



## Request for Proposals

- Proposals Due:** Friday, March 22, 2024
- Position type:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Organizational Consultant
- Timeline:** May – September 2024, estimate 60 hours of work
- Budget:** Cooper House is budgeting \$15,000 for this scope of work.

### OVERVIEW

Cooper House is seeking a consultant to advise our Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Team to increase the capacity of our organization’s people, policies, and practices to lead in alignment with our value of equity. We are not seeing the level of engagement or action organization-wide that we have been striving to develop over the past 4 years. We are a team of committed, creative, and strategic thinkers, but we’ve hit a wall and need help understanding the barriers at play and are looking for recommendations for our future work.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE AT COOPER HOUSE

Cooper House is an infant and early childhood mental health clinic in Seattle, WA that provides integrated mental health and occupational therapy to children birth-5 and their families. We also provide support for birth-5 providers in our community through reflective supervision and training, including Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) training throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. The field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health emerged within the institutions and culture of a deficit-based medical model that perpetuates oppression and pathologizes symptoms of trauma. Putting our values into action, we strive to ensure young children and the people who care for them can access support within a just and equitable community. We are in an intentional process of building a diverse and inclusive organization where we hold ourselves accountable to eradicate oppression in our relationships, professional practice, and the systems we interact with.

Our intentional efforts began in April 2020 when we made an organizational commitment to *Increase capacity of Cooper House’s PEOPLE, PRACTICES, and POLICIES to lead from a lens of social justice*. The Cooper House Equity and Social Justice Team was formed to lead this effort. This team is currently made up of 11 employees, with a plan that is updated annually to support learning and action by the whole organization. Over the past four years the ESJ Team focused on achieving these goals:

1. Establish a collective understanding of racial equity, and social justice principles.
2. Build a culture of BRAVE space (Values, Beliefs, Behaviors, tools)
3. All forms of isms and their intersections are a concern for ALL individuals and the organization as a whole.
4. Everyone understands that diversity work is a part of their role and continues to find ways to infuse it into their practice.
5. Leadership is defined more broadly as those who are taking a lead in the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

We have focused quite a bit on building the capacity of our people: Org-wide professional development facilitated by Cultures Connecting and Equity Matters NW provided additional skills and opportunities to design our practices. All employees design annual training goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Cooper House was founded by a white woman, and our current Executive Director is a white woman. We are building a team where these leaders, and staff with more privilege are expected to hold humility and share power. The diversity of our team does not currently match the diversity of our clients, participants, and the region that we serve, though we are making progress.

Highlights of other actions from recent years include: launching a FAN grant program, providing FAN en español, allocating resources so BIPOC staff can access individual reflective consultation with BIPOC providers, and conducting a welcoming and belonging environmental review of our buildings.

While we are proud of our progress, the ESJ Team feels stuck. We are not seeing the level of engagement or action organization-wide that we want to see. White Supremacy cultural characteristics are alive and well in our team, particularly when it comes to engaging in difficult conversations. We are unsure if the way we are organizing ourselves as an ESJ Team is effective, and if our efforts are creating value for our clients and the community. We seek a partner to collaborate with us to assess our effectiveness and help us understand where to go from here.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK**

Assess effectiveness of Cooper House ESJ work 2020-present and make recommendations for future strategies.

We are open to feedback and ready to co-create a scope of work with you. These are the questions we want to answer through this project:

1. How can Cooper House increase accountability /engagement from all staff in living out equity values in our stance, signals, and practices?
  - a. What are client impressions about how well we are living out our current values? What would they like to see our attention focused on in the next few years?
  - b. What are team perceptions of engagement with ESJ efforts over the past 4 years? What barriers to participation and growth do they see? We are particularly interested in exploring perceptions of staff who do not currently serve on ESJ team.
  
2. Does it help/hinder our goals to have an ESJ Team? If there was not this leadership structure, what would you recommend?
  - a. If you recommend that we continue to have an ESJ Team, we are looking for recommendations on how to search/onboard a new ESJ Team Lead or Co-Leads, as our Executive Director will transition out of this role during Q4 of 2024.
  - b. What recommendations do you have for prioritizing our goals? We have used ESJ Team, workgroups withing ESJ Team, and workgroups specific to programs/operations teams. We have many opportunities and needs to pursue and given the variety of roles within our organization, how can we effectively work together to prioritize and carry out action? We are looking for specific recommendations on how we gather, the structure of the team, the primary purpose of the team, and building capacity within the team.

3. How can Cooper House increase trust and sturdiness in the face of discomfort and difficult conversations?
4. How can Cooper House empower our team of independent thinkers to encompass and embody new ESJ recommendations?
  - a. What strategies will engage both the people comfortable staying in a place of reflection, as well as the people who are ready for action?
  - b. How can we make space for multiple ways of communicating, inviting learning, attunement, and cohesion?

We are ready and willing to provide access to data from our organization so the Consultant can listen to the voices of other employees and clients. This includes data from 2020-2024 ESJ Plans, 2021-2024 Employee Engagement Surveys, FAN BIPOC Evaluation, FAN Equity Workgroup products, notes/agendas/participation from ESJ activities, 2021-2023 Director performance reviews, 2023 organizational strategic plan, and other written documents.

