

FUNDERS CONCERNED ABOUT AIDS
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT**

Issue Date: 01/25/2024

Submission Deadline: 02/12/2024

Introduction

Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA) is seeking a strategic communications partner to develop and help implement a new strategic communications plan focused on:

- Crafting and elevating FCAA's thought leadership and profile
- Ensuring that new organizational key messages are integrated seamlessly across FCAA communications platforms
- Development of organizational and sector key message/toolkit development
- Supporting media outreach and op-ed development
- Building an editorial calendar and related content tools to maintain relevancy throughout the year

About FCAA

FCAA is a philanthropy-serving organization (PSO) founded in 1987 to take bold actions and push philanthropy to respond to HIV and AIDS. FCAA's mission is to inform, connect, and support philanthropy to mobilize resources to end the global HIV pandemic and build the social, political, and economic commitments necessary to attain health, human rights, and justice for all.

In December of 2020, FCAA launched its 2021-2025 strategic plan to reflect the current state of the fight against HIV and AIDS and to mobilize philanthropy to direct resources where they will be more effective.

During the 1980s, the earliest responses to the HIV pandemic were started by individuals in local communities, clinics, health departments, and foundations that had the vision and courage to act for health, rights, community empowerment, and an adequate response by governments.

Written during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, FCAA's strategic plan recognizes that to respond to emerging pandemics and continue to sustain progress against HIV and AIDS, grant makers need to apply the experience and approaches learned from the history of the HIV response in funding effective research, community education, advocacy for rights and justice, and scaled-up testing, treatment, and prevention.

Through this plan, FCAA pledges to remain a central source of information about HIV-related philanthropy, to connect and to convene leaders in philanthropy and support the visibility and influence of HIV-related funders.

Current Situation

Led by FCAA's new Executive Director Masen Davis, the organization underwent a communication thought exercise in 2023 with the firm Wonder for Good to test messaging and

positioning with key philanthropic stakeholders. The goal was to determine if, and how well, FCAA is reaching into broader philanthropic communities whose work intersects with HIV and the multiple socioeconomic issues that continue to fuel the epidemic.

By the end of January, the organization will be prepared with message guidance and goals that can inform a new strategic communications plan.

Audiences

- FCAA Membership
- Broader philanthropy, including philanthropy serving organizations
- Community leaders, policy makers and organizations working in HIV, health, human rights and LGBTQ Issues

It is important to note that FCAA is a membership organization, consisting of more than 50 philanthropic organizations hailing from seven countries, and representing a diversity of institution sizes and type, as well as issues and geographic foci.

Purpose and Goal

Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA) is seeking a strategic communications partner to develop and help implement a new (2024) strategic communications plan focused on:

- Crafting and elevating FCAA's thought leadership and profile
- Developing content to help implement a people-centered communications across multiple platforms, such as interviews and member profiles for the website, newsletter, and social media.
- Development of organizational and sector key message/toolkit development
- Supporting media outreach and op-ed development
- Building an editorial calendar and related content tools to maintain relevancy throughout the year.

This project will include three phases:

1. March: Introductory review and plan development.

During this phase, the engaged firm/team will review FCAA's new messaging materials and recent communications successes and meet with key staff to develop a new communications plan for the year. During this process we will finalize key media approaches and targets, including niche media (podcasts, webs series, etc.), as well as critical partnerships to pursue and publications to prioritize.

2. April – July: Preparation for International AIDS Conference – July 2024, Munich (AIDS2024)

AIDS2024 in July will be a key event for FCAA, its members, and Board of Directors. It will also be a key venue to elevate organizational leadership, data, and advocacy. The engaged team/firm will be able to focus implementation efforts on the communication's plan around AIDS2024 activities, and partner with key staff to ensure all organization plans are informed and supported by communications objectives. The focus of this work will be to analyze and support the profile of FCAA's board, staff, and Executive Director Masen Davis, and help finetune organizational messaging.

This phase of work may encompass media outreach, op-ed development, and additional data visualization/design projects.

While the main focus during this phase will be the lead up to Munich, other tactics and opportunities may need support, such as responsive communications related to advocacy opportunities (e.g. related to PEPFAR reauthorization, domestic U.S. budget, etc.). This will include the beginning of an enhanced membership engagement effort – in partnership with new FCAA staff – to create member profiles for the website and social media platforms.

3. August – November 2024: Post-Conference Editorial Calendar and Communications Cadence

This phase of work will encompass finetuning and implementing an “always-on” communications cadence and editorial calendar to ensure FCAA is appropriately engaging and reaching out to its key audiences and taking advantage of stakeholder events and key milestones in the HIV landscape.

This phase of work may encompass media outreach, op-ed development, web/social media content development, member engagement profiles and efforts, messaging toolkits, and 1-2 data infographics/reports.

4. November 2024 – February 2025: World AIDS Day and FCAA Summit Support

This final phase of work will focus on supporting communications opportunities around World AIDS Day and the 2025 FCAA Philanthropy Summit in January 2025.

