Request for Proposal

Project Title: Development of NSGC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Proposal Deadline: January 31, 2020

Email proposals and/or questions to: Katie Strang (kstrang@nsgc.org) ATTN: DEI Consultant RFP

NSGC will accept questions about this RFP via email until: January 24, 2020

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is for the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) to enter into a contractual agreement with a successful bidder and select a suitable contractor to carry out the following work:

- Review and assess the current status of NSGC’s diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
- Work with NSGC leadership, membership and staff to craft and provide guidance on implementation of a multi-year DEI plan and timeline, which will be effective, integrated and sustainable, and builds on NSGC’s DEI statement.
- Assess current levels of DEI within the society against benchmarks in healthcare and professional healthcare associations and and establish metrics to measure success in advancing DEI within the society over time.
- Identify opportunities for NSGC to impact the diversification of the profession of genetic counseling.

Background

In June of 2018, the NSGC Board of Directors held a strategy session to enhance goal-oriented focus and optimization of the NSGC’s resources and potential impacts. Among the four areas of focus discussed and agreed upon by the Board of Directors was one titled Strategic Area of Focus 4: Diversity and Inclusion. This area of focus delineates the intention of the NSGC to “promote a culture of inclusivity that supports visible and invisible diversity, and leverage that culture to expand the perspectives represented in our field, build community and foster equity in genetic services” (NSGC Board of Directors 2018). To tackle the proposed goals within this strategic area of focus, the yearlong Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was initiated.

The NSGC Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was established in February 2019. Over the past 9 months, this group of 17 (14 members and 3 staff liaisons) individuals have analyzed the
strengths and weaknesses of both the profession and organization to determine the best path forward for the membership, organization, and profession.

One of the charges of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was to develop an NSGC Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The recurring themes that came up in our discussions, and that helped shape the recommendations of the Task Force include acknowledging our past as a profession and a society, taking accountability, and striving for open communication and transparency. Through an honest examination of the strengths and weaknesses of both NSGC and genetic counselors, the Task Force developed the following statement, which is now included, along with NSGC’s mission and vision, as a foundational statement of our society: **NSGC Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

A guiding principle of the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) is to integrate genetics and genomics to improve healthcare. As a society, we can only meet this goal by promoting the active participation and leadership of people with diverse identities, perspectives, and backgrounds. Starting within our organization and extending into the larger healthcare system, we seek to empower our members to advocate for themselves, each other, and the diverse people we strive to serve.

**History and Responsibility**

We know that a diverse and inclusive organization does not build itself, but must be created through sustained effort by leadership, staff, and each individual member. We acknowledge the history of genetic differences being used and misused to justify stark injustices and reinforce social inequalities. Within the membership and leadership of NSGC, we do not yet have adequate representation or inclusion of minority identities, a disparity that has influenced our policies and services. We are responsible for learning from the past in order to pursue equity in our profession.

**Advocates for Underrepresented People**

NSGC advocates for the wellbeing of all genetic counselors – present and future - and those who are served by these professionals. We recognize that individuals with underrepresented characteristics and identities face logistical, social, and historical pressures that impact their professional and personal lives. These characteristics include, but are not limited to; age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, country of origin, culture, language, religion, spiritual beliefs, legal status, health history, and disability. Furthermore, the various characteristics of an individual interact to inform their experiences and perspectives. We strive for a culture of equity that addresses these pressures so that diverse perspectives are respected and empowered in our organization.

**Commitment to an Inclusive Future**

As professionals working at the forefront of clinical genetics, we are witnessing an era of rapid advancements. We recognize the duty to use our skills and knowledge for the
benefit of all people so that disparities in healthcare are not compounded by the power of genetics. The skills of genetic counselors are exactly those needed to promote a diverse and inclusive organization: empathy, tailored communication, problem solving, advocacy, and the ability to support people of all backgrounds through important moments in their lives. We acknowledge the need to extend the same types of support we are trained to provide to patients and clients to ourselves and our colleagues.

We know that over 98% of human genetic sequence is identical and our shared humanity unites us. Each of us has the need to feel respected, supported, and that we have a place where we can participate in a meaningful way. We also know that each person’s unique perspective gives them power to contribute to the greater good. NSGC commits to valuing those differences.

Other charges of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force included:

1. Define existing strengths and weaknesses regarding D&I for NSGC and the genetic counseling profession as a whole.
2. Assess opportunities for optimizing strengths and overcoming weaknesses specific to NSGC’s position in the genetic counseling community, organizational structure, mission and strategic plan.
3. Develop an organizational inclusion and diversity statement.
4. Develop recommendations for recognizing D&I efforts through the annual NSGC Leadership Awards program.
5. Develop recommendations to initiate D&I oversight and direction within NSGC.
6. Make initial specific recommendations for NSGC’s short term 2020 D&I activities, including proposed budget and committee ownership.
7. Develop long term goals to guide the trajectory of NSGC’s ongoing D&I initiatives.

Goals and Scope of Work

The goals for a comprehensive DEI plan for NSGC are grounded in recommendations the NSGC D&I Task Force delivered and the NSGC Board of Directors approved in October 2019. The basis for this RFP was the primary recommendation of the Task Force, that NSGC engage a DEI consultant to assess the organization from a DEI perspective and work with NSGC leadership, membership, and staff to craft and provide guidance around implementation of a DEI plan that will be effective, integrated, and sustainable. The Task Force also recommended that a DEI Advisory Group be chartered to represent the voices of diverse genetic counselors and work in partnership with the DEI consultant in developing the DEI plan.

