations of comparable mission to SPLC (civil and human rights, progressive, social justice focused).
3. Experience in researching or evaluating advocacy campaigns and civic engagement information.
4. Detail your experience in survey design and sampling.
5. Experience in collecting and analyzing data from interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, or other qualitative or quantitative research.
6. Experience in conducting statistical analysis of communication campaign results.

7. Ability to collaborate with SPLC's teams and key stakeholders to ensure their analysis supports the organization's goals.

B. Statement of Proposed Work and Deliverables

To address SPLC's needs for technical assistance on three indicators, **SPLC is seeking a consultancy to assist in developing data collection methods, tools (surveys, focus groups, etc.), sampling guidelines, and conducting data analysis.** SPLC's MEAL unit has drafted preliminary data collection plans and tools for each of the three indicators. The technical assistance consultancy will assist collaboratively with SPLC's MEAL staff in refining the methods and tools to ensure they are appropriate to studying the focal audiences for the forms of information resources being disseminated. SPLC is requesting proposals to provide technical assistance supporting three main components in developing the indicator methodologies and subsequent data collection:

1. Develop data collection methods and tools – Consult on designing surveys, focus groups, or interviews to ask relevant audience segments about knowledge, attitude, behavior or intention to act in after receiving SPLC information.
2. Define sampling plans and strategy – design or provide guidelines for sampling the specific segments of focal audiences in five states in the Deep South: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi and.
3. Assist with data analysis – to establish procedures for routine processes to clean the data, aggregate individual responses, analyze patterns, and report results in a way that enables replication over time; assist in carrying out those processes.

SPLC is offering to share information about its draft indicator data collection designs and tools upon request. This will be delivered in a webinar. Prospective applicants may send an email stating interest, questions, and a request to view the draft indicator data collection materials during an informational webinar. Email the request to steven.lize@splcenter.org by Friday, May 17, 2024.

Please describe in your proposal how you will provide technical assistance to support SPLC's MEAL staff in refining the indicator methodologies, conducting the data collection and analysis, and reporting the results. Include a four-month (18 week) work plan describing the logical sequence of objectives, main activities, milestones, key deliverables, and timeline. Finally, provide a budget based on the proposed workplan.

C. Proposed Budget & Timeline:

The start date of the technical assistance contract will be as soon as July 1, 2024. The end date is November 1, 2024. The key deliverables for each component should be within the following timeframe:

- July: Planning phase. Review SPLC's draft data collection methodologies for each indicator; examine samples of SPLC's information resources; interviews and meetings with key stakeholders in SPLC; finalize data collection methodologies.

- August-September: Data collection phase. Implement data collection plans.
- October: Analysis and reporting phase. Compile data, carry out data cleaning and quality control, analyze results, and provide reports.

5. Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Timeline for this RFP

SPLC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. Responses will be evaluated along several dimensions including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Statement of Qualifications
- B. Understanding and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- C. References
- D. Statement of Proposed Work*
- E. Proposed Budget & Timeline
- F. Interview by SPLC

*NOTE: Only proposals for original work that will be customized for and specific to SPLC will be considered.

RFP timeline:

- April 29, 2024: RFP is released.
- May 24, 2024: RFP responses are due.
- May 28 – June 10, 2024: We will invite a limited number of finalists to deliver a virtual presentation.
- June 17 – 28, 2024: Second interview if determined necessary.
- July 1, 2024: We intend to award a contract.

6. Process for Proposal Submissions

- A. Inquiries. Please direct all questions regarding this RFP to steven.lize@splcenter.org no later than 5 p.m. PST on May 17, 2024.
- B. Closing date. Proposals are due by 5 p.m. PST on May 24, 2024.
- C. Conditions of the proposals. All costs incurred in preparing a response to this RFP, including costs associated with interviews or in-person visits, are the bidder's sole responsibility and will not be reimbursed by the SPLC.
- D. Submission instructions. Proposals must be a single PDF document. The file name must include the contact person name. Email your proposal to steven.lize@splcenter.org. Hard copy, U.S. mail submissions will NOT be accepted.