



Request for Proposals

Horizon Foundation Structural Racism Media Campaign

Introduction

The Horizon Foundation seeks proposals for a marketing campaign that invites residents to partner with the Foundation to change the narrative around structural racism and health inequities – and to ultimately join the Foundation’s work to dismantle systems and policies that perpetuate structural racism.

About The Foundation

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives. We fight for equitable and compassionate health and mental health care, access to affordable and safe homes, a community where healthy food is accessible and affordable and where all residents are able to generate and pass down wealth. Our mission is to work side by side with community to build power, advocate for policy change and dismantle structural racism to achieve better health for everyone in Howard County and greater Maryland. Learn more at www.thehorizonfoundation.org

Context

The Horizon Foundation envisions a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives. Centuries of racism have defined and created many of the inequitable structures that exist in our society today, and have led to significant health disparities. We view health disparities through the lens of racial equity, because it is the most persistent and difficult to address. We are committed to working to remove structural, institutional and systemic racism that continues to exist in the health, social, and economic systems in our community. This includes, for example, racism that is embedded in laws, regulations, policies, and governmental agency budgets.

Through this RFP we are seeking a partner to design and execute a marketing campaign that articulates the barriers structural racism presents to living a healthy and abundant life and calls the community to action.

The Foundation intends to execute a multi-year contract with the winning firm, with an initial budget of \$300,000 for the first 12 months and subsequent renewals provided both parties wish to continue the work.

The Foundation is partnering with Ignited Strategies to execute this RFP process. For questions or communications related to this RFP, please reach out to Tiffany Erbelding at tiffany@ignitedstrategies.com

Goal and Audience

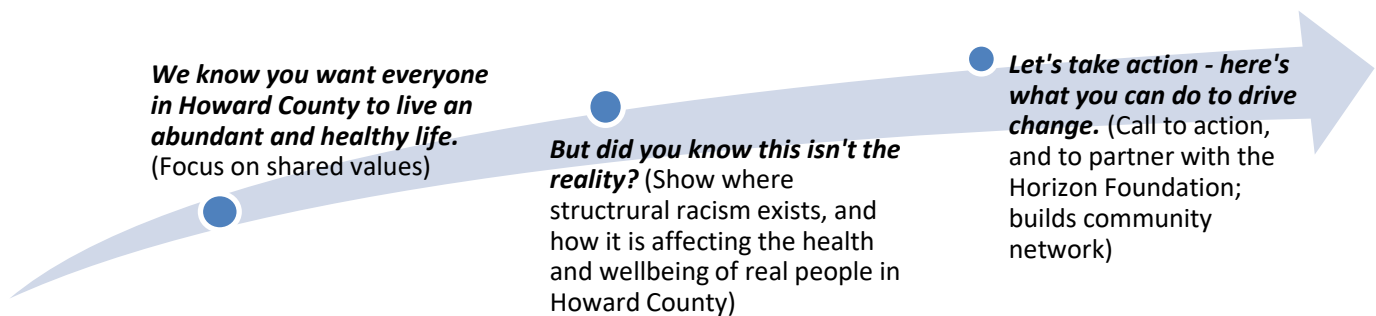
Goal and Audience

As noted above, our goal is to engage residents in a conversation on structural racism, and how it drives health inequities – and to invite them to join a network of community partners working together to dismantle structurally racist systems and policies that drive health inequities.

We want to move residents to get involved with the laws and policies that perpetuate structural racism. We want to invite them to move their thinking beyond accepting that racism is a “bad thing”, and to take action to make real, structural change in the community. The Foundation has a history of working very intentionally at the policy level to drive change, and we want to lean into policy and advocacy opportunities for this campaign as well. Learn more [here](#) about the Foundation’s past advocacy work and policy successes.

