
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (School) and Academy of Hope Foundation (Foundation) seek the services of a strategic planning consultant with expertise in nonprofit and charter school sectors. The selected contractor will be responsible for developing separate but interconnected three-year strategic plans for both the School and the Foundation.

These plans will build upon the 2019 strategic plan of the School and guide the next phase of growth for both organizations:

- For **Academy of Hope Adult PCS**, the focus will be on enhancing programs and facility infrastructure to address the evolving needs of adult learners and staff in Washington, D.C., ensuring operational excellence and programmatic innovation for an increased learner ceiling of 2000 adult learners.
- For the **Academy of Hope Foundation**, the plan will focus on becoming the philanthropic arm for the School driving mission alignment, facilitating regional and national expansion, and strengthening graduate services programming. This strategy will serve as the Foundation's blueprint for scaling Academy of Hope's impact and brand beyond D.C., advancing research, and securing the financial sustainability necessary for long-term sustainability and success.

The selected consultant must demonstrate significant experience working with separate nonprofit entities operating as one network with an evolving structure. Expertise in nonprofit operations, adult charter schools, national scaling, and nonprofit governance, particularly for mission-driven organizations, is essential.

Consultant Requirements:

- Proven experience in strategic planning for nonprofit and educational organizations.
- Strong understanding of how to align strategic goals between nonprofit entities functioning as one network.
- Experience with national scaling strategies and organizational development for mission-driven organizations.
- Knowledge of fundraising strategies and developing philanthropic arms for nonprofit entities.

The consultant will work closely with the School and the Foundation leadership, staff, and stakeholders to ensure that the strategic plans reflect the distinct roles and interconnected missions of both organizations, positioning the organizations for sustainable growth, expanded philanthropic capacity, and continued mission impact.

II. SOLICITATION SCHEDULE & BUDGET

Responses should be provided in electronic format and emailed to Joy Bentley Phillips at joy@aohdc.org by **January 3, 2025**. Please contact Joy Bentley Phillips at 202-269-6623, ext: 109 with any questions you may have regarding this RFP. **Budget not to exceed \$80K.**

III. BACKGROUND

Academy of Hope was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1985 as a community-based nonprofit organization and transitioned into an **adult public charter school** committed to providing exceptional adult education in 2014. Our mission is to support adult learners in changing their lives and transforming their communities by offering high-quality adult education and career training that creates direct pathways toward economic mobility. At Academy of Hope, learners become part of a vibrant learning community where everyone is valued, contributes meaningfully, and is both a teacher and a learner. Our experiential curriculum is rooted in life skills, enabling learners to immediately apply what they learn to their everyday lives and begin reaping the benefits right away.

The Academy of Hope Foundation was established in 2020 as a separate nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity. Through its support and philanthropic activities, the Academy of Hope Foundation ensures that adult learners can achieve their goals and maximize their potential through education, career development, and upskilling. By investing in Academy of Hope schools, the Foundation develops, tests, and expands new instructional models; bridges the national opportunity divide through education and career training; and advances the field of adult education through research and systems change. Together, we are committed to expanding and enhancing adult learning opportunities across the nation, creating a future where every adult can thrive through the power of education.

As the Academy of Hope Network approaches its 40th anniversary, the organization is experiencing a transformative period of growth and development. Over the past decade, we have achieved key milestones that reflect our ongoing commitment to excellence in adult education and community impact:

- **2014:** Transitioned from a community-based organization to an adult public charter school; moved the Ward 8 campus to 421 Alabama Ave SE; GED and NEDP programs aligned with Common Core standards.
- **2015:** AoH learners successfully advocated for a State High School Diploma for D.C. residents who pass the GED or complete the National External Diploma Program (NEDP).
- **2016:** Purchased a permanent facility at 2315 18th Place NE, relocating the Ward 5 campus.
- **2017:** Launched Career Academies in hospitality, healthcare, and office administration; advocated for and implemented the Adult Learner Transit Subsidy program.
- **2018:** Achieved Tier 1 status from the DC Public Charter School Board; earned Middle States accreditation; established a Race Equity Task Force.
- **2019:** Approved as a DC Board of Nursing Certified Nursing Assistant training site; received unanimous approval for a five-year charter extension; released a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement, and updated core values through a DEI lens.
- **2020:** Celebrated 35 years of service; adapted to hybrid and virtual learning and 1-1 devices; The Academy of Hope Foundation was established- a separate nonprofit corporation, classified as a

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Ward 8: 421 Alabama Ave. SE | Washington, DC 20032 | P. 202.373.0246 |

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Section 501(c)(3) public charity; initiated a new long-term strategic plan; began major renovations on the Ward 8 campus.

