

City of Oakland, California

# Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Cultural Strategists-in-Government

CULTURAL STRATEGISTS-IN-GOVERNMENT  
\$10,000

The Cultural Affairs Division of the Economic and Workforce Development Department of the City of Oakland seeks Cultural Strategists-in Government to advance transformational change in City government Oakland's communities to advance equity.

## PURPOSE

In September 2018, the City of Oakland released a new cultural development plan, *Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan* (<https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/cultural-plan>), its first in thirty years. The plan provides a foundation for supporting and lifting-up the role of culture in building a just and equitable city and positions the diversity of the people of Oakland at the heart of the work of City government. As part of the first steps of implementing the new plan, the Cultural Affairs Division is launching this pilot program, *Cultural Strategists-in-Government* (CSIG), which aims to infuse City policymaking and practices with new creative and culturally competent thinking and problem-solving in order to promote civic belonging and well-being in Oakland.

## Why Cultural Strategists?

People working in the realm of culture, art making, and aesthetic practices of Oakland's communities can bring unique skill sets and perspectives to bear on thorny problems. They can be nimble adaptors in complex situations, creative "*ideators*" in surmounting barriers, and skilled synthesizers of diverse viewpoints. They can offer alternative form of wisdom when well-worn practices have ceased to be effective and new pathways need to be found. The work of the City government is complicated and often perplexing because it is driven by the mandate to foster the well-being of the many different types of people who live, work, and play in Oakland and of the environment in which these activities take place. Because of this challenge, the City seeks to discover new ways of achieving its aspirations through engaging with cultural strategists.

CSIGs could be artists, artist-activists, creative entrepreneurs, traditional culture bearers, community historians, or others who are knowledgeable of culturally specific practices, history, or heritage relevant to residents of Oakland and who are interested in serving the community.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The CSIG program will embed cultural strategists within City departments and offices to work in partnership with staff, project partners, and/or community stakeholders to address community issues in creative ways and bring fresh perspectives to government practices and problem-solving.

There are five City departments/offices that seek to partner with a Cultural Strategist to address a current issue. They are:

- The Human Services Department
- The Mayor’s Office for Housing Security
- The Planning and Building Department
- The Department of Race and Equity
- The Department of Transportation

Each department/office interested in having an embedded Cultural Strategist-in-Government has submitted a CASE STATEMENT (click on document below) outlining its mission; a brief description of the project for which CSIG is sought, a description of the issue to be addressed in partnership with the CSIG, the desired skills and qualifications of the CSIG, and the estimated time frame in which the partnership will take place.

Some projects may focus on addressing **internal** issues of the department, such as a need creative thinking around staff training, developing work plans, or strategies that need refreshing; others may focus on **external** issues, such as building more community participation in civic processes or increasing public engagement in civic spaces. All of the projects have the potential of making a real difference for Oakland-by supporting City workers to be more effective in their jobs or by strengthening the City's relationships with the community.

Some of the benefits that CSIGs can gain from participation in the program are: gaining knowledge about civic processes, amplifying the impact of their creative work, gaining new skills, building new relationships, and. being a voice for their community.

Those wishing to submit an application to be considered for the CSIG program must choose only one of the five (5) proposed projects and should choose the one that best fits their experience, skills, and interests.

## **ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATIONS**

Applicants to the Cultural Strategists-in-Government program. must be residents of Oakland.

Generally, ideal candidates will:

- Have deep knowledge of communities in Oakland
- Have knowledge of or experience in the public sector or be interested in learning about the culture of city government
- Have experience in working collaboratively and engaging diverse stakeholders in expressive practices
- Be flexible, adaptive, and sensitive to emergent learning and possibilities
- Value advancing racial and cultural equity in Oakland.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Please carefully review the following eligibility requirements. If you are a first-time applicant or have questions regarding eligibility, please contact the Cultural Funding Coordinator at (510) 238-7561.

Applicants must:

- Reside in Oakland at the time of application
- Maintain residency during the grant period
- Be 18 or older

Proof of residency is required and may be satisfied by submitting a copy of one of the following:

- Utility bill
- Bank statement
- Rental agreement
- Voter registration

This will be a professional services contract. If applicant is awarded, they will be required to provide proof of commercial liability insurance.

