



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Racial equity work at Northwest Resource Associates

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Introduction

Headquartered in Seattle, Northwest Resource Associates is a nonprofit social services agency, specializing in foster care and adoption. We are 40 employees strong and have offices and programs in Alaska, Washington, and Oregon. Our organization is more than four decades old, and we have recently had a change in leadership, as the founding executive director retired. Our employees are working remotely during the pandemic.

Northwest Resource Associates is in search of a consultant to help staff deepen their understanding of white privilege, systemic racism, anti-racism, and related concepts. This is the first step in what we expect to be a multiyear journey toward building a more diverse and equitable agency. We're issuing this request for information to make the selection process fair and efficient for consultants and ourselves. We are aiming to keep it as simple as possible. Thank you for considering us.

We are also looking for a strategic planning consultant. We welcome your interest in both projects, and we welcome consultants to team up.

Context

At Northwest Resource Associates, we acknowledge the historical discrimination and marginalization that has created unfair advantages for some and disadvantages for others. These inequities persist in every sector of society, including the human services community.

Much of our work is in the child welfare sector, which has a long history of racism. To this day, children of color are disproportionately represented in foster care. Those of us who work with the system must work to dismantle institutional bias by looking first at ourselves. Our own organization does not reflect the diversity of the communities we serve; we have work to do. We are making equity and inclusion a top priority across all of our programs.

Our DEI work to date

In 2013, we became an LGBTQ+ culturally competent organization through the Human Rights Campaign's All Children - All Families (ACAF) program. The program requires ongoing staff training that solidifies our ability to serve LGBTQ+ children and families.

In 2019, we formed our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to expand our efforts to become a more equitable and inclusive agency, with a particular emphasis on anti-racism.

In 2021 and 2022, we are committed to:

- **Funding ongoing learning for all staff.** Effective conversations about creating change require a shared vocabulary and understanding of discrimination and marginalization, both at individual and structural levels. We are investing in trainings that move staff toward a common language to address issues of racism, bias, and other discrimination. In addition, we will continue creating intentional spaces for staff to communicate and have brave conversations so that the learning can be incorporated.
- **Reviewing employment practices.** We are committed to reviewing and revising our current employment practices and to eliminating potential bias and promoting behavior that fosters inclusion. We will revise recruitment and hiring practices and other personnel policies.

Earlier this year, we administered surveys to determine our baseline demographics and sense of belonging at the agency. Subsequently, we held a consensus workshop with the agency leaders and additional staff from the DEI Committee around how we could increase and elevate voices of people of color.

Our DEI Committee also catalogued important race and equity work happening in individual programs, which often operate autonomously. We can provide the consultant with all of our data and contextual information.

Finally, we are currently undertaking strategic planning, along with racial equity work. We expect our strategic planning work to incorporate racial equity goals and objectives.

What we want to achieve this year

This request for information addresses the “ongoing learning for all staff” goal. At the end of this initial engagement, we hope that:

- All of our employees have received training and share a knowledge base and lexicon for addressing increasing racial equity in their work. Employees understand the ways in which our agency contributes to or reflects racism and needs to change.
- Program directors and managers have skills to lead conversations and design programs that address racial inequity.
- Agency leaders see obvious next steps for continuing our racial equity work.

Timelines

We are eager to begin this work and will work with our consultant to identify a reasonable timeline.

The timeline for selecting a consultant is as follows:

Date	Milestone
October 15	Consultants let us know of their interest by submitting a short letter.
October 16	We begin conducting brief video calls with three to five consultants.
November 5	We hope to have a signed contract for engagement.

Budget

We are expecting to spend between \$10,000 and \$25,000 this year.

How to engage

If you are interested in working with us, **by October 15**, please email to nwra@nwresource.org a letter or document that includes:

- A description of the services you offer and your experience.
- What you will need from Northwest Resource Associates.

We anticipate submissions being just a page long, but we will accept up to 10 pages.

We will review submissions and choose a few consultants to talk with. We will try not to take up a lot of your time, as we understand that this is a relatively small contract.

When evaluating consultants, we will consider the experience and credibility of the consultant, including experience with remote working and online facilitation; the appeal and practicality of the recommended approach; and the affordability.