



Senior Communications Consultant

Scope of Work

April 2021

The Aspen Institute [Forum for Community Solutions](#) (FCS) is seeking a Senior Communications Consultant (the consultant) to develop and implement communications strategies that will advance narrative change about opportunity youth and community-based solutions in the United States and around the world; raise the visibility of the opportunity youth movement; and engage a wide network of organizations and individuals who share FCS's [mission](#) and [values](#).

The Forum for Community Solutions promotes collaborative, community-based efforts that build power and influence through networks like the Opportunity Youth Forum, the Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN), Philanthropy Forward, and others. Collectively, these efforts support communities to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers and create their own vibrant and lasting solutions to pressing, seemingly intractable, challenges.

The consultant is the primary communications person at FCS, and supports all internal and external communications activities across FCS domestic and global programming. The consultant reports to the Managing Director of FCS and coordinates with the Director of GOYN.

The initial period of this contract will be one year, with the potential for extension. The funding available for this position is up to \$10,000 per month (plus expenses for any required travel), dependent upon experience, with the understanding that this contract will entail 40 hours per week of work on average. FCS has its main office in Washington DC, but the consultant may be located anywhere in the US. FCS prefers to hire an individual, rather than a firm, for this contract.

The consultant must have considerable prior experience across a broad range of typical non-profit communications activities, and must have led communications strategy development processes in the past. Prior work on the issues that FCS focuses on, and/or work in social justice-related communications is a bonus, but not required. Women, people of color, and other minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Resume and materials are due by May 3, 2021; we prefer the consultant start no later than July 1, 2021.

FCS Communications Goals:

We seek to have these impacts with our communications work:

- Use communications to meet the mission and goals of the organization.
- Be a part of the narrative change happening in the US and globally on social issues related to our mission; promote narrative change as a strategy for social change.
- Promote and get the word out about our own work and the work of our partners and of the networks we manage; increase understanding of our organizational purpose and the programs we conduct among key stakeholders.
- Communicate based on our organizational values and in ways that promote our organizational values.
- Expand reach of our messages to new audiences.
- Support members of our networks to be better communicators.
- Support fundraising goals; increase our ability to raise funds for our programs and to regrant to communities and partners.

Consultant Activities

External Communications:

Manage Publications/Reports Process – Edit and proof reports, find images if needed, manage approval process, manage designers, publish and promote new reports. 5-10 reports per year.

Blogs & Resource Pages – Write and/or coordinate others to write blogs to amplify our work and partner work, increase timeliness/freshness of web-based resources. Cross-post FCS blogs to other partner blogs.

Website Updates & Maintenance - minor updates to sites as needed; post new reports, events, etc. Manage maintenance contract/process. Lead periodic content refresh process; track metrics.

Email List Newsletters / List Management – Monthly short newsletter to our email list; support other email list one-off announcements as needed; Maintain ‘core’ email lists in email list platform; Track metrics.

Social Media – Maintain social media presence - mainly Twitter, and occasional Facebook and Instagram posting; Revise/update overall SM strategy and consider value of other platforms (eg. LinkedIn); Track metrics.

Convening-Related Communications (2 convenings per year for OYF and 1 per year for GOYN): Pre- and post-event communications to attendees and public.

FCS Digital Events: promote digital events through SM, email newsletters, etc.

Press Relations/Earned Media – Implement media outreach strategies including researching target media, building press lists, and communicating directly with reporters.

Design: light graphic design to enhance social media, newsletters, presentations, blogs and website (if consultant is not a designer themselves, increase use of graphics through contracts to increase visual impact of all FCS comms assets).

Internal Style Guides: update and codify overall look and feel of FCS and its programs (eg. Opportunity Youth Forum, GOYN, etc.).

Internal Communications & Strategy:

FCS Communications Strategy: lead FCS team in creating and implementing a program-wide communications strategy that will raise the visibility of FCS' work and impact, and will include plans for social media, earned media and website content, including a specific plan for GOYN's communication strategy; create sub-plans for FCS social media and website content refresh.

Coordinate with AI Comms staff – act as primary point of contact for the Institute's central Communications Department, which serves as an in-house agency that provides some communications and marketing advice. Partner with the Department's leadership and staff to leverage the Institute brand and platforms (web, SM, newsletters, Ideas magazine, etc.) to increase awareness of FCS's work and impact.

Maximize cross-posting and utilization of FCS content: Re-use of content from our events, written publications, etc. for resharing, retweeting, etc. in multiple ways. Maximize content from convenings; support turning convening sessions into blogs, etc.

Speech/presentation writing: assist FCS leadership by writing/co-writing for speaking engagements.

Create visual presentations for FCS leadership presentations and conferences, webinars, funder meetings, and other speaking engagements.

Program-Communications Integration:

OYF and GOYN member outreach and coordination to uplift more local stories: increase reach of OYF, GOYN and movement-wide comms by creating and maintaining contacts among network members. Includes lifting up the work that key partners are doing on issues we care about that are adjacent to our work.

Movement-level Communications Coordination: liaison with other domestic opportunity youth (OY) movement lead orgs to create more efficient and informative national presence for OY. Liaison with GOYN global partners and communities to build awareness regarding global opportunity youth and help catalyze action and commitments to accelerate decent work for global OY.

OYF Site-Level Communications TA: provide templates, guides, other supports to Opportunity Youth Forum site comms people to increase their comms capacity. Promote/help increase narrative change as a specific comms strategy at the network and site levels.