- **2021:** First cohort of learners earned Certified Nursing Assistant licenses; launched a Phlebotomy workforce training track; completed the first phase of Ward 8 site renovations.
- **2022:** Introduced an Information Technology Pathway; implemented a two-year Strategic Adaptive Plan.
- **2023:** Expanded to over 800 adult learners; launched the Hope Forward Graduate Services Program.
- **2024:** Welcomed over 1,000 adult learners; celebrated 10 years as an adult charter school and received a unanimous five-year charter extension approval.

These achievements represent Academy of Hope's unwavering dedication to improving the lives of adult learners and expanding our reach to serve more communities. As we plan for the future, our strategic efforts will focus on strengthening our programs, facilities, and national presence, all while advancing our mission and further supporting our learners and alumni.

Academy of Hope's PCS Core Values: CARES

Community- AoH fosters an atmosphere where individuals can be completely present as their authentic self. We seek to advance values, attitudes, and beliefs that promote caring for one another. We believe we are stronger together and that representation for the people we serve matters.

Acceptance- AoH respects the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. We remain open-minded as we acknowledge each individual's complex identities and our collective differences. To us, every person is worthy and we expect teachers, staff, learners, and community members to come as their true selves.

Respect – At AoH, we believe that every human is deserving of respect and respect is an action. Respecting someone means engaging, learning, and trying to understand individuals' experiences. At Academy of Hope we are encouraging self-love and a deep understanding, appreciation, and regard for our communities.

Empowerment– AoH aims to purposefully recruit and engage community members who understand the power in every person. Our community is committed to actively listening and amplifying voices and lived experiences that are often unheard as a means to propel change.

Service- Our ultimate goal is to serve all learners responsibly. We strive to be good stewards of the trust learners place in us by consistently reviewing our practices, programs, and structures to ensure we are advancing learners' stated best interests.

IV. PROJECT SCOPE

Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (School) and the Academy of Hope Foundation (Foundation) are seeking a qualified contractor to develop two integrated, yet distinct, three-year strategic plans: one for the School and one for the Foundation. These plans will provide a comprehensive framework for Academy of Hope Network's continued growth and sustainability over the next 40 years, supporting adult learners in Washington, D.C., and beyond.

The contractor will be responsible for:

1. **AoH Public Charter School Strategic Plan:** Focus on programmatic and facility improvements to meet the evolving needs of the School learners and staff while ensuring alignment with the organization's mission. This plan should address key areas for growth within Washington, D.C., enhancing AoH's role as a leader in adult education innovation. The contractor will work closely with the School Board of Directors Strategic Planning Committee to ensure governance and operational priorities are integrated.
2. **AoH Foundation Strategic Plan:** Prioritize the AoH Foundation's role as the philanthropic arm of the School focusing on fundraising, donor engagement, and regional and national expansion. Additionally, the plan should cover research initiatives and systems change to support AoH's long-term impact. The contractor will collaborate with the AoH Foundation Board of Directors Strategic Planning Committee to ensure alignment with development and financial sustainability goals.

Both plans should be interconnected, highlighting opportunities for synergy and collaboration between the School and the Foundation. These strategic frameworks must be actionable, measurable, and rooted in AoH's core values of **Community, Acceptance, Respect, Empowerment, and Service (CARES)**, with a forward-thinking focus on innovation, inclusion, and organizational excellence.

