



# COMMUNITY COMPASS

FROM INQUIRY

---

TO IMPACT

**REQUEST FOR  
PROPOSALS**

**CONSULTANTS**

LOHENGRIN  
FOUNDATION

**DEADLINE JUNE 10, 2026**



# COMMUNITY COMPASS

## A NEW PHILANTHROPIC POSTURE

### OVERVIEW

The Lohengrin Foundation is launching Community Compass, a dynamic, community-driven grantmaking framework rooted in deep listening, hyperlocal issue identification, and outcomes-based impact. Community Compass represents a strategic shift toward a model in which the Foundation looks to local communities to identify priority issues, define shared desired outcomes, and inform investment decisions in order to reach greater impact.

### STARTING WITH A DIFFERENT QUESTION

The decision to launch Community Compass grows out of a simple but powerful question: **What would it look like if the Lohengrin Foundation's commitment to centering community, increasing our learning, and deepening impact were driven not by us, but by the communities we seek to serve?**

What if communities—not foundations—identified the issues most pressing to their daily lives? What if community members took on the role of traditional program officers, thinking strategically about how best to allocate funds towards an issue(s) they know most intimately? What if community members worked alongside evaluators to develop shared learning and outcome frameworks—becoming architects of how change is measured—rather than simply being the subjects of someone else's research? And, what if grantmaking portfolio reports were not designed solely for the board of a foundation, but were instead community report-backs and accessible briefings that returned findings, progress, and learning directly to the people and places they were intended to impact?

These are not rhetorical questions. They are the conviction behind Community Compass, the Lohengrin Foundation's bold attempt to try a different way of doing philanthropy. We do not yet have all the answers, but we are convinced that asking better questions, in genuine partnership with community, is where more durable change begins. It is the Foundation's initial response to these questions—not a departure from our existing work—but a deliberate expansion of it.

By trying a grantmaking approach and framework rooted in deep listening, hyperlocal issue identification, and shared community-defined outcomes, the Foundation is building a more complete philanthropic toolkit and community of practice. It pairs our institutional capacity, grantmaking resources, and sector knowledge with the lived expertise of the people closest to the challenges we seek to address.

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## THREE CONSULTANT TRACKS

The Lohengrin Foundation seeks to engage a team of consultants to support the ongoing development and launch of its Community Compass Framework in the new funding focus area of Housing.

We are seeking three consultancies: one to support the ongoing development and deployment of the strategic funding approach, and two local community engagement consultants for our target geographic focus areas of Chicago and Boston, and for targeted surrounding Massachusetts Gateway Cities.

We are issuing this RFP across three tracks:

- Track A — Strategy Consultant:
  - Guide the Community Compass rollout process, provide subject matter knowledge and expertise, and provide support for the development and training of Community Advisory Councils.
- Track B — Chicago Community Engagement Consultant:
  - Guide the process and on-the-ground listening sessions, facilitation, and community engagement in eight Foundation-selected community areas in Chicago's South and West sides.
- Track C — Massachusetts Community Engagement Consultant:
  - Guide the process and on-the-ground listening, facilitation, and community engagement in six Foundation-selected communities (3 Boston neighborhoods and 3 Gateway Cities).

Respondents may apply to one, two, or all three tracks. A single entity may be awarded more than one track if they demonstrate sufficient capacity and relevant expertise for each. All three tracks will be awarded simultaneously.

# PROJECT GOALS

## PROCESS AND PRODUCT OUTCOMES

The Lohengrin Foundation seeks consultant partners who believe that how this work is done is as important as what it produces.

The following goals reflect what success looks like across both process and product outcomes:

- To center community voice at every phase of Community Compass, ensuring that residents and stakeholders in Chicago and Massachusetts are genuine participants in identifying issues and shaping solutions;
- To work in collaboration with Lohengrin Foundation staff to build authentic, Trust-Based relationships with the communities it intends to serve through its Housing funding program area;
- To surface and validate 3–5 priority issues per geography through deep community listening and a rigorous Community Advisory Council (CAC) process; and,
- To close the loop between CAC deliberation and the broader community through a documented validation process completed before Board review.

