



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS VELA STRATEGIC PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from consultants experienced in utilizing an equity led participatory planning process to create VELA's next 3-5-year strategic plan.

VELA OVERVIEW

When told that your child has a disability, your life is forever changed. Research shows parent involvement to be the greatest indicator of positive health and educational outcomes for children with disabilities, yet parents report feelings of confusion and powerlessness when navigating doctors, therapies and special education for their child. This is especially problematic for the majority of families served by VELA, who are underserved, live below the poverty level and experience language and cultural barriers. Without an informed and supported parent, the child will miss key developmental, academic and community-based resources resulting in limited opportunities and marginalization as an adult. In response to this immense gap in services, VELA was founded in 2010 with a mission to empower underserved Spanish and English-speaking parents of children with disabilities. Through interactive and culturally responsive courses and wraparound services, families gain knowledge, empowerment, resilience and community to ensure that their children thrive. In the last 11 years, VELA has grown from a 100% volunteer run agency to having 9 staff, a strategic and diverse board, and a community of committed volunteers. In 2021, VELA served 2,400 individuals across 84 zip codes through both in person and virtual program offerings, at no cost to families.

As the needs of families of children with disabilities evolve, we want to be certain that our growth aligns with community needs and gaps in services. For the last 10 years, we have offered interactive courses, workshops, support groups, case management and Family Fun Days. Until 2020, those services were all in person, either at VELA's East Austin Space or held on school campuses. In 2020, we launched our virtual programming and continue to grow those offerings while now also providing in person courses and support groups. Through this strategic planning process, we want to set the course for VELA's next phase while exploring 1) intentional growth into other geographies/additional services 2) integrating VELA's courses/workshops into schools and clinics 3) creating a Parent Leadership Academy that provides leadership opportunities for VELA graduates. As we enter the next 10 years, we want to set the course to grow into the directions that allow us to both serve more families in the best way possible and also scale our organization sustainably.

SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES:

Scope of Work

- Design and execute a strategic planning process that ensures VELA's strategic plan is community-informed and captures feedback from previous and current families served and partners on how VELA can best meet our service population's needs.



- In partnership with VELA staff, identify external and internal data that will support the development of the strategic plan.
- Collecting and using community feedback, work with present Board Members and staff to design a strategic plan for VELA.
- Identify organizational goals that will serve as a 'north star'.
- In partnership with VELA Staff and Board, identify what additional capacity, partnerships, and resources are necessary to reach those goals.
- Create relevant financial models to match potential growth options.
- Identify clear, measurable outcomes and KPIs for how to measure organizational and strategic effectiveness, impact, and success. Key one- and three-year milestones should be identified that support the execution of the longer five-year strategic plan. Ensure KPIs are SMART -- specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.
- Develop a timetable of implementation that considers the timing and sequence that VELA will take actions. This should consider our ability to grow, the number of families we can serve, and what is our lead time necessary to take big steps towards our goals.
- Identify internal and external factors that are indicators for whether VELA is progressing towards our goals.
- Facilitate all meetings and record meeting notes. Provide expert leadership, direction, advice, and consultation related to the development of an effective strategic plan, including successful implementation plan.
- Establish a framework and process for VELA's leadership to effectively implement the strategic plan and monitor progress toward achievement of goals and objectives.

Key Focus Areas

- Explore various program growth models/scenarios related to expanding our geography/services and integrating services into schools/clinics via partnerships relevant to community and market needs.
 - KPIs, measurement tools and program evaluation processes
 - Size of Market and Partnership Exploration
 - Staffing/ Capacity Building Plans/Operational Structure/Financial Models

Assets/ Deliverables

Deliverable should be a clear, easily consumed, strategic planning roadmap accompanied by a strategic planning timeline, implementation, evaluation methodology, and communication strategy.

- Written feedback from stakeholders that informed plan
- Written Strategic Plan with relevant imagery, infographics, timetables, etc.
- External Facing Strategic Plan Presentation Deck (to be used with funders, program partners, etc.)
- Communication recommendations to disseminate Strategic Plan
- Financials where appropriate



VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- Experience with strategic planning for nonprofit or community based organizations of similar or comparable scope or size
- Experience with participatory planning, co-design and facilitation with underrepresented groups
- Commitment to strengthening communities through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- Make certain that the participatory process is inclusive of Spanish and English speaking stakeholders (focus groups and/or interviews with Spanish-speaking families to be held in Spanish, separately) and that in person and virtual processes are engaging, interactive and adapted for varied literacy levels. Written materials need to be translated into Spanish and reviewed by VELA to ensure accuracy before sharing with families.
- Strong writing and presentation skills
- Highly communicative and able to meet deadlines

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

This RFP represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. **Proposals will be accepted until 5pm CST on December 30th, 2022.** If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidder(s), the bidder(s) will be notified. **We will select a contractor by Jan 31st, 2023.** All deliverables need to be completed 16 weeks after the start date. Proposals may be submitted to Susanna Olivarez, Board Chair: solivarez@utsystem.edu with the subject line: VELA Proposal

VELA's budget is estimated at \$30,000 with the option to increase based on the vendor's experience and our ability to increase our budget. VELA invites applicants to provide part of the service as an in-kind donation to VELA. We will offer appropriate recognition of the gift based on current sponsorship benefits.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must include the following

- Summary of consultant's/firm's background and experience on similar projects.
- Demonstration that the consultant/firm meets all the desired qualifications.
- Suggested project plan and timeline with major tasks and milestones
- Applicants must include in their project timelines "check-in" points for VELA to be provided with project status updates on a weekly basis. The successful applicant will be responsible for setting up the check-in meetings/calls, preparing an agenda for each meeting/call, sending out meeting invites and writing meeting minutes.
- Detailed methodology and facilitation approach that will be utilized
- Detailed project budget
- Identify who will be involved on your project team and their role, including their relevant experience
- Name, phone number, email, and address of at least two references from other organizations/nonprofits
- Two examples of written work (or final product) like the scope of work requested within this RFP (e.g., strategic plan.)



EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- The extent to which the proposal addresses the stated needs and clearly describes the scope of work
- Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services, including experience facilitating feedback from diverse groups
- Qualifications and experience of the firm and the consultant(s) in providing strategic planning development
- Availability for work to be conducted between Feb 2023-May 2023 with strategic plan final product shared 16 weeks after start date.
- Project cost