Considering this goal, the campaign will likely focus on audiences that are more likely to engage and act. While we acknowledge individuals are all on different paths of their own racial equity journeys, this campaign will focus on those who are already somewhat engaged – given their understanding of the impact structural racism has on health outcomes, or bringing an interest to grow their understanding. This audience might include allies who want to support the work, individuals with lived experience who have been directly impacted by racism and inequities, or even people who see that something is not quite right but who might not yet be able to name it or what to do about it. We understand that different messages will resonate differently within these audiences – we hope to find creative ways to reach each of them.

Considering the goal and audience, this campaign will likely build in stages to invite people to partner with the Foundation on its racial equity work. A potential approach might look something like:



This draft approach captures several considerations that guide our thinking:

- It focuses on those who have shared values¹ around wanting to achieve racial and health equity
- It demonstrates how and where structural racism shows up in our community (e.g., through storytelling)

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided messaging guidance in their [Structural Racism and Health Messaging Guide](#). Firms may review for background; however, proposals should still include how you would conduct local research to understand which messages best resonate in Howard County.

- It ultimately leads to a call to action (occurring at a future point in the campaign, as opportunities to take action alongside the Foundation build in 2025 and beyond). And as noted above, this campaign will set the stage for future policy campaigns and advocacy work in future.

We recognize that the final campaign strategy may not fully align with our above approach – there may be many ways to achieve the goal, and many methods/mediums to leverage in such a marketing campaign. We are open to ideas and look forward to exploring with the chosen firm.

Firm Experience and Thought Partnership

This is a complex topic that will impact each person at a different space in their personal journey. As noted above, this campaign will be very iterative and will develop collaboratively. A key element of this RFP and our journey will be to **identify a marketing firm that can serve as a true thought partner in sensitively crafting this campaign.**

We seek to partner with a firm with a deep understanding of the impact of structural racism. We are invested in the people in our community who experience the worst health outcomes, and we seek to address the root causes that drive those outcomes. **We are looking for a partner who understands racial equity and its impacts (and, if possible, has experience leading similar campaigns in other communities).**

We are open to firms that do and do not have experience working specifically on **health campaigns** – we are most interested in firms that have a demonstrated connection to working in diverse communities, and to changing minds and driving action.

We also seek to evolve our identity as a community partner, change leader and advocate for health and racial equity. We seek to be humble and open, listening with understanding and empathy. At the same time, we seek to be catalytic, impactful dismantlers of racist systems that perpetuate poor health outcomes. **We are eager to find a firm that can help us present a public campaign that aligns with this role.**

Proposal Elements

Proposals should describe a marketing campaign that incorporates different mediums to effectively reach the target audience.

Below are key elements to be addressed in the proposal. Submissions should be multi-layered and incorporate a number of approaches. We are open to ideas on the best ways to reach the target audience and goal, and firms may consider other elements to include in the submission:

1. **Message Development/Market Research**
 - Use qualitative and/or quantitative methods to determine the most powerful and effective messaging.
 - Messaging and market research data should be broken down by race/ethnicity, age and other key demographics.

2. Marketing Approach

- Assist the Foundation in developing and executing a comprehensive integrated marketing plan that delivers effective messages to our target population. Potential mediums are listed below.

We recognize that this list is not comprehensive, and we are open to other creative or effective approaches to consider. However, this initiative is intended to be a true media campaign and should focus on marketing and communications (see an example of one of our previous campaigns [here](#)).

- Paid media
 - Paid media strategy that includes, as appropriate, the development and purchase of sponsored social media posts, display ads, digital video ads, traditional mass media (e.g., cable TV, radio, etc.), text ads, etc.
- Social media
 - Social media strategy based on message testing that engages residents; focus on groups most likely to use and be impacted by social media.
- Collateral materials
 - Compelling print materials such as posters, rack cards, specialized content for libraries, provider offices, hospitals, faith communities and other materials/locations.
- We would also like to see the following considerations incorporated into the campaign, alongside the marketing approach. Firms should consider and address these in their proposal:
 - Incorporate ways to authentically and respectfully engage community in this campaign and campaign process.
 - Leverage diversity of voice, particularly elevating the experiences of those in our community (e.g., through storytelling).
 - Center health equity and structural racism – with a focus on structural racism (laws, structures and policies) vs. a focus on individual racism (beliefs and actions).

