Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) requests proposals for consulting services to development a strategic marketing plan that supports overall organizational marketing and communications, key messaging and storytelling, as well as fundraising efforts.

NDC Mission
Founded in 1968, the Neighborhood Design Center is a nonprofit organization that facilitates the development of healthy, equitable neighborhoods through community-engaged design and planning services. By providing the tools, expertise, and partnerships necessary to realize neighborhood visions, we support broad participation in the evolution of the built environment.

Overview
NDC has been building equity through community-led design since our founding and has helped complete over 3,700 projects in Maryland in that time. NDC projects are collaborations between residents, community stakeholders, design professionals, local government agencies, fellow nonprofits, and our staff. Together we lay the groundwork for improving blocks, renovating parks and school grounds, reclaiming abandoned structures for community use, and revitalizing commercial districts.

We are a unique organization in Maryland with a growing national presence. Higher profile work of note includes hosting “Reverberations” a national conference on community design, in 2018, securing highly competitive national funding, winning competitive project commissions, and most recently, launching “Design For Distancing” with Baltimore City, to address COVID-era business re-opening needs, which has garnered international attention. Currently, much of our work focuses around our two main jurisdictions; Baltimore City and Prince George’s County, and we look to expand those impact areas in the coming years.

A great deal of work has been undertaken in the last few years resulting in a well-defined brand architecture and style guide, comprehensive fundraising strategy plan, and new website that was launched in 2019 (https://ndc-md.org). Current marketing and communications platforms/assets include; NDC Website, Social Media (Facebook, IG,
Twitter, LinkedIn) with limited paid content, Newsletter (Mailchimp), Events, Collateral. Identified audiences include: field leaders and design professionals, community leaders, donors and the general public. We strongly suggest that candidates review our website to understand our work, mission, community commitment and overall approach in our communications style.

Similar to our community-engaged design work, our internal process is collaborative. The selected marketing consultant will be required to work with NDC staff and a team of existing writing, graphic design, and social media contractors.

NDC has a rich inventory of highly visual stories to share, that grows with each year. We have increased investment in organizational marketing year over year, with the full marketing and communications investment in recent years as follows: FY19- $46k, FY20- $70k, FY21- $96k. In order to maximize the impact of this investment, we are seeking a marketing consultant that can help us develop a detailed plan to better leverage our history of success, articulate our value, and expand our reach and influence.

Scope of Work
The marketing strategy must outline a strategic approach to accomplishing marketing goals that can be easily understood and managed by in-house staff and contractors. Specifically, we seek a consultant to:

1) Evaluate current and archived marketing and communications tactics to understand why they were successful or not, and identify elements that can be expanded upon. Also, review other organizational documents that are relevant to the project.

2) Develop a marketing program that will define goals, identify target audiences, and detail specific strategies and tactics to be developed and implemented over the next 12-18 months. Strategies are to be prioritized with project milestones and proposed budgets presented where appropriate.

3) Address how existing marketing efforts and new recommendations can complement each other and leverage new opportunities, while utilize existing brand architecture, style guide, and audience personas.

4) Provide analysis and recommendations to include (but not be limited to): online marketing/advertising; social media content; collateral/print materials; NDC e-newsletter; website, including “Journal” (the news section); events; media relations; public speaking/conferences and related activities; and additional nontraditional marketing strategies.
5) Address ways to leverage marketing and communication to increase individual and corporate giving, by building off a recently developed fundraising strategy plan, aligning campaign development with current and future trends.

6) Assess established positioning and values in light of recent global events and changing dynamics of communication methods and messaging platforms to create powerful key messaging to clarify and strengthen the NDC brand.

7) Craft an action-oriented plan that is easy to understand and provide enough detail for NDC staff to readily manage and implement in-house. Include a glossary of terms and tips if needed.

8) Provide a series of draft plans for review over the lifespan of the contract, culminating in a final written plan in a PDF document with a final presentation with deck highlighting findings and recommendations.

NOTE: This RFP does not include the creation of marketing and communications content (for example, website or social media content, annual report, collateral material design), or other elements that will be used in the implementation of the marketing plan. Rather, this RFP is focused on the creation of the strategy and tactics which will then guide implementation.

Proposal Requirements:
Firms considered for this project must be able to demonstrate the following:

1) Experience in working with non-profit organizations and creating comprehensive strategic marketing plans.

2) Understanding of the contexts within which NDC works, in order to develop a nuanced understanding and sophisticated articulation of the purpose and activities of the organization.

Proposal Timeline
1) Date of RFP Release: August 28, 2020
2) Deadline for submission of RFP questions: Sept 2, 2020
   a. Questions regarding this RFP can be emailed to Briony Hynson at bhyson@ndc-md.org, no phone calls will be accepted.
   b. If you are interested in receiving these responses please email by the above date that you would like to be added to the list.
3) Question responses emailed: Sept 3, 2020
4) Deadline for proposal submission: September 8, 2020
5) Notification of selection: September 10th, 2020
6) Contract execution: September 17, 2020
7) Expected completion of contract: November 30, 2020

Proposed Budget
Range $11,000 - $13,000

Evaluation Criteria
1) Strategic vision: A winning proposal will demonstrate the ability to present a compelling vision
2) Outline the approach to project management and when milestones will be met from start to finish, including all the elements outlined in this RFP.
3) Ability to propose a compelling vision within budget

TO APPLY:

Proposals should include:
1) Cover letter to include key contact name, title, email address, phone number and email address. Acknowledgement of agreeing to proposed project timeline.
2) Detailed description of your qualifications and expertise to meet or exceed the specifications in the “Scope of Work”.
3) Proposed work approach to complete the “Scope of Work” and list of expected deliverables.
4) Projected project plan and timeline, and resources that will be required from NDC to complete the project.
5) Overview of at least two recent, relevant projects that involved developing strategic marketing plans, with a special focus on non-profit organizations.
6) Identify key personnel to perform this contract and include resumes.
7) Proposed budget with a breakdown of costs for the project, including a clear description of services included in the fee and additional optional add-on or discretionary costs.

Proposals should be submitted to bhynson@ndc-md.org by no later than 4pm on September 8th, 2020.