



STATE INNOVATION EXCHANGE AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Request for Proposals: Rural Narrative Consultant with Progressive Values

State Innovation Exchange (SiX) is a national resource and strategy center that collaborates with state legislators to improve people's lives through transformative public policy. 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 policy support, communication products, research, trainings, convenings, technical assistance and strategic advice with a particular focus on the dynamics in each state.

We are committed to building progressive power at the state level by providing lasting and personalized support for state legislators. SiX supports legislators who are working to: strengthen our democracy, fight for working families, advance reproductive freedom, defend civil rights and liberties, support healthy regional agriculture systems, and protect the environment. We have recently expanded into more comprehensive rural programming with the launch of the [Blueprint for Rural Policy Action in the States](#), a tool designed to support legislators with rural districts and from rural states in promoting progressive policies to positively impact the lives of people living in rural communities.

Our goal is for state legislators to champion these policies using persuasive values-based messaging that widely resonates with their constituents. State legislators not only set the policy agenda for a state, they also help establish what issues the press covers and how those issues are framed. To be successful on the policy front, legislators must go beyond the technical nature of legislation and engage on the broader themes.

In recent years, a variety of rural-focused and rural-inclusive narrative and messaging projects have demonstrated successful communications frameworks and approaches for connecting with rural communities on progressive issues. These findings have not been tailored specifically for the state legislator audience. This presents an opportunity to do so, in practical narrative and messaging toolkits for the policy issue areas of the *Blueprint*.

We seek a short-term consulting firm or consultant, with experience working with and in rural communities, to create messaging and narrative toolkits on a variety of issue areas. Policymakers will access the toolkits on a SiX website, where they can also learn policy context and nuance, access background resources, identify collaborating partner organizations, and gain skills for discussing complicated policy priorities with constituents.

Project

This project is a collaboration between multiple people across two organizations. To successfully complete this project, the consultant will:

1. Serve as project manager, including creating work plans, facilitating meetings, and tracking progress and materials. Successful candidates will be organized, direct, accountable, and collegial.
2. Create a landscape assessment of the best values-based narrative and messaging guidance that is most relevant and effective for advocating for the policies in the *Blueprint* with people in rural communities.
3. Create a communications toolkit (or multiple toolkits focusing on different policy areas of the *Blueprint*) targeted towards a legislator audience. The toolkit/s should include specific narrative guidance and messaging documents for approximately 10 priority issue areas.
4. Identify gaps and define areas for additional research.
5. Propose next steps beyond the scope of this contract towards the broader objective.

Timeline

July 12:	RFP released
September 6:	Proposals due
September 16:	Select candidates invited to interview
October 7:	Project start date

Commitment

We envision this project taking a significant amount of time over a few months; as much as 25 hours/week. A portion of that time will be spent in meetings and project managing, and a portion spent researching, collaborating with partners and staff, writing, and creating toolkits. While the ideal candidate will come with connections and resources to rural advocates, we have staff members in-house who hold deep relationships with advocates across the country.

Budget

Proposal budgets should not exceed \$10,000/month for six months.

To Apply

Please submit:

- A brief (two page maximum) proposal that conveys your expertise and experience as it relates to state policy and rural advocacy, communications, and project management.
- Approach to scope of services and explanation of deliverables (1 page maximum)
- Proposed project schedule
- A proposed budget
- For individuals: a resume or CV, work product sample, references; for firms: a list of similar work products and clients.

Proposals are due September 6, 9am ET.

Please submit your proposal via email with the subject line *Consultant Proposal: Rural Blueprint* to: Kendra Kimbirauskas, Director of Agriculture & Food Systems, State Innovation Exchange agriculture@stateinnovation.org

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.