Qualifications:

- Must have led multiple communications-focused strategy planning processes, preferably for non-profit clients.
- Must have extensive prior experience (5 years minimum) and the skills needed to perform the full range of typical non-profit communications activities (described above), including having:
 - Exceptional writing, editing, and verbal skills. Ability to write effectively for a variety of different formats and for different intended audiences.
 - Project management skills: ability to work with a wide range of people on the FCS staff and at our partner and grantee organizations, to keep them focused on communications needs and tasks and on time.
 - Track-record of success working with new and traditional media.
 - Earned media/press relations experience.
- Experience, interest and ability in working with program staff to support communications abilities of partner organizations.
- Competence in the use of standard office software products: Excel, Word, PowerPoint; experience with WordPress or similar web publishing platform; experience with standard email newsletter production platforms and list management.
- Some minimal graphic design/image manipulation skills. Position does not require advanced graphics/layout skills.
- Creative problem solver; innovator. Ability to translate program-related materials and activities into communications opportunities.
- Self-starter and self-managing.

It is not required, but we would prefer a consultant with some familiarity with the issues FCS works on: place-based collaborations, the education and workforce needs of young adults, equity, racial and economic justice. Knowledge of and/or experience in global development is a plus.

Contract Parameters:

- 40 hours of work per week are expected; the contract pays up to \$10,000 per month, depending on prior experience.
- The contract is for an initial one year commitment with potential for renewal.
- The consultant is the primary communications staff for FCS and is responsible for executing all the activities named here.
- FCS has its main offices in Washington DC, but the consultant maybe located anywhere in the US. The consultant must already be allowed to work in the US.
- Infrequent travel to DC may be required if the consultant is located elsewhere. The consultant will be expected to attend our 3 yearly major events in person (post-COVID), which are held in the Spring and Fall. Required travel expenses will be covered on top of the contract.
- The preferred start date is no later than July 1, 2021; however, if a ramp up period would be needed to reach the full 40 hours/week after July 1, we are open to discussion on this point.
- We prefer to contract with an individual consultant rather than a firm. However, the individual may propose subcontracting limited parts of the work.

Submission:

To be considered, please submit the following information to Bakhtawer.Abbasi@aspeninstitute.org no later than May 3, 2021. If you have clarifying questions about the role please email Aspenfcs@gmail.com.

- Your resume (include in your resume a link to any online portfolio you may have related to writing or editing examples, or design or other visual work)
- A cover letter / narrative, that does not exceed two pages, that highlights:
 - Years of experience in performing the required activities
 - Experiences creating organization-wide communications strategies: please briefly give at least two examples
 - Any experience communicating about the core areas of focus of FCS (i.e. equity; social, racial, economic justice; advocacy; opportunity youth; education and workforce issues, collective impact; community engagement; etc.)
 - What interests you about this specific consulting project
 - Confirmation of:
 - your available start date,
 - your proposed bid for the contract,
 - your understanding that 40 hours of work per week is expected,
 - if you would propose subcontracting any parts of the contract (if so, which parts), and
 - any other important considerations we should be aware of.
- At least one example each of:
 - Writing sample: longer form, ie. an annual report or longer program description or program summary piece
 - Writing sample: short form, ie. a blog post
 - Communications strategy report
 - OPTIONAL: Design examples – a report or brochure; infographic or other illustration/graphic

NOTE: Attachments over 10MB are too large to be delivered through the Aspen Institute's e-mail system. Preferably, please send links to specific items in your portfolio, or use a service like Dropbox or Google Docs.

- Two references that can speak to your ability to perform the activities listed here, as well as conduct communications strategy processes.

About the Forum for Community Solutions:

The mission of the [Forum for Community Solutions](#) is to support community collaboration - including collective impact - that enables communities to effectively address their most pressing challenges. FCS works to accomplish this mission by pursuing four complementary strategies including: 1) building awareness by documenting and lifting up proven strategies and stories of success; 2) mobilizing stakeholders through knowledge and network development; 3) removing barriers by advocating for effective policy; and, 4) catalyzing investment by encouraging funder partnerships.

The [Opportunity Youth Forum](#) (OYF) is the first funding collaborative launched by FCS; its overall goal is supporting a network of nearly three dozen urban, rural, and tribal communities to design and scale multiple reconnection pathways that achieve better outcomes in education and employment for opportunity youth (young adults 16-24 that are neither in school nor working). By focusing on the development of educational and career pathways, the OYF seeks to interrupt the multi-generational cycle of poverty that undermines the vibrancy and economic health of communities. Two additional key goals of OYF are 1) to build strong evidence of success for utilizing a 'collective impact' community collaboration strategy to build and deepen pathways for opportunity youth, and 2) to make the case for increased adoption of collective impact and community collaboration as an effective model for community change, and 3) to begin to scale what works within OYF and other communities through a policy/advocacy and communications/narrative change strategies that expands interest in and support of opportunity youth.

At the center of OYF efforts is an emphasis on youth led change; OYF collaboratives seek to authentically and meaningfully incorporate youth voice, decision-making and expertise in designing solutions to the challenges youth face. On the national level, FCS is deeply committed to advocating for policy and practice changes in partnership with opportunity youth, and has engaged former and current opportunity youth as thought partners since the launch of the initiative.

The Opportunity Youth Forum inspired the creation of the [Global Opportunity Youth Network](#) (GOYN) which supports cross-sector collaborative efforts to advance decent work for global opportunity youth. Opportunity Youth, together with community partners, identify local strategies that address deep-rooted systemic barriers to economic opportunity and come together globally to learn, build knowledge, and inspire action and commitments to meet the Decent Work for All vision of the 2030 Social Development Goals.

GOYN collaboratives are thriving in Bogota, Colombia; Mombasa, Kenya; eThekweni (Durban), South Africa; São Paulo, Brazil; and Pune City and Ramgarh District, in India. In 2021, two new collaboratives are being established in Mexico and Senegal.

The Aspen Institute

[The Aspen Institute](#) is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. FCS has been a policy program of the Aspen Institute since 2012.