# TRACK A - STRATEGY CONSULTANT

## SCOPE OF WORK

### **PLANNING PERIOD (APPROXIMATELY 4-6 WEEKS POST-AWARD)**

- Participate in joint planning sessions with Foundation staff to finalize the inquiry design, listening session approach, and timeline
- Work in collaboration with foundation staff to develop a detailed implementation plan for the Inquiry phase; including timeline, roles, potential partners, and decision points
- Establish a framework for CAC orientation, training, and ongoing engagement in coordination with Foundation staff

### **PHASE 1 — INQUIRY (FALL 2026 – WINTER 2027)**

- Design tools and protocols for listening sessions conducted across targeted communities in each geography (14 total) to be facilitated by community engagement consultants
- Design the landscape analysis framework and oversee secondary data review in coordination with Foundation staff
- Support CAC orientation in coordination with Foundation staff

### **PHASE 2 — ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (WINTER – SUMMER 2027)**

- Design and facilitate CAC sessions in which community findings are reviewed, priority issues selected, and outcome statements developed
- Prepare materials for CAC deliberation, including synthesized findings from community engagement consultants
- Coordinate with community engagement consultants as they conduct community validation and document feedback
- Prepare the formal CAC recommendation package for Board review following community validation
- Support staff in preparing materials for Board deliberation at the Phase 2 handoff moment

### **ONGOING**

- Serve as a thought partner to Foundation staff throughout the process
- Participate in regular check-ins with staff and engagement consultants
- Receive and integrate community validation documentation from engagement consultants at the close of Phase 2
- Contribute to learning documentation

# TRACK A - STRATEGY CONSULTANT DELIVERABLES

## PHASE 1 — INQUIRY (FALL 2026 – WINTER 2027)

- Planning documentation — a written implementation plan for the Inquiry phase; including timeline, roles, tools, and decision points, produced in collaboration with Foundation staff during the planning period
- Inquiry design toolkit — tools and protocols for community listening sessions; including facilitation guides, data collection instruments, and an asset mapping framework; for use by community engagement consultants
- CAC orientation plan — a framework for onboarding and training Community Advisory Council members, that will be implemented by Foundation staff
- Phase 1 synthesis report — a summary of community engagement findings across both geographies, integrating submissions from Track B and Track C consultants, and prepared for CAC review

## PHASE 2 — ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (WINTER – SUMMER 2027)

- Community validation integration memo — a summary document incorporating community feedback received from engagement consultants, submitted alongside the formal CAC recommendation package
- Develop an issue briefing presentation template to be used annually to share progress on grantees' work, secondary data, and feedback from field leaders
- Board presentation—creating presentation materials from each step of the process to share with the Board, a designed and accessible presentation
- CAC recommendation package — a formal presentation of community-defined priority issues and outcome statements, prepared for Board review following community validation sessions
- Year one learning documentation — a summary of process learnings and recommendations for Phase 3 and beyond, submitted at the close of year one

# TRACK A - STRATEGY CONSULTANT

## DESIRED CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

### REQUIRED

- Demonstrated experience designing and facilitating complex, multi-stakeholder planning or strategy processes; preferably in a philanthropic, government, or nonprofit context
- Experience facilitating advisory bodies, community councils, or similar governance structures
- Strong project management capacity, including the ability to coordinate across multiple consultant partners and Foundation staff simultaneously
- Commitment to Trust-Based and community-centered approaches to strategy and planning
- Experience working across multiple geographies simultaneously

### PREFERRED

- Direct experience supporting philanthropic grantmaking strategy, including community-centered or participatory grantmaking models
- Familiarity with the Chicago and/or Massachusetts philanthropic and nonprofit ecosystems
- Experience designing community engagement processes in collaboration with on-the-ground engagement partners

# TRACKS B & C

## SCOPE OF WORK

### **Track B — Chicago Community Engagement Consultant**

### **Track C — Massachusetts Community Engagement Consultant**

The following scope applies to both Track B and Track C within their respective geographies. Community engagement consultants are expected to have direct subject-matter expertise or access to subject-matter experts in housing. This expertise should inform how community input is heard, interpreted, and synthesized throughout the engagement.

