

## **NewAlliance Foundation Request for Proposal**

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

NewAlliance Foundation (“the Foundation”) seeks proposals from qualified consultants or consulting firms to conduct an organizational assessment and facilitate the development of the Foundation's next strategic plan. The assessment and resulting strategic plan will serve as the Foundation's roadmap for future grantmaking, organizational positioning, and potential rebranding efforts.

The project will focus on two interconnected workstreams designed to strengthen the Foundation’s long-term effectiveness, sustainability, and community impact:

#### **1. Organizational Strategic Planning**

- Assess the Foundation’s current position, strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
- Develop a clear vision, strategic priorities, and measurable goals for the next 3–5 years.
- Identify strategies to enhance the Foundation’s long-term financial sustainability and stewardship of assets.
- Explore opportunities for organizational growth, including expanded partnerships, community engagement, and philanthropic reach.
- Establish an impact framework that aligns grantmaking, investments, and programmatic activities with desired community outcomes.
- Develop implementation priorities, performance measures, and accountability mechanisms to guide execution and monitor progress.
- Recommend approaches for adapting to emerging philanthropic trends and evolving community needs.

#### **2. Governance and Board Engagement**

- Evaluate governance structures, policies, and practices.
- Clarify board roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
- Strengthen board engagement, leadership development, and succession planning.
- Recommend best and innovative practices to support effective oversight, strategic leadership, and organizational accountability.

The activities described above should be informed by both quantitative and qualitative data, with community voice and perspective serving as a central throughline throughout the process. The consultant should design an engagement approach that meaningfully incorporates input from nonprofit partners, community stakeholders, residents, and other voices connected to the Foundation’s mission and geographic footprint. The

consultant should also incorporate local, regional, and national best practices from small private foundations and peer philanthropic institutions, leveraging lessons learned, innovative models, and evidence-based approaches to strengthen the Foundation's long-term effectiveness and impact.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

The Foundation was established in 2004 through a \$40 million stock contribution from NewAlliance Bankshares, Inc. to enhance economic vitality and improve quality of life in the communities it serves. Following the 2011 merger of NewAlliance Bankshares and First Niagara Financial Group, the Foundation became an independent private foundation based in New Haven, Connecticut. With approximately \$36 million in assets and an annual grantmaking budget of about \$1.1 million, the Foundation awards grants across 42 cities and towns in four Connecticut counties—primarily in Greater New Haven and selected communities east of the Connecticut River—and has awarded more than \$30 million in grants to nonprofit organizations since its inception.

The Foundation's grantmaking focuses on four priority areas:

- Arts
- Community Development
- Health & Human Services
- Youth & Education

In 2013, the Foundation launched REAdy for the Grade, a summer literacy initiative developed in partnership with public libraries to support early reading development and help address summer learning loss among young children. As a core program, it includes an ongoing independent evaluation, with findings intended to inform the Foundation's strategic planning and guide its future work.

The Foundation is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors and operated by a staff of two full-time professionals (Executive Director and Director of Programs) and one part-time Administrative Assistant.

The Foundation is at an important point in its organizational evolution. Following the appointment of a new Executive Director in early 2026, the Board is undertaking a strategic assessment to position the Foundation for long-term impact. As community needs and the philanthropic landscape continue to evolve, the Foundation seeks to clarify its unique role, strengthen partnerships, and maximize the effectiveness of its investments.

The Strategic Assessment Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors, is leading a thoughtful assessment of the Foundation's future, building on its legacy while exploring how it can best serve the community in the years ahead. The

Committee seeks to engage a consultant with strong facilitation expertise to guide a comprehensive and forward-looking process. The selected consultant will work closely with the Committee and the Board to assess the Foundation's current state, build alignment, and develop clear, actionable recommendations for the Foundation's future vision, values, and strategic direction. While this engagement includes the development of a strategic plan, it is intentionally broader in scope—encompassing a full organizational assessment designed to position the Foundation for meaningful, long-term impact.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **1. Organizational Strategic Planning**

#### **Internal Organizational Assessment**

Assess the Foundation's current position, capacity, and readiness for future growth, including:

- Mission, vision, values, and organizational identity.
- Staffing structure and organizational capacity.
- Grantmaking processes and operational effectiveness.
- Financial stewardship and long-term sustainability considerations.
- Current partnerships, community engagement, and philanthropic reach.
- Existing performance measures and impact assessment practices.

