



State Innovation Exchange (SiX) Request for Proposals: Communications and Branding Consultant

Deadline: February 12, 2021

The [State Innovation Exchange \(SiX\)](#) empowers, emboldens and equips state legislators to build and wield community governing power by/with/for the people they represent. We do this by providing legislators with the tools needed to shape impactful public policy and building their capacity to lead with their constituents. We foster long-term collaboration between legislators—across chambers, across regions, and across state lines—and with grassroots movements for progress. SiX exists to advance a bold people-centered policy vision in every state in this nation and to fill a gap in the progressive movement: helping state legislators succeed after they are elected.

SiX works in close coordination with legislators, advocacy groups, think tanks, and activists to provide the tools and information legislators need to be successful. We provide our network of over 3,500 legislators and legislative staff with customized policy research, skills- and issue-based trainings, convening and strategy sessions. Through earned media opportunities, sign-on letters, strategic communications, graphics, and policy-specific messaging, SiX provides opportunities to strengthen legislators' voices individually and collectively. We also coordinate with partner organizations to provide messaging best practices and conduct communications trainings in a variety of formats.

While SiX works on a broad range of progressive policy issues, we have three issue programs that provide specialized resources and technical assistance to train, elevate, and support legislators: the [Reproductive Freedom Leadership Council \(RFLC\)](#), the [Democracy Project](#), and the [Agriculture and Food Systems](#) program. As our work becomes increasingly critical to furthering the progress of transformative public policy, SiX will build a larger public profile. Our team seeks to shape the national dialogue on the critical policy issues state legislators are leading on and the understanding of the role of good governance in our democracy.

Overview and Deliverables:

The Executive Team at SiX invites proposals for a consultant or firm to fulfill one or all of the needs described below.

Branding

As the organization prepares to position itself in a more public facing space, SiX will need to more fully understand our brand and how it relates to our vision and mission. SiX staff will need to understand how a refined and increased external brand relates to our individual work and how we communicate that to our constituencies. SiX will need to refine the brand and develop supporting materials.

- Review of existing materials used in fundraising and public outreach by the SiX team and existing public profile (social media, website) and an analysis of SiX's current branding;
- Analyze peer organizations and make a recommendation on how SiX can strategically promote its unique brand;
- Advise on long-form content needs and the SiX elevator pitch;
- Lead internal staff on developing a SiX style guide to help internal actors with consistency in how they create presentations, one pagers and talk to target audiences about SiX and our work; and
- Develop a system for tracking and updating materials that are used across the organization from fundraising to program presentations.

Strategic Media Planning

SiX seeks a comprehensive media plan and supporting materials to effectively define and position the national organization in the media and leverage organizational spokespeople to shape the national conversation on state trends and priorities.

- Short-term media plan for 2021 which will include proactive pitches and recommendations on how best to prepare for opportunities that may arise;
- Five-year media strategy document which includes recommendations on reporter contacts to cultivate and recommendations on how to best position the organization for placement opportunities;
- Outreach to national media to position SiX as a go-to resource on state legislative trends;
- Draft and place monthly content by the Co-Executive Directors;
- Placement of SiX State Directors and Program Leaders when opportunities arise;
- Interview preparation and follow up with SiX team; and
- Year-end work summary and recommendations.

Training

SiX seeks media training for senior staff members so they are better prepared for on-camera media opportunities as they arise.

- Virtual on-camera media training for staff;
- Follow-up sessions to refine and improve skills;
- Additional on-going feedback on appearances; and
- Advice and guidance on use of social media tools.

Respondents

SiX welcomes concepts from consultants/firms with the capacity to provide timely, comprehensive communications, branding and training support; a commitment to advancing racial equity; knowledge of state policy; and an understanding of the progressive movement. Respondents can submit proposals for any or all parts of this project. If you are submitting a proposal for the Training portion of this RFP, please separately break out the costs for that service.

Consultants who are hired will report directly to the Co-Executive Directors and work closely with the senior leadership team at SiX. Upon selection, the individual or firm will be expected to develop a work-plan and timeline for deliverables in collaboration with the SiX team.

Information Requested

Interested respondents should submit a concept, not more than 5 pages, addressing the following:

- Vision for one or all parts of the project proposal;
- Approach to meeting the stated objectives;
- Anticipated challenges and ways to address those challenges;
- Experience and key staff that will work on this project;
- High-level budget which includes personnel and other costs; and
- Proposed project timeline.

Selection & Evaluation Criteria

Candidates should ideally have:

- Proven commitment to building an equitable, resilient, healthy and prosperous future for every person in the United States;
- Expertise in working with progressive organizations and in value-based communication; and
- A positive track record in working with similar organizations and with external audiences in the progressive ecosystem.

We will evaluate proposals on several dimensions:

- Qualifications (What level of risk do we perceive based on the bidder's qualifications?)

- Approach (Do we believe the approach will help us reach our objectives and syncs with the mission of our organization?)
- Feasibility (Do we believe the engagement will set us up for success in implementation?)

Administrative Information

Proposal Submission: The application **deadline for proposal submission is 5 pm ET, Friday, February 12th**. Application should be no more than 5 pages. Please submit applications to Kelly Baden, kelly@stateinnovation.org.

Budget: Total fees and out-of-pocket expenses should not exceed \$120,000.

Selection Process and Timeline: SiX will review all proposals and **interview finalists by March 12, 2021**.

Anticipated Period of Performance: SiX anticipates that activities will occur between **April 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021**.

The State Innovation Exchange is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and encourages applications from all qualified individuals including women, people of color, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals.