

Justice Climate Fund
Request for Proposals (RFP) for Strategic Communications Services

Release date: 12/10/2024

Submission date: 01/10/2025

Summary

The Justice Climate Fund (JCF) invites qualified vendors to submit proposals for the provision of strategic communications services. JCF seeks to enhance its brand presence, refine its messaging both locally and nationally, and strengthen its engagement with diverse stakeholders. This RFP outlines expectations, scope of work and timeline for submissions. Through this RFP, we aim to identify a communications partner who can deliver exceptional results aligned with our mission and strategic priorities. Given JCF’s start-up dynamic, the selected partner must remain flexible and proactive in adjusting strategies and deliverables. This includes leveraging storytelling to humanize the impact of JCF’s programs, using data-driven approaches to ensure alignment with organizational goals, and timely responses to urgent or unexpected situations. Innovation, creativity, and responsiveness will be critical to success. We look forward to working with the best qualified firm to advance JCF’s mission and vision.

All correspondence for this RFP should be directed to:

Theresa Bedeau (tbedeau@justiceclimatefund.org)

Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Justice Climate Fund

RFP submission instructions:

Proposals must be submitted electronically in a single pdf file to: Theresa Bedeau, tbedeau@justiceclimatefund.org. Subject line should read “JCF Strategic Communications RFP” and be submitted electronically by Monday, January 6 by 7:00PM Eastern Time

RFP schedule:

| | |
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| Release of Request for Proposals | Tuesday, Dec 10, 2024 |
| Deadline for Submission of Questions | Tuesday, Dec 17, 2024 |
| Deadline for JCF to Respond to Questions | Friday, Dec 20, 2024 |
| Submission of Proposals | Friday, Jan 10, 2025 (no later than 7:00PM EST) |
| Announcement of Selections | Monday, Jan 20, 2025 |
| Anticipated Contract Start Date | Tuesday, Jan 21, 2025 |

Organizational Background:

Founded by the Community Builders of Color Coalition, the Justice Climate Fund (JCF) is a dynamic and growing national network of 300+ diverse financial institutions and advocacy organizations advancing climate equity. For decades, our partners have worked within historically under-resourced communities, building trust and creating opportunities for growth and resilience. In 2024, JCF was awarded nearly \$1 billion through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA) program, part of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), to pioneer transformative, community-centered finance solutions in communities most impacted by climate change.

JCF is a purpose-built nonprofit driving climate solutions while deploying transformative capital through its network of community lenders, including community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and minority depository institutions (MDIs). Our network partners serve all 50 states and reach more than 113 million Americans, including over 55 million low-income and disadvantaged individuals.

Our vision is to build resilient, thriving communities across the United States by ensuring those most impacted by climate change are empowered to lead the transition to a sustainable and equitable future.

In its first two years, JCF has reached significant milestones:

- **Securing Substantial Federal Funding:** JCF's success in obtaining \$940 million through the EPA's GGRF underscores the critical role that early-stage funding plays in scaling organizations like JCF to meet ambitious national climate goals.
- **Attracting Private Capital:** JCF obtained over \$5 million in philanthropic support to bridge its launch in advance of being awarded its EPA GGRF grant and the critical period negotiating its final agreement.
- **Building Infrastructure and Expertise:** JCF is rapidly building its organizational infrastructure and expertise, including an [expert team of executive leaders](#), online presence with over 12,000 online users and a growing partnership network. As a leader in climate equity, JCF has the administrative infrastructure in place to ensure efficient and compliant management of its expansive and growing funding portfolio.

Scope of Services

The selected firm will report to the Managing Director of Communications or the Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer. The following scope of services is based on current organizational needs and will evolve as JCF expands its resources, responds to community needs and refines its strategy through relevant data and stakeholder feedback.

Strategic Communications

- **Strategy Integration:** Collaborate with JCF's Strategy team to provide relevant insights and data, supporting the implementation and expansion of the CCIA program and overall organizational objectives.

- Leadership Support: Develop, draft, and refine high-quality materials and trainings for JCF leadership, including talking points, statements, PowerPoint presentations, email updates on trends, and quarterly newsletters.
- Event Support: Provide content development, documentation, and media engagement for JCF-sponsored events to ensure effective communication of event goals and outcomes.
- Narrative Refinement: Refine key narratives to ensure communications align with strategic priorities, and messaging resonates with the diverse audiences JCF serves.
- Strategic Counsel: Offer ongoing, tailored recommendations for both internal and external communications strategies, serving as a trusted advisor in regular check-ins with JCF leadership. Serve as a trusted advisor to JCF leadership, participating in regular check-in calls to align efforts and document action items.

Earned Media

- Media Material Development: Create impactful materials such as press releases, media pitches, op-eds, and backgrounders.
- Media Relationship Management: Maintain and leverage comprehensive media contact lists to secure coverage across print, broadcast, and online platforms.
- Spokesperson Preparation: Provide media training and support to ensure JCF's spokespersons are confident and effective.
- Event Recaps: Deliver comprehensive coverage recaps after press events, summarizing media mentions, audience reach, and key takeaways to evaluate impact and inform future strategies
- Media Monitoring and Reporting: Provide daily media clips featuring JCF mentions, and notable articles aligned with JCF's initiatives to keep leadership informed and identify opportunities.

Social Media and Digital Presence

- Content Creation and Management: Develop, schedule, and manage high-quality, interactive and engaging content for JCF's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X) tailored to its audience.
- SEO Optimization: Integrate SEO best practices into website updates and blog content to improve visibility and organic traffic
- Performance Metrics: Track and analyze social media metrics to measure return on investment (ROI) and refine strategies for enhanced impact.
- Audience Engagement: Oversee backend management of accounts to streamline interactions and direct inquiries to appropriate JCF contacts.
- Website Management: Regularly update and optimize JCF's website with consistent, user-friendly content that reflects JCF's brand and initiatives.
- Accessibility: Ensure all digital content meets accessibility standards to maximize inclusivity and reach
- Digital Campaigns: Launch campaigns tied to program milestones, including application launches, event registrations, and key advocacy pushes.

Tailored Stakeholder Communications

- Network Activation: Coordinate with JCF's partners to extend messaging reach by creating press releases, social media content, and additional resources to activate their networks.
- Diverse Stakeholder Materials: Draft and customize communications to address the unique needs of various stakeholder groups.
- Support for the MD of Communications: Assist with the development and execution of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement and communications plan.
- Surrogate Media Training: Offer tailored media training for surrogates, including key partners and stakeholders

Budget

- We do not have a firm budget for this scope of work and look forward to the market helping to inform the cost estimate.
- We plan to issue one award to one organization, and we are open to different billing structures, including fixed price, cost reimbursement (with profit margin negotiated), and time and materials.
- If cost reimbursement or time and materials methodology is chosen, please provide a detailed build-up of your proposed cost.
- Budget will be subject to terms and conditions negotiated with our funding source.

Submission requirements

Proposals should be no longer than six (6) pages, not including budget, and cover the following:

1. Firm Description and qualifications: describe relevant experience with non-profit, climate, national and local government, and/or community-focused organizations
2. Approach and methodology: outline approach to delivering the outlined set of services, including process for assessing best use of resources
3. Proposed team: include profiles and roles of team members that will support the range of services outlined above.
4. Estimated Budget: provide a detailed budget, including monthly retainer fees, anticipated out of pocket expenses and any other costs.
5. If your organization is a certified M/WBE, please provide documentation.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated expertise in strategic communications and branding.
- Understanding of JCF's mission and audience.
- Creativity and innovation in proposed solutions.
- Value and clarity of the proposed budget.
- Experience working with similar climate or community lending-focused organizations.

Top-rated proposals (see scoring rubric) may be invited to interview with JCF staff members. The selected consultant, firm or organization and JCF will then mutually discuss and refine



the scope of work for the project and shall negotiate final conditions, compensation, and performance schedule for the subsequent contract to be executed.

| Scoring rubric | Max Points |
|---|------------|
| <p>Required criteria: Proposals will not be considered for evaluation without meeting all the following mandatory criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrated expertise as evidenced by professional certifications, accreditations, or industry recognition. B. Independent. C. No record of substandard work. | 25 |
| <p>Technical criteria: Proposals that have met each of the criteria above will additionally be evaluated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly stating an understanding of the work to be performed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensiveness of the services-to-be performed/scope of work. 2. The proposer has prior experience working on similar projects. 3. The proposer has prior experience working with similar organizations. 4. Quality of submitted work samples. B. Firm's technical experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Satisfactory completion of similar communications support services under consideration in the proposal. 2. Demonstrates an understanding of the organization's needs and desired results. 3. Illustrates an approach to the scope of work that will likely lead to successful results. 4. Illustrates ability to successfully execute the proposed approach. 5. Details project activities and milestones, or deliverables, associated with each stage of the scope of work. C. Qualifications of proposed staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qualifications of communications team. 2. Experience working with diverse stakeholders across the climate eco-system and government offices. 3. Experience providing communications support to similar entities. D. Firm's commitment to justice and equity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of firm or individual commitment to justice and equity through demonstration of diversity plans, past performance with diverse businesses, and commitments to diversity and inclusion initiatives. | 50 |
| <p>Cost criteria: Reasonableness of proposed cost (considering hourly billing rates, out-of-pocket expenses, and total proposed cost).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The proposal includes a detailed budget for each stage of the scope of work. B. The proposed costs are reasonable. C. The proposed changes to JCF's standard contract terms and conditions are acceptable. | 25 |
| Total points (maximum) | 100 |

The following is subject to revision based on agreed terms and conditions upon contract execution and the terms and conditions of source of funding. We are providing it here as an example.

**Attachment A
Required Terms and Conditions
for Contracts Supported by Federal Funds**

The following terms and conditions are required to be included in any contract(s) awarded as a result of this solicitation that are supported by federal funds, in whole or in part, during the life of the contract(s). As used herein, “Contractor” shall refer to the selected Proposer, and “contracting entity” shall refer to JCF.

BUY USA - DOMESTIC PREFERENCE FOR PROCUREMENTS

1. Contractor should, to the greatest extent practicable under a Federal award, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States (including but not limited to iron, aluminum, steel, cement, and other manufactured products). The requirements of this section must be included in all subawards including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products under this award.
2. For purposes of this section:
 - a. “Produced in the United States” means, for iron and steel products, that all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.
 - b. “Manufactured products” means items and construction materials composed in whole or in part of non-ferrous metals such as aluminum; plastics and polymer-based products such as polyvinyl chloride pipe; aggregates such as concrete; glass, including optical fiber; and lumber.

BYRD ANTI-LOBBYING AMENDMENT, 31 U.S.C. § 1352 (AS AMENDED)

Contractors that apply or bid for an award exceeding \$100,000 shall file the required certification. Each tier certifies to the tier above that it will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or firm for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant, or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. § 1352. Each tier must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award. Such disclosures are forwarded from tier to tier, up to the non-Federal award.

CLEAN AIR ACT AND WATER POLLUTIONS CONTROL ACT PROVISIONS

1. Contractor agrees to comply with all applicable standards, orders, or regulations issued pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 7401 et seq.), and the

Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.).

2. Contractor agrees to report each violation to the contracting entity and understands and agrees that the contracting entity will, in turn, report each violation as required to assure notification to the grantor federal agency and the appropriate Environmental Protection Agency Regional Office.
3. Contractor agrees to include these requirements in each subcontract exceeding \$150,000 financed in whole or in part with federal assistance.

CONTRACT PROVISIONS FOR DAVIS BACON AND RELATED ACTS

Please refer to the following website for [DBRA Requirements for Contractors and Subcontractors](#) under the EPA.