The Task Force recommended that the DEI plan incorporate the following Areas of Focus, although we realize they may not be verbatim, as the consultant will be asked to bring their expertise in how to accomplish the intended outcomes behind the recommendations when
developing the final plan. The DEI plan should also include a plan for ongoing evaluation and accountability to maintain these efforts.

**Areas of Focus**

*Dialogue with Stakeholders*

- The Task Force recommends that NSGC establish communication with various stakeholders including non-member genetic counselors, other genetic counseling professional organizations, prospective genetic counselors, and underrepresented patient populations to strive to understand the needs of other stakeholders who are related to the genetic counseling profession.

*Reporting DEI Progress, Outcomes, and Available Resources*

- The Task Force recommends designing and implementing consistent, systematic, and ongoing reports accessible to all members that summarize DEI progress, outcomes, and initiatives.

*Demographic Representation*

- The Task Force recommends designing and promoting initiatives to increase awareness, access, entry, and retention of diverse people into the genetic counseling profession and NSGC membership.
- Continuation of the short term recommendations in charge 6 (listed below) to promote financial support for diverse individuals entering and remaining in the profession.
- The Task Force recommends that purposeful efforts be made to strive for diverse representation within NSGC membership and leadership at all levels.

*Accessible NSGC Resources*

- The Task Force recommends that the principles of accessibility and Universal Design be used to evaluate existing resources and inform the development of future resources.

*Best Practice and Evidence-Based Interventions*

- The Task Force recommends that the design and implementation of projects, initiatives, and programs be informed by evidence-based practices whenever possible and established DEI best practices when the appropriate evidence base is unavailable.

*Ongoing Education*
The Task Force recommends ongoing development, identification, implementation, and assessment of educational resources focusing on DEI issues for NSGC members.

**Integrating DEI into Routine Activities**

- The Task Force recommend that resources be developed to support integrating DEI into the planning and implementation of already-established routine NSGC activities.
- The Task Force recommends that partner institutions who work with NSGC leadership (e.g., SmithBucklin) should be able to substantiate their training and expertise in DEI practices and leadership collaboration.

**Other Recommendations**

The Task Force also delivered a number of short-term, tactical recommendations that NSGC is planning to address in 2020. These recommendations may be incorporated in the DEI plan in some manner, if applicable, but are provided here for purposes of awareness of ongoing efforts:

1. Develop a survey to be completed at regular intervals (annually or biannually) to collect feedback and assess perceptions of inclusion by the membership.
2. Develop a centralized system for people to provide feedback or indicate interest in participating in DEI initiatives.
3. Initiate steps to evaluate and complete a Universal Design plan for the organization.
4. Update the charges for the existing NSGC Cultural Competency Subcommittee to distinguish it from the DEI Advisory Group.
5. Create a specific page devoted to DEI on the NSGC website to communicate updates and DEI resources for the membership.
6. Examine the extent to which financial barriers may impede the entry into and retention of diverse individuals in the profession and determine the potential impact of establishing a fund to mitigate these costs.

**Deliverables**

- **Written Reports:**
  - Review and assess the current status of NSGC’s diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
  - Present DEI best-practice resources, which can be utilized by NSGC members.
- **Written Plan:** Work with NSGC leadership, membership and staff to craft and implement a DEI plan including timeline, which will address the Areas of Focus identified above, be effective, integrated and sustainable, and builds on NSGC’s DEI statement.
• **Meetings**: The consultant will have at a minimum, quarterly scheduled meetings/conference calls with designated NSGC representatives throughout the project.

**Timeline***

- December 20: RFP release
- January 31: Proposal due date
- April 2020: Notification of award
- April – May 2020: Conference call to finalize contract

*This timeline is subject to change and NSGC reserves the right to terminate the contract at will for any reason.

**Requirements**

Proposals should include the following:

1. Statement of interest and relevant experience:
   a. Experience working with professional societies with a focus on healthcare
   b. Examples of work developing DEI workplans, which are actionable, integrated, and sustainable
   c. Examples of working with professional organizations addressing DEI internally and for the larger profession

2. A clear work-approach summary
   a. Process/methods for completing desired deliverables
   b. Process/methods for obtaining input and feedback from organizational leadership, membership and staff
   c. Summarized project management approach
   d. Detailed timeline for achieving deliverables

3. Budget and budget justifications
   a. Detailed list of all costs and out of pocket expenses
   b. Detailed scope of work as included in the quoted price and a list of what, if any, costs/services are outside of the scope of work

4. Resume/CV of proposed personnel

5. References
   a. Names, phone numbers and emails of two clients during the last 24 months.
   b. At least one reference should be a professional society with a focus on healthcare
Evaluation

NSGC’s Board of Directors, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force chairs, and Executive Office staff will review all proposals. NSGC will use the following criteria to score proposals:

- Content of project proposal
  - Prior experience
  - Qualifications
  - References
- Project plan and methodology
- Budget and budget justifications

Budget

- Contract compensation will commensurate with market value for services to be provided
- Contract will be administered by the Board of Directors of the National Society of Genetic Counselors

Contact Information

For additional information, contact Katie Strang, Senior Manager, National Society of Genetic Counselors at kstrang@nsgc.org.

Resources Available Upon Request

1. NSGC DEI Statement
2. December 2019 NSGC Advocate Article: Summary of D&I Task Force activities
3. NSGC Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations
4. 2019 NSGC Professional Status Survey: A biennial survey of NSGC members that provides a detailed profile of the current genetic counseling community and identifies new and emerging trends within the profession

Contact Katie Strang at kstrang@nsgc.org for access to these resources.