National Farm to School Network is seeking a consultant to guide approaches for and facilitate a systems change implementation plan that is centered in racial equity.

Who We Are
The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education (including school gardens) into all schools and early care and education (ECE) settings. Farm to school creates opportunities for children and families to make their own food choices, while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities. NFSN has provided vision, leadership and support at the state and national levels to connect and expand the farm to school movement since its establishment in 2007. Our network includes national staff, partner organizations in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. Territories, an advisory board and more than 20,000 members. NFSN’s tagline “Growing Stronger Together” reinforces an organizational approach and belief that robust movement building is possible only when we work collaboratively across sectors and locations.

For more information, please visit [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org). NFSN is a project of Tides Center, the nation’s largest fiscal sponsor. Tides Center is a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, CA that works with individuals, groups and funders to implement and accelerate positive social change in the nonprofit sector. For more information, please visit [www.tides.org](http://www.tides.org).

What We Value
NFSN’s core values are centered on the vision that vibrant local and regional food systems are essential to the health of children, farms, environment, economy and communities. We strive to build sustainable and just food systems that nourish all children and communities by centering voices that are most impacted by systemic inequities. We work at the intersection of the following values: economic justice, health impact, prioritizing racial equity, respecting workers and educators, and animal welfare.

Our Systems Change and Strategic Plan
In 2018, we embarked on a systems mapping process to get input from our network and begin to outline the next chapter of farm to school’s evolution as a movement and a field of practice. This process involved hundreds of stakeholder interviews, roundtable discussions with deep reflection, and surveys to thousands of members. Out of this process, we identified a unifying direction – or call to action – for our partners and network: **By 2025, 100% of communities will hold power in a racially just food system.**

We identified three leverage points that will help move us further distances in the shortest amount of time to achieve this call to action:

- **Relationships:** How can we build new relationships – with organizations and individuals in communities – that will shift power to achieve and sustain a racially just food system?
● **Strategies:** What transformational and outcome-driven strategies will eliminate bias and build community power?

● **Programs and Policy Projects:** What are the projects that disrupt systems of oppression and make space for inclusive conditions in farm to school?

**Our Next Steps**

We seek to implement our call to action at the organizational and network level. It is important that the formation of the “lever teams,” which correspond to the three leverage points described above, functions collaboratively and independently. The work of the lever teams needs to be responsive to and have impact on the local and regional food systems embedded in the farm to school movement. It is also important that implementation is centered in and supports conditions for racial equity, both for the staff and partners engaged in the work, as well as through the goals, tactics and activities identified.

While it is our intention that the consultant hired will guide the formation of the lever teams and implementation thereafter, we anticipate that the process will include some or all of the following:

- Advise NFSN on an equitable nomination and selection process for the lever teams, ensuring that the team composition promotes belongingness and authentic representation.
- Facilitate the formation of self-organized lever teams for each of the three leverage points comprising staff, partners, and network members.
  - Lever teams will set goals, tactics and activities specific to their respective priority area and in service of the call to action. Lever teams are expected to:
    - Meet frequently and independently (between monthly and quarterly) to review outcomes and make adjustments needed to make progress toward the goals.
    - Meet with each other approximately twice a year to align, cross validate, and make adjustments.
    - Support and connect successful outcomes for each other as they relate to the three leverage points.
- Build skills and capacity for NFSN and lever team participants through:
  - Trainings on relevant topics such as what it means to shift power in the food system, racial healing, racial justice, and centering groups most impacted by inequities.
  - Meeting facilitation and structural guidance focused on working across differences.
- Identify metrics centered in racial equity and shifting power; provide guidance on tracking progress towards these metrics and sharing them transparently.
- Identify opportunities to increase engagement and voice for members of the network that are not participating in a lever team.

**What do we need?**

We have completed the design, engagement, mapping, validation and analysis phases of our strategic mapping...
process for our 2020-2025 strategic plan. We are seeking a consultant to guide a continued development and implementation process that is centered in racial equity and shifting power in the food system.

