



## **Request for Proposal (RFP) First Year Cleveland Strategic Plan**

**Submission Deadline: Monday, June 2, 2025, 5:00 PM EST**  
**Submit PDF via Email: [axn656@case.edu](mailto:axn656@case.edu)**

### **PURPOSE**

First Year Cleveland (FYC), a Case Western Reserve University program at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, seeks a qualified strategic planning consultant or organization to design, oversee, and execute a strategic planning process to produce a 3-year strategic plan. The consultant will have experience working with collaborative collective impact organizations, and a background with community engagement and participant-centered practices is highly preferred.

### **BACKGROUND**

For more than five decades, Cuyahoga County has had one of the highest infant death rates in the country. In 2015, Cuyahoga County, the worst of 88 counties in Ohio, 156 infants died before their first birthday. Among the top 100 US cities with the highest number of preterm births, Cleveland's premature birth rate was the worst.

After losing far too many infants to preventable deaths, in December 2015, FYC was established to mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths and identify the solutions to decades of high infant mortality rates (IMR) and poor maternal health outcomes. FYC has brought together more than 100 community partners, including parents who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy and/or infant, health care providers, nonprofits, the faith-based community, philanthropic organizations, government and business entities, and educational institutions to achieve optimal birth outcomes.

*More information is available at [firstyearcleveland.org](http://firstyearcleveland.org).*

### **FYC VISION**

Ensuring first birthdays and healthy moms for every family in Cuyahoga County.

### **FYC MISSION**

To reduce infant mortality—particularly among communities of greatest need.

### **FYC STAFF AND ORGANIZATION**

FYC staff members are employees of Case Western Reserve University. Current positions total 6.0 FTEs:

- Angela Newman-White, Executive Director
- Richard Stacklin, Senior Director of Community Impact
- Stacey Hren, Director of Operations
- Julie Hewitt, Project Manager

- Alvonta Jenkins, Project Manager
- Alaa Altom, Fiscal Coordinator

### **CURRENT FYC FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING**

In July 2022, the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences welcomed First Year Cleveland from the School of Medicine, a move that has allowed the organization to work in a more community-centric approach, addressing social determinants of health and structural racism. Founded to serve Greater Cleveland in 1915, the Mandel School's dynamic learning community remains rooted in a commitment to social justice and dedicated to preparing future leaders who will shape a more just and equitable society.

With a new leader and new staff, in 2023 First Year Cleveland recommitted to responding to community needs as a connector, protector, and activator. Programming is focused on convening and supporting the maternal/infant health workforce, offering training and capacity building, fundraising and funding community-based organizations, and advocating for local and statewide policies that support infant and family vitality. First Year Cleveland is supported by its Steering Committee made up of community leaders, in addition to public policy, community advisory and healthcare committees that drive the work. Funded by the Ohio Department of Medicaid, Cuyahoga County, City of Cleveland, Mt. Sinai Health Foundation, George Gund Foundation, Cleveland Foundation and many additional foundation and individual donors, First Year Cleveland invested almost \$7 million into over 40 community partners from 2023-2024.

### **SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

Working with FYC's Executive Director and Steering Committee, the consultant will deliver a 3-year FYC Strategic Plan and present the plan to the FYC Steering Committee by December 12, 2025. This strategic plan will be developed through a data-driven and participatory planning process, including affected individuals. The consultant's deliverable is a clear, easily consumed, strategic planning document, with an executive summary and graphics summary suitable for dissemination to stakeholders and the broader community.

The scope of this will reflect the opportunities to impact communities of greatest need, with a combined health care and community-based model and roadmap.

The implementation plan will include:

- Priority areas of investment
- Implementation structure (committee structure, or other structure)
- Implementation steps, timelines, and milestones used to measure progress
- 3-year operational budget

The evaluation plan will include:

- Specific measurable outcomes
- Logic model which describes how specific actions and interventions will lead to achieving outcomes
- Theory of change which describes the relative contributions of multiple factors to achieving outcomes
- Monitoring and Evaluation Tools
- Identification and definition of indicators and means of verification
- Methodology for data collection on shared measures for all funded FYC partners
- Reporting template for funded partners reporting outcome results to FYC

## **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINE**

1. FYC is seeking proposals from consultancies with demonstrated success leading a backbone organization strategic planning process.
2. While FYC understands that completing the strategic plan will require significant and active Steering Committee and staff involvement, it is important to note that the consultant will be responsible for completing all work products and final deliverables (e.g., meeting materials, presentations, notes, writing the actual strategic plan, final report, etc.).
3. The consultant will identify which aspects of the work will require Steering Committee and/or staff involvement and include the expected time requirements for all activities involving their participation.
4. Proposals must include a detailed timeline with clear descriptions of the plan to complete each work product (i.e., in what order they will be completed, how long each component will take to complete, etc.)
5. The consultant must include in the timeline “check-in” points for FYC to be provided with status updates. As work products/deliverables are completed prior to the established check-in points, the consultant will be required to send FYC these materials, to facilitate the status update meetings and/or conference calls. The consultant will be responsible for setting up the check-in meetings/calls, preparing an agenda for each meeting/call, sending out meeting invitations and writing meeting minutes.
6. In addition to the check-in meetings and/or conference calls, the consultant will be expected to present a status update on preliminary findings and recommendations prior to writing the final project deliverables and strategic plan.
7. At the conclusion of the planning process, the consultant will produce a final written report, executive summary, graphics summary, and presentation.
8. FYC will be responsible for implementing the recommendations from all final deliverables; however, it is expected that the consultant will provide ongoing coaching and implementation support as needed, per letter of agreement.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

In awarding a contract for consulting services to develop a strategic plan for the organization, FYC will examine several factors which will include:

- The extent to which the proposal addresses the stated issues and clearly describes the scope of work
- Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services
- Qualifications and experience of key consultancy personnel in leading strategic planning for a backbone organization
- Availability for work to be conducted from July 1, 2025 through December 19, 2025, with the Strategic Plan presented to the FYC Steering Committee by December 12, 2025
- Explanation of costs and expenses

## **APPLICATION PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

Provide a complete written response to this RFP which is double-spaced and does not exceed 15 single-sided pages. The proposal should include:

- A brief Executive Summary
- A description of the consultant’s approach to strategic planning, including methodology, perspective, or philosophy that guides the work
- A description of the applicant's experience with similar entities as FYC
- A clear explanation of how the consultant will address the work of a participatory planning process

- A list of deliverables with a detailed timeline for each deliverable and overall completion of the strategic plan
- A detailed budget that explains all expenses, including payment schedule
- A list of key consultancy personnel who will be involved in the work. Please include bios and three references as well as credentials, qualifications and experience

#### **ANTICIPATED PROJECT START DATE**

July 1, 2025

#### **ANTICIPATED PROJECT END DATE**

December 19, 2025

#### **PROJECT BUDGET**

It is expected that the total cost for this project will not exceed \$35,000.

#### **SUBMISSIONS**

Applicants must submit one electronic copy of the proposal in PDF format to Angela Newman-White, Executive Director. Please note that FYC will neither return any proposals it receives nor reimburse applicants for any costs they incur in developing their proposals.

#### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

Email completed proposals no later than 5:00 pm, June 2, 2025 to Angela Newman-White, FYC Executive Director, [axn656@case.edu](mailto:axn656@case.edu).

#### **REVIEW AND SELECTION**

Notice of award of contract will occur June 23, 2025.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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