This phase of work may encompass media outreach, op-ed development, web/social media content development, member engagement profiles and efforts, and 1-2 data infographics/reports.

Timeline

This is currently conceived as a 1-yr contract. Engagement beyond this initial scope may be considered once we assess future needs and capacity.

Below is an estimated timeline regarding the RFP process:

- RFP Issued January 22nd
- Opportunity to submit intent/ask questions: January 22nd – February 9th
- Proposal Deadline: Friday, February 12th
- RFP Review Period (estimated): Mid February
- Finalist Interviews (estimated): Late February
- Awardee Notification (estimated): Early March
- Project Term: 12 months beginning on contract execution date

Budget

FCAA will award one contract for this project. The budget proposal must not exceed \$45,000. Cost effectiveness will be considered in reviewing proposals.

How to apply

Structural racism and social determinants of health, such as poverty, homelessness, and less access to healthcare, have long fueled the HIV epidemic within communities of color. Additionally, while key populations¹ and their partners account for 70% of new HIV infections globally, they receive at most, 16% of HIV philanthropy each year.

Hence, we strongly encourage proposals from people and organizations who identify deeply with or are members of underrepresented and underfunded communities in the HIV response, including but not limited to women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC communities. We also ask applicants to provide evidence of an organizational commitment to equity, accessibility, and diversity practices.

Additionally, we are asking that applicants demonstrate their skills and competencies in the following areas:

- Understanding of and experience in working with the philanthropic sector
- Experience in developing comprehensive communications strategies
- Experience in cultural narrative and social change communications
- Experience/familiarity within the HIV and/or public health sector/response would be an added advantage.

To apply, please submit a proposal by midnight U.S. Eastern Time on Friday, February 12th to Sarah Hamilton, Director of Operations, at sarah@fcaaid.org. The response should be clearly structured to address the following questions.

1. **Applicant Overview:** Provide a summary description about your organization/company, what you do, and what compels you to do it. Help us learn about who you are. Include the name, title, phone number and email address for the primary point of contact regarding the proposal. *One page maximum.*
2. **Interest:** Tell us why you are responding to this request. What sparked your interest? Why do you want to invest your time in this kind of work? (One-page maximum)
3. **Experience and Expertise:** Why are you a good partner for this project? Tell us about the team and/or individual(s) you will commit to this project. What makes them the right fit for this particular project? What related experience do they bring? What sets them apart from others? (Two-page maximum) *You may attach resumes, but it is not required, and it is not considered part of the two-page maximum for this section.*
4. **Equity Commitment:** How does your organization/company commit to advancing equity and racial justice – both internally (e.g., share how your organization/company works towards and practices justice, diversity, equity and inclusion) and externally in the work you engage in? How does your organization/company align with FCAA's mission? We

¹ Key populations often refer to: gay men/men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, transgender people, sex workers, and general LGBTQ communities. It is important to acknowledge that the term key populations often encompasses other populations, dependent on the country and region of context, or can be referred to by other umbrella terms. As one example, the Robert Carr Fund uses "inadequately served populations," which is defined as "populations facing a high HIV risk, mortality, and/or morbidity compared to the general population, and, at the same time, facing systematic human rights violations and barriers to information and services."

also welcome suggestions on how you address digital accessibility in your communications and design capacities. We recognize individuals, organizations and companies are in various places on their equity journeys, and it is our intent to understand where our partners are on that journey. Please include reflections about your journey toward understanding your own bias, privilege and power. (Two-page maximum)

5. **Approach:** Tell us how you will approach this project if selected. We are not requesting a fully formed project plan at this stage. Rather, help us understand how you would think about approaching this work and what you'd take into consideration. Be clear about how you would center equity in your approach.
6. **Budget:** Please provide general ideas about how you will use your time and resources for this project. We encourage you to clearly define if/when implementation costs – such as design – are or are not included in the budget. Please indicate the retainer or hourly rate for the individual(s) assigned to this project, as well as total anticipated hours. This is intended to be an estimate and is subject to change based on contracting for the completion of specific work agreed upon with FCAA. Cost effectiveness will be considered in proposal review. (This is not included in the total page maximum.)
7. **Primary Contact:** Include the name, title, phone number and email address for the primary point of contact regarding this application.

FCAA will keep confidential any materials sent to us and will not use these in any way other than for its process.

Please send a proposal and any supporting documentation electronically in Microsoft Word or PDF to Sarah Hamilton at sarah@fcaaid.org. You are also welcome to reach out with any questions about the request or process via email or by phone at +1 509-336-9240 before February 12.

Terms and Conditions

FCAA reserves the right to reject any or all applicants, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received, and to accept any portion of an application or all items proposed if deemed in the best interest of FCAA.

Applications may be modified or withdrawn prior to the established deadline.

FCAA is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request.