#### **PLANNING PERIOD (APPROXIMATELY 4–8 WEEKS POST-AWARD)**

- Participate in joint planning sessions with Foundation staff to finalize the inquiry design, listening session approach, and timeline based on the overall strategy developed with the strategy consultant
- Contribute local knowledge and community context to inform process design

#### **PHASE 1 — INQUIRY (FALL 2026 – WINTER 2027)**

- Lead one in-person housing community listening session per Foundation-selected target communities (8 total sessions in Chicago and 6 total sessions in Massachusetts, with at least 30 participants each session) within the assigned geography
- Provide virtual feedback opportunities for community feedback for those who cannot attend a listening session in their community
- Conduct asset mapping and contribute to secondary data review
- Synthesize community input into a clear summary of priority issues for CAC review, submitted to the strategy consultant and Foundation staff

#### **PHASE 2 — ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (WINTER – SUMMER 2027)**

- Receive formalized outcome statements developed by the CAC through the strategy consultant and Foundation staff
- Share CAC outcomes with community groups through existing relationships and light-touch outreach, prior to Board review
- Administer a survey or similar feedback tool to participants from Phase 1 listening sessions to capture responses to the formalized CAC outcomes
- Document and submit community feedback to the strategy consultant and Foundation staff
- The community engagement consultant's scope concludes upon submission of community validation documentation

# TRACKS B & C

## SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

### CAC FACILITATION SUPPORT

- The community engagement consultant's CAC facilitation role will be centered around providing local contextual support for CAC meetings and note-taking. It is scoped for year one and will be evaluated annually by mutual agreement with Foundation staff.

### Track B — Chicago Community Engagement Consultant Deliverables

### Track C — Massachusetts Community Engagement Consultant Deliverables

The following deliverables apply to both Track B and Track C within their respective geographies.

#### PHASE 1 — INQUIRY (FALL 2026 – WINTER 2027)

- Facilitation of 6 to 8 community in-person listening sessions
- Development of a community feedback report — a synthesis of findings from Phase 1 listening sessions and virtual feedback sessions; including a summary of community input, key themes, and a recommended list of the top 3–5 priority issues surfaced across all listening sessions for the CAC review
- Asset mapping summary — a report documenting community assets, organizations, and resources relevant to the Housing focus area within the assigned geography
- Work in conjunction with Foundation staff to facilitate local Community Advisory Council sessions for issue identification and shared outcomes development

#### PHASE 2 — ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (WINTER – SUMMER 2027)

- Facilitate community validation outreach process — documented outreach to past participants and community groups sharing formalized CAC outcome statements
- Community validation report — a written summary of community feedback collected during Phase 2, documenting responses to CAC outcome statements and submitted to the strategy consultant and Foundation staff prior to Board handoff

# TRACKS B & C

## DESIRED CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

### TRACK B — CHICAGO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

### TRACK C — MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

The following qualifications apply to both Track B and Track C. Track B applicants should demonstrate deep rootedness in Chicago communities. Track C applicants should demonstrate deep rootedness in Boston and the Massachusetts Gateway Cities.

#### REQUIRED

- Deep, authentic relationships with communities in the assigned geography, with a demonstrated track record of facilitating community engagement processes
- Subject matter expertise in housing, or demonstrated access to subject matter experts in these areas
- Experience designing and facilitating community listening sessions, focus groups, or similar participatory processes
- Ability to synthesize and communicate community input clearly and accurately
- Experience working collaboratively with external partners and funders
- Organizational capacity to manage a multi-phase engagement spanning approximately 12–18 months

#### PREFERRED

- Experience working with philanthropic or government partners on community engagement or participatory planning projects
- Experience designing and administering surveys or other feedback tools for community participants
- Familiarity with Community Advisory Council or similar community governance models
- For Track B: familiarity with the Chicago philanthropic and nonprofit ecosystem, and South and West side communities
- For Track C: familiarity with the Massachusetts philanthropic and nonprofit ecosystem, and Boston neighborhoods and Gateway Cities

# PROJECT TIMELINE AND DURATION

## MILESTONES AND DATES

Milestone	Date
RFP Released	May 14, 2026
<u>Pre-Proposal Information Session</u>	May 27, 2026
Proposals Due	June 10, 2026, 9:00 AM CT
Foundation Review Period	June 11 – July 10, 2026
Finalist Interviews	Week of July 13, 2026
Award Notifications	Week of July 27, 2026
Planning Period	August 2026
Phase 1 – Inquiry	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027
Phase 2 – Issue Identification	Winter – Spring 2027
Community Validation	Spring – Summer 2027
Board Handoff	Summer 2027
Year One Learning Documentation	Fall 2027



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# PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

### PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please submit a proposal that includes the following:

1. **Organizational overview** — describe your organization, mission, and relevant experience
2. **Track(s) applying for** — clearly indicate which track(s) you are applying for and why
3. **Approach and methodology** — describe how you would approach the scope of work, including your theory of practice around community engagement and/or grantmaking strategy; Track B and C respondents should describe their approach to community listening and community feedback
4. **Subject matter expertise** — for Tracks B and C, describe your organization's expertise in housing, or identify subject matter experts you would engage
5. **Relevant experience** — provide two to three examples of similar projects, including the client, scope, and outcomes; note any experience with philanthropic or government partners
6. **Community rootedness** — for Tracks B and C describe your organization's relationship to the communities you would serve and how that informs your work
7. **Team** — identify key personnel, their roles, and relevant qualifications
8. **Budget** — provide a proposed budget with a narrative; budgets should reflect the full scope of proposed work and broken out per deliverables
9. **Availability and capacity** — confirm your organization's availability to begin the joint planning period in August and describe any capacity considerations
10. **Cross-track collaboration** — if applying to more than one track, describe how you would manage the relationship between tracks; if applying to a single track, describe your approach to working as part of a multi-consultant team

### PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals address the requirements under above – Proposal Requirements and should be no more than 12 pages in length. Please ensure your proposal file is a PDF.

For consideration, please email your proposal, no later than June 10, 2026, by 9:00 am CT, to [info@lohengrinfoundation.org](mailto:info@lohengrinfoundation.org), using "Community Compass—Track [insert the track(s) you are applying to] RFP 2026" as the subject line.

# SELECTION CRITERIA - TRACKS A-C

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND TERMS

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

### **TRACK A — STRATEGY CONSULTANT**

- Experience designing and facilitating complex, multi-stakeholder planning or strategy processes; such as designing co-governance strategies with public agencies, community-based philanthropic grant strategy designs, and nonprofit program expansion design and implementation
- Quality and clarity of proposed approach
- Experience facilitating advisory bodies or community governance structures
- Commitment to Trust-Based and community-centered values
- Experience working with philanthropic or government partners
- Team qualifications and capacity
- Budget reasonableness and transparency
- Sustainability, value, and overall fit

### **TRACK B — CHICAGO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT**

### **TRACK C — MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT**

- Community rootedness and depth of relationships in the assigned geography
- Experience facilitating community listening sessions or participatory processes
- Commitment to Trust-Based and community-centered values
- Quality and clarity of proposed approach
- Subject matter expertise in housing
- Experience working with philanthropic or government partners
- Team qualifications and capacity
- Budget reasonableness and transparency
- Sustainability, value, and overall fit

### **TERMS**

- The Lohengrin Foundation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, request additional information, modify the RFP timeline, or discontinue the RFP process at any time
- The Foundation reserves the right to award to one or multiple entities across tracks
- The Foundation reserves the right to negotiate scope and budget with finalists prior to award
- This RFP does not constitute a commitment to award a contract
- All proposals will be held in confidence

# ABOUT THE LOHENGRIN FOUNDATION

## MISSION AND VALUES

The Lohengrin Foundation is a private family foundation headquartered in Chicago, Illinois.

For more than 60 years, the Foundation has invested in programs and initiatives advancing equity, opportunity, and justice to eradicate systemic barriers and promote vibrant, safe, and thriving communities.

To work towards these goals, we partner with and invest in organizations that guide transformational programs, advocacy, and policy initiatives to drive social impact and systems change.

### **EQUITY**

We embrace differentiated approaches that activate the voices, power, and full potential of those served by addressing the root causes and impacts of structural and systemic racial, social, and economic disparities.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

We believe that equitable access to educational, economic, and social mobility efforts must exist to be attainable by all.

### **JUSTICE**

We act to achieve fairness, equity, and the removal of systemic barriers in pursuit of a just society.

### **COLLABORATION**

We aim to address the complex challenges facing our society, amplify our impact, and create lasting, positive change through partnerships with community stakeholders, governmental agencies, policymakers, peer funders, and those directly impacted by the changes we are trying to advance.

The Lohengrin Foundation is a funder, convener, thought partner, and connector that champions and works alongside and behind leaders and practitioners. We serve as learners, partners, and collaborators who aim to use influence, grantmaking, funding collaboratives, and strategic grantee-centered communications to deliver on our mission.



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