

National Council on Independent Living Request for Proposal (RFP): Strategic Planning Consultant

Issue Date: January 15, 2026

Updated: January 27, 2026

Response Extended Deadline: Proposals are due via email by **5:00 p.m. Eastern, February 6, 2026**.

Purpose

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan. The successful candidate will work closely with our board, members and stakeholders to create a robust 3-to-5-year plan that aligns with our mission and enhances our engagement with the disability community and stakeholders.

Background

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) is the longest-running national cross-disability grassroots organization, founded in 1982 by and for people with disabilities. As a vital advocate for thousands of organizations and individuals across the United States, NCIL represents individuals with disabilities, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and other entities committed to promoting the human and civil rights of people with disabilities. The organization is built on shared leadership throughout the organization, including its board of directors and committees. NCIL has an active and engaged membership and board of directors that make shared decision-making and leadership possible.

Mission

NCIL is dedicated to advancing independent living and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. Through policy development, education, and grassroots mobilization, NCIL works to remove barriers and create inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Vision

NCIL envisions a world where people with disabilities are valued equally and participate fully in all aspects of society. This vision drives the organization's efforts to promote inclusion, accessibility, and equity, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can enjoy the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

As a product of the national disability rights and Independent Living Movements, NCIL embodies the values of disability culture and Independent Living philosophy. This approach emphasizes that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs and should have the opportunity to decide how to live, work, and engage in their communities.

Since its inception, NCIL has assisted member CILs and SILCs in building their capacity to advocate for social change, eliminate disability-based discrimination, and enable individuals with disabilities to participate in the legislative process. NCIL promotes a national advocacy agenda established by its membership and provides input and testimony on national disability policy.

Despite progress, the vision of equality for people with disabilities has not yet been fully realized. Many individuals remain in institutional settings, and civil rights laws are increasingly threatened. NCIL relies on the support of advocates to advance its goals and the broader disability rights movement. NCIL's guiding principles reflect its commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities and fostering an inclusive society. NCIL is committed to fostering a society that respects and values the contributions of all its members while continuously advocating for the rights and empowerment of people with disabilities.

Scope of Work

The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap to guide our organization in achieving its vision, ensuring that we effectively serve our members and fulfill our mission in a rapidly evolving environment. Through this RFP, we aim to engage a consultant with demonstrated experience in strategic planning for nationwide membership organizations, a deep understanding of stakeholder engagement, and the ability to utilize innovative practices that promote accessible and inclusive participation throughout the planning process. It is our expectation to present the completed plan to our membership at our annual conference in July 2026.

The consultant will be expected to perform the following tasks:

- Environmental Review
 - Conduct a thorough assessment of the current strategic direction, including a review of existing materials and data related to programs, projects and membership engagement.
 - Gather and analyze data relevant to the NCIL's current status. This includes conducting internal assessments, market research, and a SWOT analysis to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Membership and Stakeholder Engagement

- Foster an inclusive environment for input and involvement throughout the planning process.
- Using accessible technology to involve key stakeholders, including members, staff, and partners, to gather insights, perspectives, feedback, and ideas.
- Strategic Goals and Objectives
 - Collaborate to establish clear, measurable goals that align with the mission and vision. Ensure that these are realistic and achievable.
 - Develop or provide tools for tracking progress and determining success.
- Communication of Progress and Updates
 - Keep stakeholders informed throughout the process about progress, milestones reached, and upcoming tasks.
 - Encourage feedback and maintain transparency to foster trust.

Qualifications

The ideal consultant will possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated expertise in strategic planning with a nationwide membership organization.
- Proven experience in utilizing accessible technology platforms for stakeholder engagement and data collection.
- Expertise in facilitating strategic planning sessions, ensuring productive dialogue and collaboration.
- A clear understanding of how to involve and engage membership in the strategic planning process, incorporating feedback into the final plan.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Independent Living (IL) Philosophy, the national IL Network, and Community and/or an personal connection to the disability field, preferred.
- Capacity to deliver a final draft of the Strategic Plan by June 30, 2026.

Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants should submit the following:

- Cover Letter – Introduce yourself/your firm and outline your interest in the project.
- Qualifications – Provide a summary of your relevant experience and expertise as it relates to the qualifications listed above.
- Project Approach – Outline your proposed methodology for conducting the strategic planning process, including timelines and key milestones.

- Samples of Work – Include examples of previous strategic plans or reports developed for similar organizations.
- References – Provide at least three professional references from previous clients, particularly in the field of strategic planning for membership organizations.
- Budget Estimate – Include a budget summary that outlines all fees and costs associated with the project.

Submission Information

Proposals should be submitted electronically to Sylena Campbell at sylena@ncil.org by 5:00pm EST, January 30, 2026. When submitting your proposal, please use the following subject line: 2026 Strategic Plan Proposal – [Your or your Company Name]. All submitted document titles should include your or your company name.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Proposed methodology and approach
- Cost effectiveness
- References and past work quality

For any questions regarding this RFP, please contact Sylena Campbell at sylena@ncil.org.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and thank you for your interest in partnering with the National Council on Independent Living.