COPYRIGHT AND DATA RIGHTS (IF APPLICABLE)

1. Data, as used herein, shall include any work subject to copyright under 17 U.S.C. § 102, for example, any written reports or literary works, software and/or source code, music, choreography, pictures or images, graphics, sculptures, videos, motion pictures or other audiovisual works, sound and/or video recordings, and architectural works.
2. Contractor grants to the contracting entity, a paid-up, royalty-free, nonexclusive, irrevocable, worldwide license in data first produced in the performance of this contract to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, including prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly such data.
3. For data required by the contract but not first produced in the performance of this contract, Contractor will identify such data and grant to the contracting entity or acquires on its behalf a license of the same scope as for data first produced in the performance of this contract.
4. Upon or before the completion of this contract, Contractor will deliver to the contracting entity data first produced in the performance of this contract and data required by the contract but not first produced in the performance of this contract in formats acceptable by the contracting entity.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

Contractor acknowledges that Federal funds will be used to fund all or a portion of the contract. Contractor will comply with all applicable Federal law, regulations, executive orders, policies, procedures, and directives. This specifically includes, *but is not limited to*, all 2 CFR 200 requirements, and any Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) requirements and guidance established by the United States Department of the Treasury and/or the EPA for IRA funding. It also includes any legal requirements applicable to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding.

PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT (HUAWEI AND ZTE) (IF APPLICABLE)

Contractor and any sub-contractor are each prohibited from obligating or expending loan or grant funds to:

1. Procure or obtain;
2. Extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or
3. Enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. As described in Public Law 115–232, section 889, covered telecommunications equipment is telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

(1) For the purpose of public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes, video surveillance and telecommunications equipment produced by Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

(2) Telecommunications or video surveillance services provided by such entities or using such equipment.

(3) Telecommunications or video surveillance equipment or services produced or provided by an entity that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Director of the National Intelligence or the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reasonably believes to be an entity owned or controlled by, or otherwise connected to, the government of a covered foreign country.

PUBLICATIONS CLAUSE (FOR INFLATION REDUCTION ACT “IRA” FUNDS)

Any publications produced with funds from this award must display the following language: “This project [is being] [was] supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number [enter project FAIN] awarded to [name of Recipient] by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.” This requirement is subject to change based on the requirements of EPA.

RIGHTS TO INVENTIONS MADE UNDER A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Contracts or agreements for the substitution of parties, assignment, or performance of experimental, developmental, or research work shall provide for the rights of the Federal Government and the recipient in any resulting invention in accordance with 37 CFR part 401, “Rights to Inventions Made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms Under Government Grants, Contracts and Cooperative Agreements,” and any applicable implementing regulations.

SUSPENSION OR DEBARMENT

1. No contract will be awarded to a Contractor or any party that is debarred from working



on federally funded projects, as listed on the government-wide exclusions list in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov, in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R. Part 180.

2. This contract is a covered transaction for purposes of 2 C.F.R. Part 180 and 2 C.F.R. Part 3000. As such, Contractor is required to verify that none of Contractor's principals (defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.995) or its affiliates (defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.905) are excluded (defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.940) or disqualified (defined at 2 C.F.R. § 180.935).
3. The bidder or proposer agrees to comply with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. Part 180, subpart C and 2 C.F.R. Part 3000, subpart C while this offer is valid and throughout the period of any contract that may arise from this offer.

[Signature Page Follows]

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND CERTIFICATION

On behalf of [NAME OF FIRM], I hereby:

1. Acknowledge that the specific terms and conditions outlined in this Attachment A will be fully incorporated into any contract(s) awarded because of this solicitation that are supported by Federal funds, in whole or in part, during the life of the contract(s); and
2. Commit to adhere to all relevant regulations, guidelines, and requirements outlined in this RFP and all Attachments contained within this RFP. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the qualification process and ensuring fair evaluation.

Name of Firm:

Name:

Signature:

Title:

Date:

SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- a) Promptly notify JCF in writing of any legal proceedings resulting from any subcontract or other commitment related to the terminated portion of the contract;
- b) Settle outstanding liabilities and proposals arising out of the termination; and
- c) If there is a terminated construction contract, ensure the cleanup of the site, protection of serviceable materials, removal of hazards, and other actions necessary to leave a safe and healthful site.

END OF DOCUMENT