



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for STRATEGIC VISIONING & LONG-RANGE PLANNING

PURPOSE

The Harvest Foundation is initiating a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify a qualified consulting firm or collaborative team with expertise in community engagement, strategic facilitation, and planning to lead a long-range, community-centered visioning process. This plan will envision what Martinsville-Henry County could look like in 25 years, with a focus on community engagement and actionable planning. In addition, the selected firm will use the process in the development of the Foundation's next 3–5 year strategic plan.

This work will be conducted in coordination with a concurrent regional visioning effort and should integrate key insights from both the City of Martinsville's and Henry County's comprehensive plans to ensure alignment and relevance to existing public strategies.

WHO MAY RESPOND

The Harvest Foundation requires a vendor with demonstrated experience in:

- developing successful consensus-based and community-driven strategic plans;
- thoughtful and equitable approach to process design;
- experience integrating public planning documents and working with multiple jurisdictions;
- capacity to coordinate with concurrent regional planning efforts;
- long-range community visioning;
- rural community planning;
- strong facilitation and participatory engagement skills;
- engaging diverse populations, especially youth and underrepresented voices;
- creating actionable sub-plans to guide implementation;
- and extensive work with non-profit strategic planning.

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1. About the Organization

The Harvest Foundation is a private foundation focused on place-based investments in the rural communities of Martinsville City and Henry County, Virginia. We envision a community where everyone shares in the promise of a Martinsville/Henry County (MHC) that is healthy, prosperous, and vibrant. The Foundation, in partnership with the diverse people and organizations that call MHC home, serves as a long-term catalyst, advocate, and investor to make our community a welcoming place where all can thrive. Since its establishment in 2002, Harvest has committed more than \$180 million through more than 450 grants to local nonprofits and municipalities.

Our current five-year Strategic Plan is guided by our North Star of Hope and focuses on building thriving youth, a vibrant community, and a resilient and diverse economy to improve education, economic vitality, and civic capacity for community revitalization.

While grantmaking is an important aspect of the work, Harvest uses other platforms to advance our overall vision of community transformation. These include:

1. Convening & Facilitating – We bring people together and support collaborative processes that lead to impact.
2. Connecting – We connect public and private sectors with communities to create solutions and solve problems.
3. Learning – We support shared learning so that we all have the knowledge and skills to constructively engage and collectively act.
4. Catalyzing – We build momentum and spark action to bring community ideas to life. We work to renew the social fabric of our community and are committed to the common good.
5. Investments – We make financial investments in community-driven projects and initiatives that align with the Foundation's strategic objectives.

2. Project Overview

The Harvest Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to place-based investments in the rural communities of Martinsville City and Henry County, Virginia. Through strategic grantmaking, we work to address local challenges in health, education, economic development, and community vitality.

As we approach the conclusion of our current five-year strategic plan in 2026, we recognize the need for a more structured and measurable approach with a long-term vision in our next strategic plan. While the existing plan was informed by extensive community and board input, it has proven to be challenging to measure effectively.

Martinsville-Henry County is in the midst of economic and generational change. As we invest in infrastructure, workforce development, and placemaking, it's vital to ground decisions in community priorities. The Foundation seeks to catalyze long-term impact by listening deeply to residents, aligning with public sector planning, and crafting a unifying, forward-looking vision for the entire community. This project will help anchor that vision in both local realities and regional opportunities.

The Harvest Foundation seeks an authentic, community-driven 25-year vision specifically for MHC that can help guide the next 25 years of progress. This vision needs to be aligned and connected with other local and regional visioning efforts underway.

In addition to the 25-Year Vision, the Harvest Foundation is seeking assistance with distilling the vision into its next 3-5 year Strategic Plan.

The selected vendor will:

- Facilitate a broad community visioning process.
- Co-create a 25-year strategic vision rooted in shared community input.
- Develop an actionable and measurable 3-5-year strategic plan that serves as The Harvest Foundation's implementation roadmap.
- Provide input to The Harvest Foundation in aligning its investments and efforts within a long-range vision.

3. Scope of Work & Deliverables

A. Design an Inclusive Process

- Develop a detailed project plan and timeline.
- Utilize creative, accessible, and culturally appropriate engagement methods.
- Prioritize the inclusion of historically underrepresented communities.
- Coordinate timelines, messaging, and participation opportunities with the regional visioning process.
- Collaborate closely with local community organizations and leaders to build trust, leverage local knowledge, and ensure ongoing community involvement throughout the project.

B. Facilitate Community Engagement

- Conduct community meetings, listening sessions, workshops, and forums.
- Administer surveys, interviews, and digital engagement tools.
- Ensure geographic and demographic representation in all outreach efforts.

- Collaborate with regional partners and cross-promote efforts to clarify distinctions and synergies between processes.

C. Integrate Local Planning Efforts

- Review and synthesize the City and County Comprehensive Plans.
- Incorporate other community plans, as relevant (i.e. Uptown Partnership, Martinsville's Mainstreet organization).
- Identify areas of overlap, opportunity, or divergence between public planning documents and community feedback.
- Ensure the resulting vision aligns with or constructively builds upon local government goals.

D. Synthesize Findings

- Analyze community input to identify core themes, values, and strategic priorities.
- Provide interim updates and facilitate reflective conversations with community leaders and stakeholders.
- Bring creative solutions and ideas that could address identified community needs and elevate future opportunities.

E. Develop the Vision Framework

- Deliver a clear and compelling vision document that includes: Vision statement, Guiding principles, Long-term community goals.
- Highlight areas of alignment with local and regional plans.
- Include visuals and summaries suitable for public communication and use by civic partners.

