



Request for Proposals Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant(s)

CommonBond Communities (“CommonBond”) invites proposals from qualified persons or firms interested in entering into a contract to perform consulting services related to diversity, equity and inclusion as described in Attachment A.

CommonBond Communities

CommonBond believes that home is the foundation for everything in life. Since 1971, CommonBond Communities has provided homes and social services support for those most in need. CommonBond was founded as a response to the racial, social and economic inequities of the time. Nearly 50 years later, these still exist and our mission is more relevant than ever.

We provide homes and services for nearly 12,000 people every year. We develop, own, or manage more than 6,800 rental apartments and townhomes located in 56 cities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Our staff and residents express rich diversity in race, ethnicity, country of birth, socioeconomic and educational background, sexual orientation, gender expression and myriad other attributes, which we view as a source of strength. For more information about CommonBond and those we serve, please visit our website:

www.commonbond.org

CommonBond’s Current Investment in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work

Over the past several years, CommonBond has invested in a number of initiatives focused on improving the organization’s diversity, equity, and inclusion practices: This has included a variety of inward-facing initiatives including; launching an Inclusion Council; maintaining a managers’ toolkit; implementing the Intercultural Development Inventory with staff; offering trainings, conversation circles, and a book club on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics; and more.

Outward facing work on diversity, equity and inclusion has included modifying our tenant selection plans to reduce barriers to housing for those with criminal backgrounds, reporting employment data through the Wilder-Itasca Employer Dashboard and creating a Board Associates program, aimed to expand the diversity of perspectives on CommonBond’s Board of Directors to include younger individuals offering an opportunity for influence, network-building, and leadership experience to those who might not be traditionally considered for Board candidacy.

Increasing Our Commitment

CommonBond wishes to deepen the impact of our diversity, equity and inclusion work, knit our various initiatives together more seamlessly and explore additional opportunities to influence our own organizational culture and those with whom we work. To that end, and with the help of the Wilder Foundation, CommonBond has sketched out a scope of work attached as attachment A. CommonBond is seeking to contract with a person or team to guide and assist in this diversity, equity, and inclusion work on a long-term basis. The selected consultant(s) will “embed” with the organization, report directly to the CEO, work closely with the Inclusion Council to accomplish what is described in attachment A, or refine that over time. We understand that this will require sustained commitment and therefore, the consultant is expected to be engaged for at least three years.

Proposals

If you or your firm is interested in providing services to CommonBond, please submit the following:

1. **Background Information.** A cover letter or executive summary with the name and contact information of the firm or individual with a brief history and description of the firm. Include resumes or bios of those who will be providing services. CommonBond is an equal opportunity employer, and encourages responses from minority- and women-owned business enterprises, veteran-owned business enterprises, disability-owned business enterprises and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender-owned business enterprises. If your firm represents one or more of the above, please make note of same.
2. **Experience in providing the Services.** Describe the experience of the firm and its consultants in providing similar services. Further, describe demonstrated outcomes as a result of the work performed in client organizations.
3. **Approach.** Provide a description of the approach you and your firm use when consulting with organizations on matters related to diversity, inclusion, and equity. Tell us what you believe most firmly in your practice. What guides your practice of DEI work?
4. **Business References.** A list of three verifiable client references.
5. **Fee Schedule.** A proposed schedule of fees including how fees are structured. As relevant, include rates for specific portions of the scope of work or a rate for comprehensive completion of services. We welcome you to propose on all or of any portion of the services requested; simply make obvious the expenses related to each section of work.
6. **Conflicts of Interest.** Any known facts which would or could create a conflict of interest with CommonBond if you were awarded a contract.

Process

Responses must be received in our office by **5:00 P.M. on October 12, 2018** and be addressed to:

CommonBond Communities
c/o LuAnn Olson
1080 Montreal Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116
or via email at luann.olson@commonbond.org

In the interest of fair process and equal access to pertinent information, questions should be addressed in writing to the contact person above. All questions and answers will be posted for the benefit of any interested respondents on our [webpage](#).

A GoToMeeting [webinar](#) will be held on **September 28th at 2pm** CDT (you can also dial in: 1-669-224-3412 Access code: 244-441-125). *Note: If this is your first GoToMeeting, do a quick system check at <https://link.gotomeeting.com/system-check>.* The webinar will provide an opportunity to speak directly with the CEO, HR Director and Co-Chairs of our Inclusion Council. The webinar will be recorded and posted at our [website](#) for those who are unable to join.

CommonBond will review the responses to this RFP, may speak with client references, and will interview top candidates. Interviews will be held during October and/or early November. We anticipate that the selected respondent will be notified by November 30, 2018 with services to commence on or before January 1, 2019. Updates or changes to this process, if any, will be announced on our [website](#).

