

Expression of Interest:**Developing a three-year Strategic Plan for WomenStrong International****Proposed Start Date: March 2022****Background to WomenStrong International**

WomenStrong International finds, funds, strengthens, and shares women-driven solutions that will transform lives in urban communities. WomenStrong works with women-led organizations all over the world (currently 18 organizations in 15 countries) that focus on girls' education, women's health, and preventing violence against women and girls. We bring these partner organizations together in a Learning Lab, to develop, test, sharpen, and disseminate their solutions. In 2022, we plan to introduce a fourth area of focus into our Lab: economic security and opportunity for women and girls. Through our collective learning and sharing, WomenStrong is building a global community of organizations better equipped to advance the rights and wellbeing of women and girls.

Our partners receive unrestricted funding from WomenStrong and come together in our Learning Lab, where they can learn and grow together as they share what's working, and what's not, in their efforts both to improve the lives of the women and girls in their settings and to advance gender equality.

Since our founding, WomenStrong has invested nearly \$10 million in direct grants to women's organizations and another \$3 million in supporting these organizations, with technical support and training, opportunities to present and publish their work, and other organizational strengthening and learning activities.

Introduction to the Project

WomenStrong International seeks to complete a strategic planning process with key stakeholders, in order to advance our mission, revise our theory of change, guide operations and programming, and attract funding for the next three years.

To help us achieve this, WomenStrong is seeking a consultant(s) who will facilitate a Strategic Planning exercise and help craft a functional Strategic Plan document that will chart WomenStrong's course for the next three years. This process should draw from the consultant(s)' familiarity with the sectors in which WomenStrong works, and the challenges faced by local, women-led non-profits in effectively and sustainably implementing programs. The consultant(s) will facilitate discussions among the team and with other stakeholders (i.e., grantee partners, Learning Lab consultants, Board members), to ensure alignment between WomenStrong's approach to grantmaking, its program activities, and its desired short- and long-term outcomes, and to identify assumptions implicit to this approach.

WomenStrong is a learning organization, built on respect and compassion that recognizes our common humanity and essential dignity. Our work is rooted in listening deeply to women and girls, responding to what they say they need, and learning from what works. We have faith in the power of collaboration at all levels, and seek to take a non-proprietary, multidimensional, and holistic approach to our work. This extends to the development of our Strategic Plan which we intend to approach with the utmost inclusivity, appreciating each others' experience and knowledge as we

seek to build a more inclusive, relevant and sustainable organization. WomenStrong sees enormous value in involving our grantee partners in this strategic planning exercise. With the guidance of the consultant(s), we would like to invite partner representatives to join discussions at different points in the process. In discussion with WomenStrong, the consultant will agree on the number of partners and a schedule for engagement and propose meaningful ways to engage partners' voices.

Expected Skills and Experience:

We are looking for an individual or a team possessing the following skills and experience:

- Demonstrated background in strategic planning and facilitation, particularly with organizations of similar size and focus;
- Demonstrated ability to adapt techniques of engagement to meet the needs of the organization's culture and structure;
- Excellent interpersonal communication and group facilitation skills, to enable safe and creative spaces for collective enquiry, debate, learning, and decision-making;
- Experience developing interactive and creative methods for gathering and incorporating stakeholder input;
- Good understanding of current priorities, trends, opportunities, and challenges in the feminist and women's rights movement. Specific knowledge or experience working with women-led organizations and on the thematic areas relevant to WomenStrong (girls' education and empowerment, women and girls' health, violence against women and girls, and economic security and opportunity for women and girls);
- Experience working with teams existing across different cultures, geographies, languages, and time zones;
- Familiarity with current philanthropic trends, grantmaking mechanisms, and trust-based philanthropic partnerships;
- Excellent analytical and framing skills, with the ability to see intersections and threads between and among WomenStrong's priorities and teams;
- Ability to organize, interpret and communicate complex information from multiple sources in succinct and engaging ways;
- Experience in facilitating meetings, interviews, focus groups, etc., in a virtual setting.

Actions and deliverables:

The consultant(s) will co-develop the strategic planning process with WomenStrong. Therefore, the following activities plan is a starting point that can be adjusted, and the final deliverables will be agreed upon, once the consultant(s)' proposal has been accepted.

1. Activities

Stage 1: Pre-planning

- Initial planning meetings to understand WomenStrong's priorities/concerns/ ambitions;
- Thorough review of WomenStrong's history, model, theory of change, organigram, budget, fundraising to-date, and other relevant documents;
- Questionnaire design/focus group. and/or interview preparation;
- Preliminary meetings/interviews with selected staff, Board members, and grantee partners of WomenStrong;
- SWOT or GAP analysis of the organization to evaluate opportunities and concerns.

Stage 2: Strategic Plan development

- Facilitation of Strategic Planning meetings and workshops involving WomenStrong staff, grantee partners, consultants, and Board members, to discuss key findings of the preliminary interviews, and from there, to start to build the Plan itself.

Stage 3: Finalization

- Creation of an actionable Strategic Plan that includes:
 - An updated mission and vision for the organization;
 - Clear aims, objectives, and an updated theory of change in support of the vision;
 - Strategies to implement the theory of change and to achieve the organization's goals;
 - Measurable outcomes within the timeframe of the Plan;
 - Analysis of how the Strategic Plan will be supported by both WomenStrong's communications and development (fundraising) efforts and by its operational and HR structures;
- Presentation of the draft Strategy before it is final, to collect and incorporate useful feedback;
- Facilitation of feedback mechanisms, and integration of appropriate feedback;
- Completion of final Strategic Plan document.

Deliverables:

- Timeline indicating key milestones;
- Report on the process, including a summary of stakeholder interviews/ consultations;
- Workshop agenda;
- Three-year Strategic Plan document that includes a budget for its implementation.

Timeframe: We anticipate that this process will begin before the end of March 2022 and take between 3-6 months, with the exact timeframe to be determined in consultation with the successful applicant(s).

Application procedure:

All interested applicants are requested to submit:

1. A project plan that demonstrates a clear understanding of the work to be performed. The plan should include:
 - a. A brief explanation of why you are interested in conducting this work;
 - b. A description of your approach to strategic planning;
 - c. An estimated project timeline including proposed major tasks and milestones.
2. CV(s) of the consultant(s) who will be implementing the project, highlighting relevant experience. We will be looking for applicants with a proven record of accomplishment in facilitating strategic planning processes with mission-driven organizations of similar size.
3. A detailed project budget
4. Name and contact details of two people who can provide references for your strategic planning experience.

Deadline: All applications should be sent via email to nwalston@womenstrong.org and received no later than February 1, 2022.

Only shortlisted candidates (or teams) will be contacted.

Location: WomenStrong staff are scattered geographically, as are our grantee partners and Board members. The remote nature of the organization, in addition to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, suggest that the majority of the exercise, if not all of it, will be completed virtually. We will therefore be looking for applicants with experience bringing teams together over online platforms.

Point of Contact: Throughout the exercise, WomenStrong's Director of Strategy and Engagement, Naomi Walston, will be the main point of contact.