3. Evaluation

- Address how your firm will measure the effectiveness of its efforts.
- Effectiveness/results should be broken down by race/ethnicity, age, and other key demographics.

Project Budget

- The Foundation has budgeted \$300,000 for all work associated with this proposal for a 12-month period (August 2024 – August 2025). A contract for that time period resulting from this RFP will be issued, with an option to renew for additional years upon mutual agreement and based on performance.

Submission Process and Requirements

	Task	Deadlines (5 PM EST for all dates)
1	RFP released	March 20, 2024
2	Informational Sessions (bidding firms must attend one)	April 1, 2024
		April 8, 2024
3	Notification of Bidding to Foundation by Interested Firms	April 15, 2024
4	Detailed Proposal Due (no more than 20 pages, excluding appendices)	May 20, 2024
5	Notification of finalists	Week of July 1, 2024
6	Interviews with 3 to 4 Finalists	Weeks of July 15 and July 22
7	Award Decision	July 26, 2024
8	Project Start Date	August 1, 2024

1. RFP is released (March 20, 2024)

2. Informational Sessions

The Foundation will hold two 90-minute virtual informational sessions. Sessions will be held:

- Monday, April 1 @ 3 PM EST
- Monday, April 8 @ 1 PM EST

All firms interested in bidding must have at least one representative attend one of the informational sessions. Sessions will be recorded and made available to all firms who register to attend. Registration instructions for the informational sessions will be posted to the RFP announcement page on the Foundation’s website.

Firms may also register [here](#) for the April 1 session or [here](#) for the April 8 session.

Firms may submit questions to be answered during the sessions. Questions received by 5 PM EST the day before each session will be given priority. Questions may be submitted to Tiffany Erbeling at tiffany@ignitedstrategies.com

3. Notification of Bidding

The Foundation requests that all firms interested in bidding on the RFP provide notification of their intent by April 15, 2024.

Notification (a 1- to 2-sentence email) can be sent to Tiffany Erbeling at tiffany@ignitedstrategies.com

Firms that provide notification will be sent instructions on how to submit their proposal before the due date.

4. **Detailed Proposal**

Full proposals are due by 5 PM EST on Monday, May 20, 2024. The detailed proposal should be no more than 20 pages, 8 ½ x 11, with the exception of appendices. Proposals should include:

A. Agency Overview

- a. Briefly describe your agency/firm's capacity to complete our project on time and on budget (e.g., staff, equipment, software, office location, etc.).
- b. Address your firm's commitment to racial equity work, and approach to addressing racial equity (both internally and externally if possible).
- c. Clearly identify any subcontractors and the nature of your partnership.

B. Details of Proposal

- a. Comprehensively describe how your firm would design a strategy to reach the campaign goal, taking into account the **Goal and Audience, Firm Experience and Thought Partnership** and **Proposal Elements** sections outlined above.
- b. Provide a proposed timeline for completion of the project.
- c. Provide an itemized **Project Budget** and budget narrative for the 12-month time period, broken down by campaign elements and timeline.
 - Please include estimates on potential print runs and third-party costs (e.g., social media ads) as appropriate.
- d. Identify any services that would be subcontracted, with the specific responsibilities and a brief background of the subcontractor.

C. References

- a. Provide reference information including current names and phone numbers for three current or former clients.

D. Disclosure and Conflict Statement

- a. Please disclose any activities or work for the health care industry within the past five years, including any work related to mental health, social determinants of health, and lifestyle behaviors (e.g., nutrition, physical activity, etc.).
- b. Be advised that the Foundation will not work with firms also engaged in campaigns with any individuals listed on the Southern Poverty Law Center's list of designated hate groups. Find the list through the SPLCs website [here](#).
- c. We recognize that conflicts may exist between the missions of your clients. If you are applying to this RFP through a conflict shop, please disclose the reason and nature of the conflict you foresee.