#### **External Assessment**

Conduct an assessment of the Foundation's external environment, including:

- Community needs and emerging priorities.
- The philanthropic landscape and funding ecosystem.
- Stakeholder interviews, community conversations, and/or advisory group engagement.
- Relevant local, regional, and national best practices among small private foundations and peer philanthropic organizations.
- Opportunities for collaboration, partnership, and strategic growth.

The consultant should describe how community voice will be gathered, synthesized, and reflected in the assessment, including the proposed mix of interviews, listening sessions, surveys, focus groups, advisory input, or other engagement methods. The approach should identify the types of stakeholders to be engaged, how participation will be inclusive and accessible across the Foundation's service area, and how insights from community participants will inform findings and recommendations.

## **Strategic Plan Development**

Working closely with the Strategic Assessment Committee and Foundation leadership:

- Facilitate strategic planning sessions and stakeholder discussions.
- Develop a multi-year strategic plan that articulates a clear vision, strategic priorities, and measurable goals.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen community impact, partnerships, and organizational effectiveness.
- Recommend strategies to support long-term financial sustainability and responsible stewardship of assets.
- Establish implementation priorities, timelines, success measures, and accountability mechanisms.
- Develop a dashboard or framework for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.

## **2. Governance and Board Engagement**

Assess and strengthen governance practices to support effective strategic leadership, including:

- Review board structure, committee structure, and governance practices.
- Clarify board roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
- Evaluate board composition, engagement, and leadership development needs.
- Recommend succession planning and board recruitment strategies, as appropriate.
- Identify governance best practices that promote accountability, transparency, and organizational effectiveness.

## **PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

Proposals will be evaluated based on clarity, alignment with the Foundation's goals, and the strength of the proposed approach along with the consultant's ability to deliver a high-impact, collaborative, and actionable process for the Foundation. Submissions should be no more than 10 pages and include the following components:

Executive Summary & Understanding (1–2 page)

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the Foundation's current mission, regional footprint in Connecticut, and funding priorities. Reflect the Foundation's voice and articulate a compelling interpretation of the opportunity.

#### Proposed Methodology & Scope (2–3 pages)

- Outline a thoughtful and well-structured approach to the engagement, including key phases such as discovery, stakeholder and community engagement, alignment, synthesis, and recommendation development. Describe how the process will elevate community voice, engage nonprofit and community stakeholders across the Foundation's service area, and translate those insights into strategic priorities, governance recommendations, and implementation guidance. Emphasize facilitation, clarity of process, inclusivity, and the ability to drive meaningful outcomes.

#### Timeline & Deliverables (1 page)

- Provide a clear and realistic project timeline, including major milestones, phases, and expected deliverables. Demonstrate the ability to complete the work efficiently (typically within 3–6 months).

#### Cost Proposal / Budget (0.5–1 page)

- Present a transparent and itemized project budget, including costs by phase or milestone and any anticipated travel expenses within Connecticut.

#### Team Qualifications & References (1 page)

- Highlight relevant experience working with philanthropic or mission-driven organizations. Include brief bios of key team members and 2–3 references from comparable engagements.

#### Relevant Work Samples (not included in page limit).

- Provide one or more examples of prior work that demonstrate the consultant's experience with strategic planning, organizational assessment, governance, or related engagements. Submissions may include completed strategic plans, planning frameworks, implementation roadmaps, governance recommendations, case studies, sample deliverables, templates, dashboards, or other representative work products. Materials may be redacted as necessary to protect client confidentiality. Please include a brief description of the project context, scope of work, and the consultant's role in the engagement.

### **TIMELINE AND SELECTION**

| <b>Action</b>             | <b>Date</b>             |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| RFP Released              | July 7, 2026            |
| Letter of intent to apply | July 21, 2026, 5:00 PM  |
| Proposals due             | August 7, 2026, 5:00 PM |
| Interviews                | August 24 – 28, 2026    |
| Selection of consultant   | September 7, 2026       |
| Contract execution        | September 14, 2026      |

### **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Letters of intent and completed proposals should be submitted in PDF format by the deadlines listed above to: Darcey Cobbs-Lomax

[darcey@newalliancefoundation.org](mailto:darcey@newalliancefoundation.org)