



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNITY (COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE) CONSULTANT**

### **PURPOSE**

The Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a qualified Consultant to serve as project manager/lead architect of a school safety and social-emotional learning (SEL) Strategic Community (i.e., community of practice).

### **WHO MAY RESPOND**

CJSF seeks a Consultant who has demonstrated experience in successfully supporting communities of practice, strong facilitation skills, expertise in working with diverse stakeholders – including organizers, policy advocates, school district officials, and others to advance policy change, and is knowledgeable about social-emotional learning and efforts to ensure that schools are culturally affirming, emotionally safe spaces for all students.

Please respond to: The Communities for Just Schools Fund via email at [info\(at\)cjfund.org](mailto:info@cjfund.org) no later than April 19, 2019.

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## **About the Organization**

Communities for Just Schools Fund, a national donor collaborative, brings together the resources of philanthropy with the power of grassroots organizing to ensure that all schools welcome students and nurture their full potential.

To make a difference, we: **Fund** organizations that change schools through community organizing and advocacy; we **Build** the capacity of our grantee partners by growing their strategic know-how on everything from communications to advocacy; we **Connect** as dot-connectors, fostering relationships between our grantee partners and philanthropy; and we **Lead** efforts, together with our grantee partners, to make school discipline reform and positive school climate a priority for traditional philanthropic organizations, for policymakers and for national allies.

Our goal is to advance and work to implement policies and practices that create positive, safe, and nurturing school climates, which protect and affirm the inherent cultural dignity of all students and foster the success of all students. Toward that end, the CJSF community seeks to end harsh and punitive school discipline practices and policies, including responses from law enforcement, that unfairly and disproportionately impact students of color including students impacted by bias based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, poverty, and disability.

More information is available at [www.CJSFund.org](http://www.CJSFund.org).

## **Project Overview**

CJSF seeks to create a Strategic Community – a community of practice focused on fostering conversations about and making connections between holistic safety and social-emotional learning (SEL) in schools. In this instance, the community of practice's practitioners are education justice organizers from CJSF's partner network – practitioners whose lived experiences as students, family members, and educators in public schools form one part of the rich, deep expertise they individually and collectively offer through their organizing praxis.

Drawing upon shared organizing frameworks and their aligned demands for a more equitable and holistic approach to safety and social-emotional learning in public education, the members of the community of practice will:

1. share learning, resources and strategies in order to deepen their individual and collective knowledge about the cultural relevancy and responsiveness of existing safety and social-emotional learning policies and practices,
2. seek to identify gaps and strengths in these policies and practices,

## **Project Overview (continued)**

3. compile a directory of local trainers/practitioners of culturally responsive SEL practices – with an emphasis on identifying and elevating restorative justice practitioners who emphasize culturally responsive approaches through collaboration with the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC), and
4. build upon the Strategic Community's conversations and research to engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the development of resources such as a roadmap for creating good policy or model policies that acknowledge that safety must be an embedded component of supporting effective social-emotional learning – especially for youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and those who live at the intersections of identities.

Urgency drives this work. Allowing the further entrenchment of policies and practices that fly in the face of emotional and physical safety for students of color and too many of their peers – the arming of teachers, hardening of schools, increasing investments in police infrastructure – will push us in the wrong direction as a nation. This is a zero-sum game. With “limited resources” as an all too often sung refrain, we must ensure that policies and practices align around what it means to not just invest in a bare bones version of safety focused on the most extreme active shooter scenarios and referrals to external mental health providers for those identified as a “risk” but rather to address the most fundamental and consistent times in which students do not feel safe or welcomed in their schools – which for many students of color, is every day.

## **Scope of Work and Deliverables**

This person would serve as project manager responsible for identifying learning resources, generating ongoing conversation and connection among strategic community participants and others, and serving as a lead architect of the conversations and ongoing dialogue of the Strategic Community as well as the primary author of any culminating materials – including a possible policy roadmap or model policy(ies)

This consultant, in collaboration with CJSF staff, would:

1. Organize 3-5 in-person and/or on-site learning and working sessions, likely:
  - a. Session One – Study Group Session for lead partners and select others (late spring 2019)
  - b. Session Two - Work/Planning Session (summer 2019)
  - c. Session Three – Synthesis/Feedback Session –including external stakeholders (late 2019)

### **Scope of Work and Deliverables (continued)**

2. Arrange Two Site visits – to explore frameworks for policy and best practice - tentatively identified as a visit to Alaska to explore and learn more about their culturally responsive schools framework, and a site visit to a California school district.
3. Engage 2-3 [CJSF partner organizations](#) as Strategic Community lead partners – who will help to shape the questions and exploration.
4. Engage at least two thirds of CJSF's 57-partner organizations in offering feedback and/or participating in a Strategic Community session or site visit over the course of the project.
5. Create opportunities for CJSF's partners to engage with CJSF's network partners – advocacy organizations, professional associations, philanthropic partners, researchers, system leaders, and others – to shape and test their recommendations/roadmap framework.
6. Create space for ongoing conversations that center safety in SEL – through a list-serv or some other form of online dialogue as well as online convening/learning opportunities.

### **Project/Outcome Goals**

1. Provide support for CJSF partners to identify key components of reforms - including examples of (a) examples of excellence/promise, and (b) examples that illustrate the challenges on the road to policy reform.
2. Develop a policy "roadmap" that can be used by organizers and advocates in conversations with state- and local officials, including boards of education – a tool that allows for local- and/or state-specific considerations about the intersections of safety policy and culturally responsive social-emotional learning policy.
3. Increase systems' leaders/policymakers awareness of organizers' efforts and expertise.

## **Process for Proposal Submission**

The proposal must include:

1. Understanding of the work to be performed, estimated hours, and other pertinent information.
2. Organization description, size and structure. Please indicate whether the firm is a small or woman- or minority-owned business.
3. Evidence of qualifications of all staff to be assigned to the project and a named project manager.
4. At least three references of individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual's name, telephone number and email address.

An outstanding proposal will also contain a description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the requested scope of work, including:

1. strategies for accomplishing the Strategic Community's goals,
2. milestones and deliverables tied to accomplishing the activities noted above, and
3. a detailed budget, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

Questions regarding this proposal may be submitted to [info@cjsfund.org](mailto:info@cjsfund.org) prior to the RFP close date. CJSF will do our best to provide responses to questions via this [google doc](#). All proposal submissions will be acknowledged with an email confirming receipt.