**BUDGET**

CSIGs will have an all-inclusive budget of \$10,000 to work on their chosen project. CSIGs will be expected to dedicate approximately 200 hours on their project, with some flexibility for cost of materials.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Cultural Strategists will be selected based on, but not limited to, the degree to which they fulfill the desired skills and qualifications outlined in the case statement of department/office to which they have applied, as well as the following general considerations and criteria:

- Depth of cultural knowledge and skills relevant to the project
- Adaptability and experience in working collaboratively
- Expertise in engaging diverse stakeholders in expressive practices
- Depth of experience or interest in working in the civic realm
- Degree of commitment to strengthening belonging and well-being in Oakland

**SELECTION PROCESS**

Once submitted, the application and attachments will be reviewed by Cultural Affairs staff, together with the interested departments/offices representatives. Up to, ten (10) finalists may be interviewed by a combination of relevant department/office staff, Cultural Affairs staff, and community stakeholders depending on the number and quality of submissions.

A minimum of three professional service contracts will be awarded and a maximum of five (5), based on the review of materials and the interviews, the strength of the skills and qualifications of the candidates for the proposed projects, and barring unforeseen changes in department/office conditions.

**TIMELINE**

RFQ released: November 20, 2018

Deadline for questions: January 2, 2019

Deadline to submit application: January 7, 2019  
Finalist interviews: February 2019  
Notification of award: April 2019

**RFQ How-to-Submit Workshops: Staff will review submittal guidelines and answer questions in a 45-minute workshop**

December 4; 12 noon and 6pm  
Oakland City Hall, HR 2

December 7; 12 noon  
Oakland City Hall, HR2

**SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENT**

All applicants must submit their qualifications through our online portal. Identify the department/office in which you would like to be embedded.

**SEE DEPARTMENT CASE STATEMENTS IN DOCUMENT ATTACHED BELOW**

You will be asked to submit the following information:

1. Explain why you want to become a Cultural Strategist for the City of Oakland;
  - The relevant cultural knowledge and competencies you bring to this project;
  - Your experience in engaging with diverse kinds of people and communities;
  - Some ideas you have to address the project and issues outlined in the case statement;
  - How you fit the specific desired skills and qualifications in the case statement that have not already been addressed in your letter.
2. A resume/CV not to exceed two pages, including your name, mailing address, phone number(s), email, website (if applicable).
3. Work Samples: Please submit examples of work that you believe are relevant to the proposed project. For example, they may be art works that demonstrate your skill and rigor, your work in collaboration with community members, your ability to communicate effectively with a target population, curricula or training guides, etc:
4. Proof of Oakland residency. (utility bill, lease agreement, mortgage document)

**Case Statements for the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program**

- In the pilot phase of the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program, the Cultural Funding Division has partnered with five City departments to address an issue unique to their mission or vision.
- The Human Services Department is looking to engage an artist to employ ways of creatively promoting resilience for their clients as well as their staff.

- The Mayor’s Office for Housing Security seeks help exploring how to creatively address the challenges of creating Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and then, how to communicate effectively with property owners who could create ADUs successfully.
- The Planning & Building Department seeks assistance to establish ongoing means of communicating, ideating and documenting concepts that capture value and increase support from a broader swath of Oakland’s diverse constituents to enhance capacity to plan together.
- The Department of Race & Equity wants to engage an artist to build awareness of how anti-black bias and anti-black racism operate structurally to advance the dismantling of inequitable systems.
- The Department of Transportation will engage a cultural strategist to help reclaim share of the public right-of-way for the express purpose of prioritizing community building in a public space through gatherings, public activities, and local commerce.

### **Guidelines and Online Application**

After reviewing the guidelines, begin your application by clicking the Submit Response button at the top right. The application is formatted in web-based forms, and as you input your work it will be auto-saved by Screendoor.

You will be asked to provide your Applicant Registry Profile, and answer Narrative questions. In addition, you will be asked to upload the following files:

- **Work Sample:** 1 Video OR 1 Audio sample, up to 5 minutes in length, OR a Literary Sample of up to 10 pages in length, OR up to 10 image files. You may submit multiple types of samples.
- **Resume/CV**
- **A scanned Proof of Residency (Attachment ):** Utility Bill, Bank Statement, Rental Agreement, or Voter Registration

**PLEASE NOTE: By submitting a grant application to the City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program through this website, you acknowledge and accept that your application materials will become public records of the City of Oakland.**

If you have any questions about the grant guidelines or eligibility, please contact Cultural Funding Coordinator Denise Pate at [dpate@oakland.net.com](mailto:dpate@oakland.net.com) or call (510) 2387561. For any technical questions about the online application form, click on the Contact Support button at right, or email [support@dobt.co](mailto:support@dobt.co).