



Request for Qualifications: Event Planning Consultant

The Bush Foundation seeks an event planner to work in consultation with us to manage and execute the details of bushCONNECT 2018. Responses are due **Aug. 28, 2017.**

We focus our work in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography, and preference will be given to consultants who are located in our region, and who have experience or familiarity working on events in the Twin Cities.

Project Description:

bushCONNECT – or bushCON for short – is a unique leadership networking event that builds stronger and more meaningful connections among leaders in our region. bushCON features inspiring talks, interactive workshop sessions, intimate conversations with community leaders and engaging networking experiences.

The event is powered by the Bush Foundation, and presented in partnership with organizations that serve as recruitment and programming partners; during the past three bushCON events, we've worked with as many as 40 partner organizations per year to bring this event to 1,100 participants. You can learn more about the event at www.bushconnect.org. You can also view videos about the event at bfdn.org/bushCON16videos.

Scope of work:

bushCON is the Foundation's signature event, and the largest we produce, with a budget of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. A welcome reception will take place the afternoon/evening of Sunday, Sept. 30, 2018, and the main event will take place all day on Monday, Oct. 1, 2018. bushCON will take place at the Guthrie Theater in all of its available spaces, ranging from rehearsal rooms to the largest theater spaces, with some sessions potentially occurring at additional nearby locations. Additional gatherings may be held in conjunction with bushCON for smaller groups of attendees such as groups of grantees.

The ideal consultant will manage and coordinate event aspects listed below, in consultation with Bush Foundation staff.

- **Planning** – Collaboratively create an internal event planning timeline for the year and participate in check-ins with Bush Foundation staff weekly or every other week to assist in the strategic planning and execution of the event. Additionally, devise and recommend schedule options for the event itself, including time blocks and movement of people throughout the venue/s. Create and manage the master timeline for the event.
- **Logistics** – Manage event logistics including hotel blocks, catering, event prep and setup, presenter needs, audio-visual and tech needs, keynote speaker logistics and onsite needs, session survey details, transportation, entertainment, and staff needs; help procure and train volunteers or extra staffing; and organize information and data required for nametags, signage, app, ticket assignments, small group assignments, etc. Oversee production of nametags and signage. Utilize universal design in our planning as much as possible.
- **Day-of-Event Management** - Oversee day-of-event activities in coordination with on-site staff including registration, programming, meals, activities, entertainment, etc.

The Bush Foundation staff plans to manage related work in the following areas:

- **Partner relationships:** In general, the Bush Foundation will manage the relationships with recruitment and programming partners; the event planning consultant will work with them to ensure they have what they need the day of the event.
- **Speaker relationships:** The Bush Foundation will select keynote speakers and salon hosts, and manage the relationships with all speakers; the event planning consultant will offer logistical support to ensure speakers have what they need the day of the event.
- **Communications:** The Bush Foundation will manage all communications plans, emails, web content and design, graphic design, social media, videos, event app, network maps, scriptwriting, powerpoints, surveys, and swag.

Request for Qualifications:

We welcome responses to this Request for Qualifications from individuals, organizations or companies interested in this project. Responses are due by the end of the day **Monday, Aug. 28, 2017**. Bush Foundation staff will review materials and hold interviews with finalists, and decisions will be made in September 2017.

The Bush Foundation believes in the power of events to inspire, equip and connect leaders and ultimately build more capacity for problem solving in our communities. At all our events, we strive to do three things: to convene diverse mixes of people and foster interaction among them; expose leaders to new ideas and push them to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in their communities; and to help build richer, more diverse networks that help people advance their work. We know people are at their best when they feel welcome and comfortable, so we strive to make bushCON, our signature event, as inclusive and engaging as possible.

Those interested in responding to this RFQ should prepare a 2- to 5-page letter of interest that addresses the following:

- How you would help us achieve the goals in the above paragraph, and your approach to your work.
- Relevant event planning experience and what makes you uniquely qualified to do this work.
- A brief description of how you and your team members would interact with Bush Foundation staff to ensure solid project management and provide the services noted above.
- Information about you/your staff. (Size of your event planning staff, the demographic makeup of your staff, and your contact information including name, email address, phone number, website or any other pertinent links.)
- How you heard about this RFQ.

We do not intend the creation of the proposal to be a burden on the writer or the review of the proposal to be a time-consuming task for the communications staff. Please be brief. Please note: We have worked with an event planner on the first three years of this event, and fully expect that company to re-apply; it is our practice to put work out to bid every few years to consider other potential vendors.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Quality of previous work and experience, including the ability to execute a complex event that is engaging, energizing and inspiring.
- Experience working with nonprofits or foundations.
- Experience working collaboratively with clients, vendors and partners.
- Ability to provide services between September 2017 and October 2018.

Response Submission:

Please email your materials as a Word document or PDF to Megan Forgrave, Bush Foundation Communications Program Manager, at mforgrave@bushfoundation.org. Questions may also be directed to Megan Forgrave either via email or at 651-379-2242.

Thank you for in advance for your response and your interest in working with the Bush Foundation.

About the Bush Foundation:

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. We work to inspire and support creative problem solving – within and across sectors – to make our region better for everyone. Learn more at BushFoundation.org.