

Strategic Planning

Request for Proposal (RFP)

PURPOSE:

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) is seeking proposals from professional consultants to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to lead IPC in the next phase of sustainable growth.

GOALS:

IPC's strategic planning committee has recognized the following four primary goals to guide our next strategic planning process. Each of the goals were identified based on current and upcoming needs to build a sustainable path forward.

Goals:

1. *Identify the type of strategic plan required to build the next phase for IPC.*
2. *Design and guide a clear path for the branding, mission, and long-term vision/strategy.*
3. *Evaluate IPC's organizational structure and identify ways to strengthen our board and staff's capacity to increase impact.*
4. *Lay out the roadmap for tracking progress towards our strategic plan goals, with a focus on operational and financial sustainability.*

Contractor may offer a proposal to fulfill one, two, or all of the above primary goals.

PROPOSALS DUE: Friday, February, 28th 2025

PROJECT TIMELINE:

2025 Quarter 1

- Internal surveys begin with all stakeholders
- Initial work begins with consultant to define project scope
- Consultant attends March 2025 board meeting to engage with IPC's board and staff regarding the strategic planning process

2025 Quarter 2 and 3

- Consultant works with all stakeholders on details of the strategic plan
- First draft for Strategic plan to be ready for August retreat since that is in the middle of Q3
- Final strategic plan draft to be completed by end of Quarter 3

2025 Quarter 4

- Final draft reviewed by consultant and Steering committee
- Strategic plan is finalized by mid Quarter 4
- Strategic plan will be introduced in Quarter 1 of 2026



INTRODUCTION

Mission: To inspire and equip people of faith to honor, protect, and restore our shared watershed.

Vision:

People of faith across the Chesapeake honor, care for, and work together to protect and restore all of Creation so that all communities in the watershed may thrive now and in the future.

Values:

Respect – Out of love for each other, we cherish nature and strive to protect all of Creation today and for future generations.

Action – Our work is rooted in hope and we live out our call to stewardship by taking action.

Justice - We acknowledge existing injustices and work to achieve a healthy watershed for all community members of every socio-economic status and race.

Inclusion – We strive to build community with all people of conscience, all faiths, all races and cultures, working together for the common good.

Accountability – We are responsible for the resources entrusted to us and expect the same from our partners.

Organizational Background:

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) inspires the power of faith communities in the Chesapeake Bay region to honor all of Creation by working together to protect and restore our shared watershed. We envision a time when faith communities across the Chesapeake region honor, care for, and protect the watershed we share so all our communities, and future generations, may thrive. Since 2013, IPC has engaged over 500 congregations to implement green stormwater infrastructure projects on their grounds and raise awareness among their congregants., as well as south-central Pennsylvania. IPC works in two ways: by raising awareness of the power that people of faith have to restore clean water and environmental justice, and by offering hands-on assistance helping congregations plan, pay for, and install healing projects for their communities such as rain gardens, tree plantings, native plantings, and more. IPC's programs are offered to congregations throughout Maryland, including the Eastern Shore and IPC is expanding into Pennsylvania, northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The Board of Directors consists of 14 members from diverse backgrounds, including environmental professionals, clergy, professors, and other leaders. The IPC board has formed a Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which will be the party actively working with the consultant to craft the strategic plan. This Steering Committee will include 54 board members and the Executive Director. The IPC staff consists of 14 employees: 11 full time employees, 2 part time employees, and 1 Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps (CCCC) member. IPC staff primarily work remotely from their home offices and actively represent the organization at community events across various regions. IPC has an office space that is utilized every Tuesday and also available on Thursdays, where 6 of the staff regularly report each week.

PROJECT SCOPE

- Overview of Project - This will be a 3-year strategic plan for 2026 through 2028.
- Goals – spend some initial time with the Board Chair/Executive Committee and Executive Director to reflect on the above goals and ensure they cover the most pressing needs for IPC.
- Deliverable - The final product will be a 3-year strategic plan, including action plan and financial strategies for the first 18 months. The plan shall include the following components: Organizational Identity, Strategic Plan, and Implementation Plan. The implementation plan will address financial strategies for meeting the articulated strategic goals. The implementation plan shall cover the first 12-18 months of the strategic plan. It will be the responsibility of IPC's staff and board to return to the strategic plan every 9 to 12 months to develop updated implementation plans for the remainder of the plan timeframe.
- Board Interaction - The full board will make itself available to the consultant for strategy discussions at a board retreat in August 2025. Two additional board meetings are also scheduled during the time frame of the planning process and portions of those meetings will be devoted to the consultant for group discussion.
- Steering Committee - IPC's Board will designate a steering committee to work closely with the consultant. The steering committee is meant to serve as representatives of the larger board, and will facilitate decisions on fine-detail of the plan and offers a sub-group with which the consultant can communicate more regularly and easily. This Steering Committee will include 4 board members and the Executive Director. Additional staff from the organization will be made available as needed for discussions, but will not be standing members of the committee.
- Document Drafting - The writing of the document itself will be led by the consultant. IPC's Executive Director and other board members will contribute if needed by drafting specific sections, editing, and feedback. It will be the responsibility of the consultant to shepherd the document preparation process.
- Stakeholder input – Optional – In addition to the board and staff, the board would like to consider the input from up to 10 stakeholders and up to 5 current and/or potential funders. IPC will provide electronic introductions to these stakeholders for the consultant. The goal of the stakeholder input is to help shape board thinking on how we serve our audience and how marketable our services/strategies are.
- Timeline - The planning and discussions will take place during the first two quarters of 2025 and the plan will be substantially completed by the third quarter of 2025. The final draft of the plan will be ready for board adoption in the fourth quarter of 2025.