E. Required appendices (not subject to the 20-page limit):

- a. Provide select examples of past marketing campaigns you have worked on, including any metrics that illustrate the effectiveness of the campaign.
- b. Include any former work you have done on similar issues (racial equity, health equity, etc.). Please specify the type of client (including a general overview of their

size and focus), a description of the work you completed, and the impact of that work.

- c. Submit documentation about your firm’s financial strength (e.g., an audited financial statement, a letter from your accountant or bank, etc.)
- d. Provide an organizational chart indicating location and anticipated supervisory responsibilities of management and staff assigned to this project. The organization chart must indicate any relationship to a parent company and subsidiaries.
- e. Include the names and resumes or bios of all individuals who would directly work on this project and outline each person’s role.

F. Optional appendix (not subject to the 20-page limit):

- a. Examples of proposed creative work for this project as cited in the narrative section of the proposal.

Selection and Evaluation Criteria

The Foundation will invite three to four finalists for an in-person interview. The Foundation will notify selected finalists during the week of July 1. Interviews are tentatively scheduled to be held during the weeks of July 15 and July 22.

The selected vendor will be notified no later than July 26, 2024. The selection will be made according to the following criteria:

- Experience
 - Track record of successfully working on similar campaigns and serving as a thought partner
 - Experience working on campaigns that address racial or health equity, or structural racism
 - Experience designing high-quality and creative social marketing work
 - Expertise in conducting the work required as evidenced by the proposal, references and proposed project team
 - References endorse the firm’s experience and quality of work
- Strategy
 - Proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP, and responds to the campaign considerations noted above
- Budget
 - The **Project Budget** is consistent with the available budget and value offered by the agency/firm
- Presentation
 - Information is presented in a clear, logical, well-organized manner

Assumptions and Agreements

- This is an open RFP process. We are interested in and open to working with new firms, and encourage all applications. If you decide to bid, please alert Tiffany Erbelding at tiffany@ignitedstrategies.com by April 15, 2024.
- Detailed proposals must be received by May 20, 2024 at 5 PM EST. Any materials received after that time will not be considered.
- The Horizon Foundation reserves the right to dismiss any and all bids.
- The Horizon Foundation will negotiate contract terms upon selection.
- All contracts are subject to review by the Foundation legal counsel and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

Rights of Foundation

- Each bidder shall bear its own costs and expenses incurred in preparing and submitting the bid. It should be understood and agreed that the Foundation accepts no responsibility for any costs and expenses incurred by bidders in preparing and submitting such bids. The proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer of the company submitting the proposal.
- The price you quote should be all-inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.
- It is understood that the aforementioned specifications are preliminary and subject to change at the discretion of the Foundation, the client. It is understood that meetings will need to be held with Bidder and Client groups to refine requirements for specific work plans.
- Bidder is required to bid on the requirements as detailed in this RFP. However, if they so wish, Bidder is encouraged to offer technologies and solutions beyond those specified here.
- All final materials, ideas, designs, code, artwork and products created or developed during work on this project are the sole property of the Foundation. It is agreed that the Foundation will hold the copyright and source materials for any and all work related to this project.
- All materials will be delivered to the Foundation's contact person at each major milestone in the schedule, in an electronic format.
- Award shall be made in accordance with the best interests of the Foundation, which in most cases shall be deemed to be the most responsible bidder that meets or exceeds specifications. The bidder understands that written notice of award will constitute acceptance of the bid offer, subject to such changes as may have been negotiated.
- Attention to detail, information security, and adherence to budget and timeline are essential.

Contact Information for Questions

The Foundation is partnering with Ignited Strategies to facilitate this RFP process. Please direct questions related to this opportunity to Tiffany Erbelding at tiffany@ignitedstrategies.com. Please do not contact any other members of the Foundation staff with questions unless directed.

Questions will be addressed during the informational sessions scheduled for April 1 and April 8, and will be fielded up until those dates.