



Strategic Planning Consultant Request for Proposal

Introduction

Founded in 1987, the Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) is the largest hunger-relief organization serving California's North Coast. The REFB works toward its vision of ending hunger by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, disaster response, and community partnerships throughout Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties.

Through a network of direct-service programs, nonprofit partners, and community collaborations, the REFB serves hundreds of thousands of neighbors annually while advocating for long-term solutions to food insecurity.

In 2025, the REFB served 135,000 people, including 7,200 new families seeking food assistance. Through 3,800 food distributions, the organization provided an equivalent of 25.2 million meals, delivering an estimated \$75.6 million in groceries to the community. This impact was made possible by 80 staff members, 7,400 volunteers who contributed more than 126,700 volunteer hours, 130 hunger relief partners, 105 major food donors, and 13,000 individual donors. Together, these efforts helped ensure that nutritious food reached individuals and families throughout the five-county service region.

Additional information may be found at <https://refb.org/>.

Project Purpose

The environment in which food banks operate continues to evolve rapidly. Changes in food costs, government nutrition programs, philanthropic giving, supply chains, workforce availability, and community needs require the REFB to continuously evaluate how to maximize mission impact and maintain financial sustainability.

To guide the REFB priorities for the coming years, the Board of Directors is sponsoring a project to develop a multi-year strategic plan. The REFB is seeking an experienced consultant to facilitate an inclusive, data-informed process that results in a strategic plan that will:

- Align Board and executive leadership on the long-term vision for the REFB
- Identify the highest-impact strategic priorities for the next 3 to 5 years
- Inform annual operating plans and budgeting
- Strengthen long-term sustainability
- Increase confidence among donors, community partners, public agencies, and other stakeholders

Project Scope

The selected consultant will collaborate closely with a strategic planning team consisting of Board members and members of the REFB executive leadership team.

We are seeking a consultant who will:

- Provide overall project management including:
 - Developing a detailed project plan and process for tracking progress.
 - Outlining clear roles and decision-making responsibilities for stakeholders such as the strategic planning team, Board, and REFB staff.
- Facilitate internal and external assessments that include:
 - Conducting focused assessments of the REFB including a review of financial results, operational performance, and existing programs.
 - Developing insights from existing data including participant and partner surveys and external data about the communities REFB serves.
 - Collecting input from internal and external stakeholders including REFB employees, the Board, and partner organizations.
 - Collaborating with the strategic planning team to develop an approach for understanding needs of those experiencing food insecurity who are not food bank participants.
- Lead the analysis of assessments and stakeholder input to identify themes.
- Facilitate structured and inclusive discussions to identify and prioritize strategic opportunities based on a comprehensive assessment of key factors such as organization capabilities, financial capacity, and community impact.
- Provide guidance and templates to the strategic planning team for drafting a written strategic plan for Board review and approval.
 - REFB staff will lead the design and production of the strategic plan's visual elements, including Board- and external-facing final materials.
- Guide the REFB leadership in developing a(n):
 - Implementation plan with specific objectives and performance metrics.
 - Framework and process to monitor plan implementation.
 - High-level process to update the strategic plan annually.

Key Deliverables

Primary deliverables include:

- Project plan
- Meeting facilitation materials
- Assessment summary
- Guidance / templates for a written strategic plan
- Guidance / recommendations for implementation plans and monitoring

Qualifications

The successful consultant will offer:

- Significant experience facilitating strategic planning for nonprofits.
- Experience working with organizations comparable in size and complexity.
- Established methodologies and tools to support a strategic planning process.
- Strong project management capabilities and ability to facilitate inclusive discussions.
- Demonstrated expertise in collecting and synthesizing internal and external stakeholder input.
- Ability to synthesize quantitative and qualitative information into practical strategic recommendations.
- Knowledge of hunger relief, food systems, health and human services, or community-based nonprofit organizations is preferred.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be sent via email to Allison Goodwin (agoodwin@refb.org) and Kathy Inouye (kminouye@gmail.com) by 5 pm Pacific Time on Friday, October 9, 2026.

Please include the following:

- Firm overview including description of your strategic planning philosophy.
- Proposed project approach including descriptions of 1) internal and external assessments and 2) stakeholder engagement.
- Description of project team members, their roles, and experience.
- Two client references with contact information.
- One or two examples of completed strategic plans.
- Proposed project schedule.
- Detailed fee proposal, including travel expenses and optional services.
- Assumptions, exclusions, and anticipated client responsibilities.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

- Relevant organizational experience
- Qualifications of assigned consultants
- Quality of proposed methodology
- Facilitation and stakeholder engagement approach
- References
- Overall value

Interviews with a Board representative and the CEO will be conducted with all prospective consultants.

Project Timeline

Milestone	Target Date
RFP Released	September 21, 2026
Proposal Deadline	October 9, 2026
Consultant Interviews	October 2026
Consultant Selected	November 2, 2026
Project Kickoff	November 2026
Strategic Pillars Defined	April 2027
Final Board Approval	May 2027

Terms and Conditions

- REFB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- REFB may request clarification or additional information from any proposer.
- Submission of a proposal does not obligate the REFB to award a contract.
- All work products developed through this engagement shall become the property of the Redwood Empire Food Bank.
- Information shared during the engagement shall be treated as confidential unless otherwise authorized by the REFB.
- REFB anticipates entering into a professional services agreement with the selected consultant following successful contract negotiations.