GOAL #1 Identify the type of strategic plan required to build the next phase for IPC.

Outputs:

1. Working along with the steering committee and primary stakeholders, identify current gaps and needs for a new strategic plan.
2. Analyze gaps in the last strategic planning process.
3. Survey existing structure/ needs of IPC and prioritize the type of plan, suitable for IPC.

Deliverable: Needs Assessment: Summary of initial findings and areas for improvement.

GOAL #2 Design and guide a clear path for the branding, mission, and long-term vision/strategy.

Outputs:

1. Create a project plan and develop a thorough planning process while working along with the steering committee.
2. Actively participate in meetings with the steering committee and primary stakeholders to gather information, analyze current needs and guide a thorough planning process.
3. Develop creative ways to conduct surveys and incorporate feedback from stakeholders during the planning process needed for building a successful strategic plan.

Deliverable: Recommendations Report and Implementation Plan: Detailed report with actionable recommendations and cost-benefit analysis.

Goal #3 Evaluate IPC's organizational structure and identify ways to strengthen our board and staff's capacity to increase impact.

Outputs:

1. Solidify the structure of the organization by bringing clarity on roles and responsibilities.
2. Work along with the steering committee, and other stakeholders to identify current gaps and evaluate potential to strengthen the organization
3. Explore potential to make a universal impact by defining approaches to expand outreach and education for a wider audience.

Deliverable: Step-by-step plan for recommendations for a sustainable organization structure.

Goal #4 Lay out the roadmap for tracking progress towards our strategic plan goals, with a focus on operational and financial sustainability.

Outputs:

1. Work along with the steering committee on developing a strategy to track progress.
2. Assist in developing a clear pathways to build long term and sustainable financial model
3. Build a sustainable pathway to find balance between restricted and unrestricted funding.
4. Identify IPC's untapped potential to diversify and expand avenues of unrestricted funding

Deliverable: Draft of 3 year strategic plan with vision, mission, goals etc.

STAKEHOLDERS

Primary stakeholders

A) Strategic planning steering committee:

1. Mark Wright, Board Chair
2. Laura Cattell Noll, Steering Committee Chair
3. Meenal Harankhedkar, Executive Director
4. Curtis Bennett, Board member
5. Bill Dinges, Board member
6. Samia Kirchner, Board member

B) Core leadership team: Executive Director; Director of Finance & Operations; Director of Development & Communications; Director of Programs

Secondary Stakeholders: All staff; Partners; Congregations, Advisory council members.

Notes: Consultant will get an opportunity to collaborate with all stakeholders. Survey inputs will be collected during the first two quarters

TIMELINE

RFP posting dates.....February 17th- February 28th
 Consultant Proposals due by.....February 28th
 Selection of consultant by.....March 7th

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

IPC will choose a consultant based on these factors, in order of importance:

1. Project and Methodology
2. Understanding of IPC, context, and task at hand
3. Primary consultant's experience and success
4. Firm's experience and success
5. Past performance based on references
6. Cost Effectiveness

Qualifications:

- Significant experience in leading strategic planning efforts for similar organizations
- Expertise in CRM/ project management tools, particularly to track strategic plan progress/ metrics.
- Strong background in data management, workflow optimization, and staff training.

SUMMARY of Deliverables

1. Needs Assessment: Summary of initial findings and identified areas for improvement.
2. Recommendations Report and Implementation Plan: Detailed report with actionable recommendations and cost-benefit analysis.
3. Step-by-step plan for recommendations for a sustainable organization structure.
4. Draft of 3 year strategic plan with vision, mission, goals etc.

PROPOSALS DUE:

Friday, February, 28th 2025

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

Proposals and questions may be submitted to Meenal Harankhedkar, Executive Director at meenal@interfaithchesapeake.org