At the conclusion of this work, we would like the Consultant to provide findings in written format and in meeting(s) with the ESJ Team, and then in meetings with the whole organization to share findings and recommendations. Both presentations should include facilitating dialogue to reflect on feedback and recommendations.

**TIMELINE:** Ideally this scope of work would be completed between May – September 2024. We estimated 60 hours of work but we are flexible. We want to work with you to determine a timeline that works for you and Cooper House.

#### **BUDGET**

We are allocating \$15,000 for this project and willing to negotiate either a flat fee or hourly rate billing.

**BEYOND THIS SCOPE OF WORK:** While this scope of work ends at this stage, we understand that continued work with a consultant may be needed to implement recommendations. We are open to learning with you and developing a new scope of work and an ongoing relationship if both parties are interested.

#### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE, COMPETENCIES AND QUALITIES**

We are looking for a Consultant who is both **versed in supporting organizational development and DEI values and action**. This is an opportunity to partner with an organization that aspires to embrace complexity, honor relationships, and create change. We are seeking proposals from Consultants who have:

1. Experience assessing the effectiveness of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts for mission-based organizations. Assessments may utilize formal assessment tools and/or utilize less formal methods which have proved effective and are in integrity with the Consultant's values and ways of knowing. We are particularly interested in consultants skilled with listening and gathering information from a diversity of voices, who can then offer analysis and recommendations.
2. Education, training, and experience equipping organizations to increase, develop, and deliver on DEI goals and strategies.
3. Experience leading a team (professional or community) to ensure practices, policies, and procedures live out DEI values.
4. Cognitive flexibility and willingness to learn.

5. Planning and organization skills to deliver on administrative tasks in a timely, thorough, and accurate manner.
6. Writing and presentation skills that make space for multiple ways of communicating, inviting learning, attunement, and cohesion.
7. Facilitation and presentation skills that invite learning, feedback, reflection, and commitment to action.
8. Competence with practicing a detailed approach while holding the whole organizational system in mind.
9. Experience managing change processes for a group or team.

### **HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL**

We welcome proposals from all qualified candidates, and we assert our commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive partnership. Cooper House strongly encourages Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; people with disabilities; and LGBTQ+ people to apply.

Email your proposal to [jhinton@cooperhouse.org](mailto:jhinton@cooperhouse.org). We are looking forward to hearing how your experience, interests, and goals fit with the scope of work outlined above. Please list contact information (name, role/relationship, phone, and email) for two references who can speak to your work with their organizations.

**Proposals received by March 22, 2024, will be given full consideration.** All applications will be acknowledged via an email receipt.

We will review all proposals submitted and invite two consultants to meet via Zoom with the members of our ESJ Team on either Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> from 10-11am or Monday April 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-11am. We anticipate making a decision by Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> and entering into a contract so the work can begin by May 2024.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

The Consultant will be able to work remotely with the ESJ Team and our organization. If they are in the Seattle area, and wish to meet with some staff in person, that is welcome. Cooper House has two locations that are 167 feet apart in Capitol Hill, Seattle. There are sidewalks in front of both locations, along with ramps built for strollers that are not designed for wheelchair use. One location has an elevator that accesses 3 floors but does not reach the top floor. The other 2-story location does not have an elevator. Cooper House is committed to providing reasonable accommodation so contractors and employees will not need to access the top floor of both buildings.

*This RFP does not constitute a written or implied contract or offer of employment.*



## Mission

Cooper House supports the social emotional development of young children and increases family well-being by partnering with caregivers to strengthen early relationships and by building the skills and effectiveness of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health workforce.

## We Strive To:

**Be accountable** We are accountable to the families with young children in our communities, both those who seek us out and those we are not yet reaching. We are also accountable to our professional community and to each other. We strive to define common goals, invite feedback, listen deeply, and apply our learning. Above all, we are committed to ensuring that those we serve find value in our work.

**Honor relationships** We believe in the transformative power of relationships for healing and growth. Fostering curiosity, compassion, trust, and mutual delight are both the means and the end of our work. We accept that ruptures happen and embrace the productive struggle that leads to repair and growth.

**Insist on equity** Optimal development for children is only possible in a just and equitable community - where all children, families, and practitioners are free from oppression and able to reach their full potential. We hold ourselves accountable to eradicate oppression in our relationships, professional practice, and the systems we interact with.

**Embrace complexity** We value the unique complexities of each child, caregiver, and professional. Supporting their growth involves encouraging the integration of mind, brain, and body - within the complex social and cultural systems they inhabit. This requires the thoughtful integration of multiple perspectives and bodies of knowledge, while remaining open to what we don't yet understand.

**Embody reflection** We compassionately attune to ourselves through continual consideration, mindfulness, study, and personal growth in order to shed light on what motivates our thinking, assumptions and biases, and we model a reflective stance with clients and colleagues. We choose to risk being vulnerable in order to find meaning and connection with clients and with each other.

## We envision a community where:

- Babies and young children feel valued and understood.
- Caregivers feel successful and supported.
- Caregivers and children build relationships fueled by trust, enjoyment, and mutual understanding.
- Professional colleagues get support developing their own skills and capacities as they help young children and families.