



Request for Proposals

Strategic Communications & Website Development Consultant/Team

As the Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFS) enters into a movement building phase of our work, we are looking for a collaborative consultant or team of consultants to support us to hone our external communications strategy and to help us redesign and build a new website that better suits the organization's needs in this next chapter. The communications strategy should align with the organization's [new Strategic Plan](#) and help to amplify SOFS's work to its various constituencies. The new website should make it easy for visitors to understand exactly what we are doing, what it means to be part of the network, and how to engage in the coalition's collective work to build a more equitable and resilient food system.

Background/Mission:

The [Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance \(SOFS\)](#) is a network of changemakers dedicated to reshaping our region's food system. Grounded in principles of transformative justice and reciprocity, we cultivate connection, collaboration, and coordination across sectors to mobilize our collective resources towards a more just and sustainable food future in Syracuse, Onondaga County, and Onondaga Nation.

Through our network's shared actions, SOFS works to enact principles of transformative justice and collective impact through the following practices:

- aligning resources and capacity
- fostering relationships
- promoting civic engagement and policy development
- cultivating food system innovation

We strive to address the root causes of food injustice and recognize their interconnectedness with all kinds of systemic oppression. We are building a responsive movement to transform our food system.

Strategic Communications and Website Purpose:

We are seeking talented individuals or small teams to develop a comprehensive strategic communications plan, updated style guide, and reimagined website that embody SOFS's mission, history, and transformative values. The plan should outline a compelling narrative strategy to elevate SOFS's work across digital platforms, including the website and social media, while aligning with our newly adopted Strategic Action Plan. The deliverables must make SOFS's current initiatives clear and accessible to diverse audiences—members, partners, funders, government officials, and the public—while offering clear pathways for engagement in events, working groups, and equitable donor partnerships. The final website should be user-friendly, easy for SOFS staff to update, and designed to sustain ongoing communication, collaboration, and impact.

Project expectations and outcomes:

Strategic communications plan:

- Conduct a survey with SOFSA team and key stakeholders to develop an understanding of the challenges and assets in their current communication strategy.
- Conduct an audience assessment and generate broad recommendations for how to engage different kinds of stakeholders.
- Work with SOFSA staff to devise a storytelling strategy that highlights the work SOFSA does along the themes of movement-building and awareness-raising.
- Integrate a storytelling approach to the design of visual and written content for the new website, in a way that helps SOFSA:
 - Communicate the outcomes of the NYHealth-funded Strategic Action Plan
 - Communicate how programs, events, and activities contribute to movement-building work
 - Showcase our civic engagement work as a critical component of movement-building and defining the future trajectory of our food system
 - Visually represent the connections between food, housing, health, education, and other intersecting issues
 - Highlight “behind the scenes” work carried out by the network to understand how to effect change in the food system
 - Elevate learnings, stories, and testimonials from local community-based research efforts.
 - Illustrate [community-centric fundraising](#) and community grantmaking initiatives in ways that are legible as community resourcing, to both on the ground actors and prospective funders/donors.
- Help hone SOFSA's visual identity to foster alignment across SOFSA's website, social media, and other communications channels.

Website development:

- Meet regularly with SOFSA team to develop an understanding of the needs for the new website and ensure alignment on visual strategy and content.
- Conduct an audit of the current website and lead SOFSA staff and key stakeholders in designing a new sitemap with existing and new information.
- Support SOFSA staff, via recommendations, in understanding and making decisions about:
 - Migrating website from Wordpress to a different content management platform
 - Integrations for contact management, events, Google calendar, social media, and a SOFSA webstore (currently hosted through WooCommerce and Printful)
 - Increasing reach and improving SEO
 - Improving the interface for visitors to RSVP or otherwise view upcoming events, while making these easy to manage on the backend.



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- Ensure website redesign is ADA compliant, and considers accessibility needs around the axis of readability, contrast, screen-reader compatibility, and language justice.
- Ensure website and resources are compatible with mobile devices.
- Support staff in evaluating website analytics.
- Provide training to staff in updating and managing the new site, and create a repository of reference resources or a user-guide.

Project Deliverables:

- Strategic communications plan with a focus on elevating individual and community narrative.
- Updated style guide.
- Up-to-date website, which must:
 - Align with style guide above
 - Support (in an easy to upload way) video and image hosting.
 - Have an e-commerce integration for the SOFSA webstore AND an easy-to-use donation interface
 - Include project pages for all of SOFSA's primary initiatives
 - Allow multiple users to hold different levels of permissions, enabling them to create posts and manage content.
 - Integrate with Monday.com, Mailchimp, and Google Calendar.
- An updated sitemap.
- Website analytics training to SOFSA staff.
- Site management training to SOFSA staff.

Timeline: *(subject to change)*

- Request for proposals published: Nov 22, 2024
- Proposals due: December 19, 2024 at 5pm EST
- Notification of Interview: January 10, 2025
- Interviews of finalist(s): Week of January 20th
- Notification of selected consultant: January 31, 2025
- Work to begin: February 2025
- Website analytics trainings: mid August 2025
- Website management training (recorded): mid August 2025
- Work to conclude: August 30, 2025

Budget:

Proposals not to exceed \$10,000. Budget will be an essential consideration as proposals are evaluated. We will be looking for applicants who demonstrate strong value for investment. Proposals with indirect rates above 5-10% are unlikely to be competitive.



Desired qualifications:

- At least 3 years of demonstrated experience in strategic communications and website development
- Familiarity with Wordpress and other content management softwares
- Experience with accessibility practices in communications and web design
- Ability to self-manage and clearly communicate workplan details and timeline
- Experience with project management
- Responsiveness and ability to translate technical details to non-tech audience
- Interest and capacity to engage in collaborative processes to yield strong results

Selection criteria:

Required:

1. Proposal and portfolio demonstrate required expertise
2. Experience working with diverse, multiracial audiences and incorporating accessibility practices in communications strategy
3. Budget that demonstrates a good value-for-investment
4. Strong capacity for collaborative strategy development

Additional desired criteria that will be prioritized in final selection process:

1. Local knowledge of the Central New York community, context, and stakeholders
2. Content area expertise in food systems, racial justice, just economic transition, impact networks, and/or related frameworks
3. Familiarity with the work/approach of coalitions in advancing collective movements

Application process:

Apply through bit.ly/SOFSASWebDev by 5pm on December 11, 2024. A complete application will include:

- Completed Monday form
- Link or upload portfolio, with at least 2 examples of previous web development projects
- 2-3 page proposal for the website redevelopment that includes:
 - a proposed work plan with preliminary timeline/phases of work
 - approach to the web-build
 - what support you anticipate needing from the SOFSA team
 - some preliminary recommendations for the website
 - budget breakdown
- Resume

Clarifying questions can be submitted to the Food Systems and Network-Building Organizer at micah@syrfoodalliance.org with the subject line "Website RFP questions" by Dec 6th.