



Request for Proposals: Strategic Planning

1. Introduction

The Brooklyn Community Foundation (BCF) is seeking proposals from experienced strategic planning consultants to design and facilitate a participatory planning process, frame and summarize key findings, and lead staff to create a 3–5-year strategic plan for the organization. The Foundation is looking to engage not only the staff and the Board of Directors, but also stakeholders from the many varied communities across Brooklyn we serve. Responses to this Request for Proposals are due on or before June 1, 2022. We look forward to hearing from you.

2. About the Foundation

The Foundation was established in 2009. CEO Cecilia Clarke led the organization from 2013 to 2021, and under her leadership, BCF created the first strategic plan in 2014, called Brooklyn Insights, which led to record breaking-contributions and grantmaking, and a doubling of the endowment from \$50M to \$100M by 2021.

In 2021, the Board of Directors hired Dr. Jocelyne Rainey to be the new CEO of the Brooklyn Community Foundation. Having managed a successful and smooth transition, the Foundation is now poised to define its focus and goals for the next 3-5 years.

Last year BCF made over \$13M in donor and staff-directed grants, and it currently has over \$100M in assets under management. Since our founding in 2009, we have directed more than \$75M in grants to over 300 nonprofits throughout Brooklyn to spark lasting social change. We seek to continue the recent years' significant growth of our impact .

BCF operates with a staff of 18. In addition, it periodically contracts for services to provide administrative support and to assist with research and advocacy efforts. The Foundation's headquarters is located at 1000 Dean Street in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

What We Do

We are a grantmaking organization to Brooklyn nonprofits. Priority is given to organizations led by members of affected communities and who center the voices of those directly impacted by structural racism in decision-making. We also advocate and organize to engage other funders, as well as institutional partners, in promoting and advancing racial equity. In addition, we provide professional development for leaders from impacted communities and increase the capacity of organizations dedicated to social and racial justice.

Our unique approach has four components: first, we listen and engage the community; second, we build on what's working by funding and supporting successful programs; third, we try new things, and when something works, we invest in its continued success. And fourth, we share decision-making with the communities we serve. Specifically, we:

- **Collaborate** with local leaders. We partner with local leaders to identify and support proven models and accelerate bold new solutions.
- **Mobilize capital.** We work with donors and manage resources to meet critical charitable goals and build a long-term asset base.
- **Leverage expertise.** We call on a vast network of experts to build on best practices and advance the thinking needed to sustain our work.
- **Utilize participatory grantmaking.** Our process gives decision-making power to the communities and people of Brooklyn who have the lived experience to help us make impactful grants.

Beyond the general Community Fund, the Foundation also has created several targeted funds that strategically focus on key initiatives, including the Invest in Youth Fund, the Immigrant Rights Fund, the Brooklyn Restorative Justice Project, the Brooklyn Elders Fund, the Brooklyn Accelerator and Spark Prize, the Wellness and Recovery Fund, and the COVID-19 Response Fund, which swiftly became the single largest community-funded effort in the Foundation's history.

As a community foundation, we also help individual and institutional donors set up and manage Donor Advised Funds. These funds provide tax benefits to donors, while offering multiple investment options. The annual fee we charge goes back to Brooklyn communities through our strategic grantmaking.

Our Vision

We believe in a fair and just Brooklyn, built on dignity and respect, where all residents have the opportunity to participate and prosper.

Five core values guide everything we do:

- **Courage.** We believe in fearlessly identifying barriers to change, and we fight for solutions that help overcome injustice.

- **Creativity.** We believe that the power of imagination is greater than the challenges we face. We celebrate what works. We pursue the new. We learn as much from failure as we do from success.
- **Honesty.** We are committed to being open and trustworthy in all we do and seek partners who share our values.
- **Collaboration.** We believe in creating solutions together, harnessing the diversity of Brooklyn, and partnering with the community to spark change and produce results.
- **Respect.** We believe in every resident's dignity and basic human rights, and honor diversity of race, gender, and background.

Our Racial Justice Lens

We will center our core value of racial justice in our strategic planning process. People of color represent nearly 70% of all Brooklyn residents, yet there are significant racial disparities in the distribution of power, resources, and opportunities in our communities.