**Scope of work and deliverables**

**Contract Duration: Anticipated June 2022 - Dec 2022, but flexible depending on changes to the Scope of Work**

- In collaboration with NFSN leadership, outline an implementation plan through 2025 including identification of resources and materials required for implementation.
- Identify equity-centered impact measures for the call to action and for lever team goals and activities and recommendations for measuring and tracking (e.g., implementation dashboard).
- Facilitation of the first implementation meeting of the lever teams; provide guidance on how to self-organize, develop, assess and adjust goals, and work successfully across organizations and industry focus.
- Provide training to the lever teams and the network to build capacity for the integration of racial equity into the team process.
  - NFSN staff may support training.
  - Training sessions will be included at the first meeting of implementation teams; additional training opportunities to be identified and scheduled based on need.
- Participate in regular check-ins with NFSN leadership staff to provide updates on progress, and flag any items that need further exploration or discussion. Advise on the following topics:
  - General process guidance for systems change implementation.
  - Network engagement in the implementation process.
  - Implementation centered in racial equity and shifting power.

**Process and Timeline**
The following process is intended to reduce the application burden and focus on requirements for identifying and selecting the consultant for this opportunity.

- Consultants should express interest in this opportunity (via email to trisha@farmtoschool.org) no later than **Monday, April 25, 2022 at 11:59 pm ET**.
- Beginning the week of April 25, NFSN will set up a 45-60 minute exploratory Zoom meeting with interested consultants to discuss qualifications and approaches, and clarify the scope of the project.
- Consultants that align with NFSN’s needs and are interested in pursuing this project will confirm the services and cost, and submit examples of existing work products and references. Deadline to submit is on **Monday, May 16, 2022 at 11:59 pm ET**.
- NFSN will select a consultant by early of June 2022.
- The project is estimated to begin in June/July of 2022.
Compensation

- We estimate the budget will be $15,000 for services, with flexibility to increase the total budget depending on the final Scope of Work.

To apply

Email Trisha Bautista at trisha@farmtoschool.org to set up an exploratory meeting. Please include consultant resumes and any pre-existing materials about your consulting firm such as links to online content. There is no need to create new materials for the exploratory discussion.

During the exploratory meeting, we will discuss the following:

- **Consultant Background**: Please share background information on your company or organization. Please include details about the facilitation approach you will be using and how this will be centered in racial equity.

- **Consultant Qualifications and Commitment**: Please share any relevant information about the following:
  - Expertise and experience with systems change models and implementation; please include any relevant experience working with networks.
  - Expertise and experience in supporting organizations to advance racial equity, including any relevant experience on community engagement, shifting power, and building capacity for diverse groups.
  - Relevant experience working with similar groups or topics. The ideal consultant(s) will have experience in or a working knowledge of farm to school or school food environments, food systems, Native communities, farmers and producers, government agencies, networks, etc.

- **Overview of Project**
  - Review the scope of work for clarity
  - Identify areas that should be defined by the consultant
  - Answer questions
  - Review of next steps

If the consultant(s) and NFSN agree that the consultant’s approach and qualifications align with NFSN’s needs, the consultant(s) should provide the following no later than Monday, May 16 2022 at 11:59 pm ET. Materials should be emailed to trisha@farmtoschool.org.

1. **Confirm Scope of Work (SOW) and Timeline**: Please review the SOW and timeline provided in this announcement and 1) confirm the SOW, or 2) provide an updated SOW and/or timeline based on your approach and expertise, specifically removing, adding or adjusting deliverables/timeline based on our exploratory conversation. The purpose of this confirmation is to ensure both NFSN and the consultant(s) have clear expectations for the contract and ensure that the SOW aligns with the fees.
requested. We are not requesting a detailed SOW that plots activities and tasks on a timeline at this
time; a detailed SOW will be established after a contract is executed.

2. **Confirm Fees:** We have identified an estimated budget of $15,000 pending adjustments to the SOW.
Please confirm the total fee requested for the SOW and provide a justification for the request, such as
estimated hours, fixed fee, or similar. Please specify requirements for additional or unanticipated work.

3. **Work Product Samples and References:** Please provide existing work product samples of similar work.
This may include implementation plans, agendas and meeting materials for facilitated meetings,
dashboards and metrics. Please include up to three client references for verification.

Questions about this RFP should be directed to Trisha Bautista at Trisha@farmtoschool.org.