Key Deliverables:

1. **Assessment & Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct an environmental scan (internal and external), including SWOT analysis, interviews, and focus groups with key stakeholders (staff, learners, board members, funders, community partners) to gather input on organizational priorities and direction.
2. **Strategic Goals & Objectives:** Establish clear, measurable goals and objectives for the School and the Foundation, with identified strategic pillars, performance metrics, and milestones for achievement.
3. **Implementation Plan:** Create a detailed, actionable implementation plan that includes resource allocation, responsible parties, and timelines for each strategic goal. The plan should outline mechanisms for ongoing oversight and progress tracking by the respective board committees.
4. **Budget & Resource Planning:** Develop a comprehensive budget that outlines financial, human, and operational resources needed for the successful implementation of each strategic plan.
5. **Final Presentation & Feedback:** Present the finalized strategic plans to the Board of Directors of the School and the Foundation, senior leadership, staff, board committees, and other key stakeholders, incorporating feedback to refine the plans as needed.

Timeline:

- RFP Responses Due: *January 3, 2025*
- RFP Evaluation & Interviews: *January 6, 2025-January 24, 2025*
- RFP Decision: *January 31, 2025*
- Draft Strategic Plans Due: *By May 9, 2025*
- Final Presentations Due: *Spring/Summer 2025*

V. CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation are seeking a contractor that can address the above described projects. Contractor's Statement of Qualifications should clearly and accurately demonstrate the specialized knowledge and experience required for services under consideration. Proposals should also include:

- Provide a project organization chart showing the proposed staff for this job, including all professional staff.
- Describe the duties and responsibilities for all key staff positions.

VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals are sought from firms with recognized expertise on design projects with experience in the nonprofit sector. In your proposal, please provide the below information in the order requested:

- Background on your organization including history, staff size and experience, average client size for this service, percent of business dedicated to technical support, and percent of business dedicated to nonprofits.
- Overview your approach / business model.
- Describe your approach to the projects identified above
- Cost Proposal: Detail prices for all services proposed. As the nature of the work to be performed will vary depending on the School and Foundation's needs and, etc., vendors should present prices in an "a la carte" format.
- The proposing firm should have a demonstrated commitment to diverse, inclusive, and equitable practices. The proposal should describe in detail the proposer's DEI commitment and practices.

Prices for which fixed prices are charged must be clearly identified. Identify what specific services are covered and which are not covered by any fixed price service. For services charged on an hourly or other per-unit basis, the cost proposal must detail charges for the following:

- If rates vary according to the nature of the contractor staff who perform the work, describe and enumerate the price for each labor category, i.e., provide a full hourly rate sheet for relevant staff.
- If prices vary according to time of day or the timing of the request for services (e.g., regularly scheduled visits versus emergency response), show those prices separately.
- Identify any other factors relevant to evaluation of pricing, such as billing increments (e.g., 15

minutes, etc.), whether travel time is charged, minimum billable units or amounts, mark-up on equipment procurement, etc.

- Technical Approach: The proposal must describe how the firm fulfills the “Contractor Qualifications” outlined in Section V.
- References: Include the three most similar clients to whom you have provided this service – name, organization, email and phone.

VII. EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

In considering proposals, Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation will make a best-value determination. Award will be made to the applicant that conforms to the RFP’s requirements and is judged to represent the best value to both organizations. Best value is defined as the proposal that presents the best overall value to Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation, cost and other factors considered, and which presents the most advantageous offer. Such offer may not necessarily be the proposal offering the lowest cost or receiving the highest technical rating.

Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation will evaluate proposals based on a number of criteria, including:

- i. How well the vendor demonstrates an understanding of the needs of both organizations and its ability to meet those needs
 - ii. The vendor’s commitment to AoH’s Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion values
 - iii. The overall business model and its match to the needs of both organizations
 - iv. Corporate experience with similar-sized nonprofits
 - v. Prior performance in similar engagements;
 - vi. Price
- Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation strongly encourage Black, Indigenous, people of color, members of the LGTBQIA2S+ community, as well as members of underrepresented groups to respond.
 - Academy of Hope Adult PCS and Academy of Hope Foundation strongly encourage small, local businesses that live and/ or serve the communities surrounding our campuses to respond.