We strongly believe addressing systemic racism and injustice is the first step in our mission of building a fairer and more just Brooklyn for everyone.

We define racial justice as the systemic redistribution of power, opportunities, and access for people of all races. We believe that all people should be equally seen, heard, valued, and respected. Whether through grantmaking, advocacy, or special initiatives, we aim to increase the ability of people of color to determine and sustain a more equitable future for themselves and their communities with a particular focus on Black, Latinx and other historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.

Our institution-wide Racial Justice Lens was developed in 2014 in partnership with our Racial Justice Advisory Council of local and national experts. This tool ensures that we consider race as we analyze problems, look for solutions, and define success in our grantmaking, governance, and advocacy. Working with the Council we have established clear benchmarks and outcomes to ensure that we make measurable progress towards our goals.

We position the following at the core of our practice:

- Understanding and naming root causes of racial inequities;
- Acknowledging historical trauma stemming from systemic racism;
- Supporting opportunities for healing and empowerment;
- Ensuring that those directly affected by structural racism are centered in decision-making;
- Measure and track outcomes in advancement of racial justice through philanthropy.

3. Background – Previous Strategic Planning

As noted above, in 2014, BCF initiated Brooklyn Insights, a 6-month project to bring the people and neighborhoods of Brooklyn together to discuss Brooklyn's future. More than 600 professional leaders participated in sector-based roundtables to discuss housing and homelessness, youth development, arts and culture, urban agriculture, business ventures,

immigrants, and more. And more than 300 people met in conversations and town hall meetings for specific neighborhood dialogues in Coney Island, East New York, and Sunset Park. From this process, 5 major themes emerged, which have guided BCF since 2014:

- Neighborhood cohesion
- Youth
- Criminal justice
- Immigrant communities
- Racial justice

See <https://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/brooklyn-insights> and <https://brooklyninsights.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/>

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will work with lead staff and select Board members to develop and facilitate a process for strategic planning, ultimately resulting in a written strategic plan for the next 3-5 years. The plan will include goals and objectives that build on current and prior work and are consistent with the current and potential capacity of the Foundation. In conjunction with staff and Board, the consultant will:

- Develop the planning process, including key elements, key voices, deliverables, and timetable.
- Guide and facilitate the process, including participatory community input.
- Document, summarize, and frame input.
- Lead the staff and Board to create an actionable Strategic Plan that includes shared mission and values; measurable and realistic goals; and objectives, strategies, tactics, measures, and outcomes across Programming, Communications, Governance, Advancement and Development, and Finance and Investments.

While the process still needs to be defined, it is anticipated the consultant's activities and deliverables will include:

- A planning process document and timetable.
- Organization and moderation of staff, Board, and community roundtables and conversations.
- A key-findings report with recommendations and presentation to the board.
- Refinement of key findings and consultation with lead staff to facilitate the creation of a strategic plan for 2023 and beyond, including methods for tracking progress.

5. Submitting a Proposal

BCF is seeking proposals from experienced consultants who specialize in strategic planning for non-profit organizations. Responses to this Request for Proposals are due June 1, 2022 and should include:

- A description of qualifications and capacity to do this project, including:
 - Experience and expertise in strategic planning and organizational development.
 - Experience working with nonprofit and philanthropic sectors.
 - Knowledge and understanding of New York City and Brooklyn.
 - Experience convening community groups for input.
- A description of how the consultant intends to accomplish this assignment, including any ideas for enhancing or improving the Foundation's efforts to undertake this process.
- A draft timeline from initial planning until delivery of a completed written plan.
- A draft estimate and full budget of what the project will cost.
- Appendices:
 - A sample list of client references similar to the Brooklyn Community Foundation, and a short description of the work performed and the time required to completion.
 - Sample budgets from other completed projects (with names redacted).
 - Resumes or brief biographical summaries of all personnel who will work on this project.

The deadline for submission is June 1, 2022.

Please email proposals to kmaloney@brooklyncommunityfoundation.org.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to kmaloney@brooklyncommunityfoundation.org.