Criteria

CommonBond will evaluate respondents based upon the written response to this RFP; the interview results; references; and any other information requested by CommonBond. CommonBond, in its sole discretion, will make its selection based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of and approach in providing services;
- Demonstrated qualifications and experience in this work, including the ability to affect real change, having performed similar services in mid-to large nonprofit organizations;
- Ability to commit specific consultant(s) for the duration of the project for continuity;
- References;
- Proposed fees; and
- Status as a minority-, woman-owned business enterprise, veteran-owned business enterprise, disability-owned business enterprise and/or lesbian/gay/bisexual/ transgender-owned business enterprise.

CommonBond reserves the right to accept any one or more than one proposal; to withdraw or cancel this RFP; to modify or amend, with the consent of the respondent, any proposal prior to acceptance; to reject any or all proposals or waive any informality and otherwise to affect any agreement that CommonBond in its sole judgment, deems to be in its best interest. The successful respondent will be expected to enter into a standard service agreement.



Attachment A Scope of Services

CommonBond seeks a person or team to consult and provide training on matters related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The person or team may propose on this entire body of work or any piece(s) individually. Overall, we want a customized plan suitable to CommonBond's needs, relevant tools and best practices, recommended trainings, and consultant's help to design strategies that support and engage community members in various diversity initiatives.

We believe this work will engage all levels and areas of the organization, from frontline staff to Board leadership. We do not assume that the work outlined will be sequential, rather, we believe it will likely begin and end at different times and may be revisited as our needs evolve over time.

Track I: Vision & Commitment

Develop a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion vision that will guide all of CommonBond's DEI work. All strategies should be tested against this vision.

Activities and Deliverables

1. Design and facilitate an inclusive visioning process, including members of the Board of Directors, staff at all levels, residents, and other stakeholders. The Inclusion Council should be engaged to provide leadership throughout the visioning process. Particular attention should be given to how to best engage residents in this process. It is critical that residents be engaged as partners with key expertise.
2. Based on input from stakeholders in the visioning process, work with the Inclusion Council and Executive Team to develop a written diversity, equity, and inclusion vision.
3. Work with CommonBond leadership and the Inclusion Council to identify the organizational structure that will best support its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Our goal here is to answer the question: *Where does responsibility for achieving DEI goals sit within the organization?*
4. Support CommonBond staff in developing an internal communications strategy to promote investment in the diversity, equity, and inclusion vision.

Track II: Training & Coaching

Activities & Deliverables

1. Design and facilitate cohort-based learning opportunities for senior leadership. Cohorts should:
 - a. Deepen participants' cultural self-awareness.
 - b. Provide a safe, peer-focused space for leaders to develop the muscle of navigating conflicting worldviews, values, and practices.
 - c. Prepare leaders to hold courageous conversations across lines of difference.
 - d. Create opportunities share best practices across CommonBond teams and departments.
2. Develop and offer regular trainings for staff at all levels, targeted to CommonBond's organizational IDI orientation. Initial recommended trainings include:
 - a. Cross-Cultural Training & Supervision
 - b. Uncovering Unconscious Bias.
3. Develop an ongoing professional development program for members of the Inclusion Council. This professional development could include targeted, higher-level trainings; coaching; opportunities to take on leadership roles in implementing new diversity, equity, and inclusion programming; etc.

4. Provide ongoing one-on-one diversity, equity, and inclusion coaching for CommonBond's executive team.
5. Provide on-call coaching for managers and supervisors as they navigate cross-cultural challenges and stress points.

Track III: Assessment & Measurement

Activities & Deliverables

1. Conduct a comprehensive organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment, including:
 - a. Conduct deep interviews with staff, board, residents, and other key partners about their experiences, vision, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at CommonBond.
 - b. Review recent organizational budgets to identify priority areas for policy change.
 - c. Engage the Inclusion Council to review policies and practices across the organization that have an impact on equity and inclusion.
 - d. Evaluate existing diversity, equity, and inclusion activities for impact.
2. Develop or update organizational diversity dashboard, including:
 - a. Identify key metrics for inclusion in diversity dashboard and support relevant CommonBond teams to collect data.
 - b. Review employee satisfaction survey and identify diversity, equity, and inclusion questions to be included in future iterations of the survey.
 - c. Facilitate conversations with leadership team to interpret dashboard results and develop narrative to be shared with staff and other stakeholders.
3. Review existing employee exit interview template and develop tools to solicit input from exiting employees on their experience with CommonBond's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and practices.
4. Continue to implement Intercultural Development Inventories (IDIs)
 - a. Work with CommonBond leadership and Inclusion Council to set a goal for percentage of staff that have taken the IDI.
 - b. Identify key staff groups to target for expanded IDI implementation.
 - c. Develop and facilitate an ongoing Community of Practice for internal IDI Qualified Administrators.
5. Select or develop a change effectiveness evaluation tool, to be implemented at key points throughout the process.

Track IV: Policies & Practices

Activities & Deliverables

1. Identify a team that will systematically review policies to ensure that they do not have disparate impact on staff, residents, and other stakeholders.

Update key policies and practices, including HR practices (hiring, performance management, terminations, salary and benefits, onboarding, promotions, etc.).