F. Strategic Planning for the Foundation

- Facilitate a planning process with the Foundation's board and staff to translate the community vision into a 3–5 year strategic plan.
- Help define mission-aligned priorities, measurable objectives, and implementation strategies.
- Deliver a final strategic plan document with a roadmap for execution, including potential partnerships and evaluation metrics.

4. Ownership and Confidentiality

All intellectual property will become the property of Harvest. All original data remains the sole property of Harvest. The vendor shall further agree to keep the information related to all contracts with Harvest in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the

contract and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with Harvest.

5. Proposal Format

To best evaluate the ability of the vendor to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposal:

- Examples of similar projects
- Your approach to community-based and equity-driven strategic planning
- A summary of strategic planning experience, including work with rural communities and strategic development around health, education, economic development, and community revitalization
- Three client references
- Suggested project timeline with major tasks and milestones
- Project budget by line item
- Sample Project Plan and a second example of similar work.
- Identify who will be involved on your project team and their role, including their relevant experience and resumes

6. The Proposal Must include the following:

General Information

Harvest understands that the scope of work requested may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address of each person engaged in the project. If a consultant group or partnership of consultants responds, the proposal should designate an individual who will serve as the main point of contact.

Consultant Qualifications and Roles

The proposal must describe the consultant's qualifications to conduct the Harvest scope of work activities, including his/her expertise, knowledge, and experience in leading a community-driven process in a rural area with a focus on the foundation's specific priority areas.

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:

- Experience in developing successful consensus-based strategic plans
- Strong facilitation and conflict management skills
- Knowledgeable of rural community systems and issues

- Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors
- Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning process
- Knowledgeable of budgeting
- Knowledgeable of marketing, communications, and branding
- Knowledgeable of leveraged community investment
- Ability to constructively challenge stakeholders
- Experience inspiring others to think innovatively
- Project-management experience

If a consulting group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct, as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge, and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- The specific activities to be conducted at each stage
 - o A timeline for the activities at each stage
 - o Here is our general outline for the 2026 Strategic Planning Process
 - Pre-development work with regional visioning effort
 - Strategic Planning Kickoff – March 2026 Board of Directors Annual Retreat
 - Focus Groups
 - Community Survey Work
 - Draft Plan to Grants Committee – November 2026
 - Strategic Plan Finalized for Board Approval – December 2026 Board of Directors Annual Meeting
- Milestones and deliverables tied to those activities
- A detailed budget for each stage, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables

References

The proposal should include at least three references from individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual's name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Previous Work Product

Proposals must include at least two samples of written work that reflect experience with strategic planning deliverables comparable to the scope of work requested in this RFP.

7. Process for Proposal Submission and Evaluation

Instructions for Submission

a) Closing Submission Date

Proposals are due by 5:00 PM EST on Oct. 13, 2025

b) Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Latala Hodges (contact information below).

Latala Hodges, Senior Communications and Operating Officer
lhodges@theharvestfoundation.org

c) Conditions of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by Harvest

d) Submission Instruction

Proposals are limited to 20 pages, not counting attachments. They should be submitted in PDF format, and printable on 8.5 x 11 portrait orientation, via Jotform ([Submission Link](#)) before the closing submission date. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided. Late arrivals will not be accepted. Mail submissions will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by Harvest by the closing submission date. A response may be judged nonresponsive and excluded from further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the specific format.

e) Right to Reject

Harvest reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any proposal received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted response will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

f) Small Business, Minority-Owned Firms, and Women's Enterprises

Harvest will make efforts to utilize small businesses, women's business enterprises, and/or minority-owned firms. A bidder qualifies if it meets the definition established by the Small Business Administration.

g) Confidentiality

If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant section(s) of the response.

h) Notification of Selection and Timeline

It is expected that a bidder will be selected within two weeks of the closing submission date, although the timeline is subject to change. Harvest reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time. Upon conclusion of negotiations with the successful bidder, all bidders submitting responses to the RFP will be informed in writing of the name of the successful firm or individual.

RFP Released: Sept. 15, 2025

Proposals due: Oct. 13, 2025

Vendor selection made: December 2025

Project begins: January 2026

i) Criteria for Selection

Harvest will select the proposal it feels will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. Proposals will be initially reviewed by the Senior Communications and Operating Officer and President. Interviews will be completed by the President, senior staff, and a Board subcommittee, who will submit the best option to the Harvest Board of Directors for a final decision.

Price will be a significant, but not the only, criterion in evaluating the proposals. Consideration will also be given to the following:

- Ability of the bidder to provide all aspects of the proposal
- Compliance of the vendor and proposal with the project requirements outlined above.
- The extent to which the proposed deliverable meets the scope and goals is outlined below.
- Experience with similar organizations and a portfolio of work.

j) Conflict of Interest

The bidder must disclose, in an exhibit to the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of the Contract or the services provided under the Contract. Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the Bidder affirms that to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the bidder, the bidder's project manager(s), or its family's business or financial interest ("Interests") and the services provided under the Contract. In the event of any change in either Interests or the services provided under the Contract, the Bidder will inform Harvest regarding possible conflicts of interest, which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that

all conflicts shall be resolved to Harvest's satisfaction or the Bidder may be disqualified from consideration under this RFP. As used in this Section, "conflict of interest" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Giving or offering a gratuity, kickback, money, gift, or anything of value to a Harvest official, officer, or employee with the intent of receiving a contract from Harvest or favorable treatment under a contract.
2. Having or acquiring any point during the RFP process or during the term of the Contract, any contractual, financial, business or other interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with the bidder's performance of its duties and responsibilities to Harvest under the Contract or otherwise create the appearance of impropriety with respect to the award or performance of the Contract; or
3. Currently in possession of, or accepting during the RFP process or the term of the Contract, anything of value based on an understanding that the actions of the Bidder or its affiliates or Interests on behalf of Harvest will be influenced.