

Request for Proposal – September 2007

Background Information

The Firelight Foundation is a private, family foundation that works to support and advocate for the needs and rights of children who are orphaned or affected by HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. Firelight strives to increase the resources available to grassroots organizations that are strengthening the capacity of families and communities to care for children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

Since making its first grants in 2000, Firelight's approach to grantmaking has been child centered, family focused, and community based. Firelight believes that children grow best in families and that the most effective strategy for addressing the needs of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS and poverty is to strengthen the capacity of families and communities to provide for their care. Firelight funds grassroots organizations that support households and communities to provide for children's care and looks for programs that have local leadership, engage the community in creating solutions to problems, and strengthen the community's capacity to address its own needs.

In addition to its Grantmaking Program, Firelight operates several other programs that work in conjunction with the Grantmaking Program, including Monitoring, Evaluation, and Technical Assistance (META), Advocacy, and Communications and Development. In addition, Firelight has an Office Manager and a Finance Manager.

Based in Santa Cruz, CA, Firelight Foundation is governed by a five-member Board of Directors and has a 15-member staff, as well as a five-member Advisory Board. Firelight's work is supported by individuals, foundations, and corporations. It is anticipated that in fiscal year 2007, Firelight will award approximately 140 grants totaling \$2.3 million, ranging from \$1,000 to \$40,000, to community-based groups in nine African countries. Our annual operating budget is approximately \$4 million.

Firelight Foundation has become a recognized leader in serving vulnerable children in Africa and, as a result, has grown significantly over the past few years, more than doubling its grantmaking, fundraising, staff size, and office space.

In 2004, Firelight initiated its first strategic planning process that resulted in a three-year plan covering FY 2006 – 2008. Upon review in March 2007 and given the foundation's growth, management and staff decided that Firelight needed to engage in a new planning process to set strategic direction and priorities for programmatic and operational planning and decision-making.

We are looking for a dynamic consultant or firm to guide and facilitate our strategic planning process during the next six months from November 2007 through April 2008.

Scope of Services

In reference to the above background information and to ensure that Firelight meets its goal of producing a concise and useful strategic plan by March 2008, we are looking for a consultant to provide us with services to:

- **OVERALL:** Guide and facilitate the Firelight Foundation's strategic planning process.

- Work with the Firelight Foundation’s Executive Committee to ensure an effective process in the development of the strategic plan, acting as principal liaison to staff for delivery of messages and feedback.
- Develop a work plan and timeline (including roles, tasks, deliverables, deadlines, meetings, and decision-making and approval processes).
- Develop overall budget for strategic planning activities.
- Review current SWOT analyses done by staff through an internal document and desk review of secondary resources to frame the issues and operating environment.
- Conduct a key stakeholder analysis (staff, board members, grantee-partners, institutional and individual donors, peer organizations, etc.) and identify their needs (operational vs. informational).
- Plan how to engage stakeholders appropriately so that they can participate meaningfully in the various planning phases. Facilitate the involvement and contributions of key stakeholders throughout.
- Develop methods and tools to gather data from key stakeholders to meet key information needs. Analyze and share findings to inform strategic choices.
- Conduct meetings with staff and key stakeholders to launch the planning process. Identify and prioritize issues, share findings, analyze data, make strategic choices, and review draft documents.
- Coordinate the writing and editing of drafts and the final strategic plan document, including a separate, shorter document for external dissemination if necessary.
- Ensure that the plan creates a way to integrate budgeting and work plans.
- Assist management to create a system of monitoring, reviewing and adjusting the strategic plan as needed.
- Document the strategic planning process, including key discussions and decisions at each stage, for development of strategy documents and communication.

Requirements

Firelight Foundation is inviting six consultants/firms to prepare a brief proposal outlining your capabilities to undertake the following work over the next six months.

Please provide:

- Resume.
- Cover letter of interest.
- Given our terms of reference, provide a proposal, workplan/timeline and budget for the entire project.
- References of organizations with which you have facilitated strategic planning.

The individual or firm would be able to conduct in-person meetings in Santa Cruz, California as needed.

Interested parties should submit a proposal with budget by October 12, 2007 to:

Jennifer Astone, Executive Director
 740 Front Street, Suite 380
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060
 Attn: Zoe Rowlandson
 zoe@firelightfoundation.org