



Request for Proposals: **Fundraising / Sustainability Consultant**

The [National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel \(NCCRC\)](#) seeks to contract with a person or entity to develop a fundraising plan that can help the NCCRC sustain and expand its impact.

About the NCCRC

Formed in 2003 as an unincorporated project of the [Public Justice Center](#) (PJC), the NCCRC works to ensure individuals have a right to effective counsel when facing the loss of their basic human needs in the civil legal system. We work nationally to accomplish this by:

Envisioning and advocating for the right to counsel:

- Supporting, connecting, and coordinating federal, state, and local efforts to a) enact, litigate, implement, and evaluate right to counsel programs; and b) engage in social science research projects that demonstrate the impact of counsel;
- Establishing guidelines and best practices;
- Identifying and supporting a variety of funding sources for the right to counsel;
- Growing and diversifying our participant and partner base so as to help grow the larger national movement;
- Responding to dangers to the movement while facilitating work to plan its future.

Educating about the right to counsel:

- Tracking and reporting on right to counsel litigation, legislation, education, and social science research efforts around the country;
- Maintaining a comprehensive right to counsel research repository and status map;
- Planning and/or presenting at convenings, educational sessions, and public events, and speaking with the media, in order to raise awareness/understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the right to counsel.

We support over 600 participants and partners in 45 states, all of whom are committed to exploring how the right to counsel in civil cases can best be advanced in their particular jurisdiction. We engage in this work because the right to full representation by an attorney is an evidence-based approach that promotes actual systems change. It enables people to enforce

their rights and protect their basic human needs while helping to effectuate the laws that have been passed to protect people. It helps to redistribute power and works toward restoring confidence in the justice system. It advances race equity by providing one form of relief to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities disproportionately harmed by, and entangled in, a civil justice system rooted in systemic racism. And it rejects the scarcity-based operations of legal services while advancing long-term fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal Background and Current Needs

From 2009 through 2020, the NCCRC operated with a staff of one. Since then, it has expanded to [five people](#), which has increased the project's funding needs significantly. Additionally, the NCCRC has been heavily reliant on several major foundations whose commitment beyond the present or near present is uncertain. Moreover, the majority of the NCCRC's current funding is for tenant right to counsel work specifically, and more unrestricted funding is needed in order to give staff greater flexibility in doing their work.

The NCCRC also has staffing expansion needs that it has not been able to meet with current funding level. The NCCRC's budget for FY25 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) is approximately \$1 million. It's estimated the project needs to raise at least an additional \$450,000 to more fully address the most pressing areas for growth.

Finally, there are number of aspects of the NCCRC that impact fundraising efforts:

- A national scope covering many cities, counties, states, and regions;
- Multi-faceted subject area coverage such as housing, health, and custody;
- Varied types of support, including litigation, legislation, and social science research;
- A support center model that works to advance change by supporting a variety of stakeholders: organizations providing direct services to affected individuals, community-based organizations, policymakers, and others;
- An approach that is heavily responsive to, and driven by, requests for assistance from its community, with the ability to adapt to where the need is in a particular year.

NOTE: While the NCCRC receives assistance from the PJC's Development Team and, when needed, receives a portion of the PJC's unrestricted revenue, the NCCRC staff have brought in the NCCRC's primary foundation supporters over the past 5 years and the staff have done a significant amount of grant writing and reporting.

Fundraising Scope of Work

To address all of this, the NCCRC is looking for a fundraising consultant to improve its long-term sustainability by auditing its current fundraising work, assessing the factors listed above, and developing a multi-year plan with recommendations for immediate and longer-term actions to sustain and grow the NCCRC's funding. The plan could include some or all of the following

components as well as recommendations for other revenue streams / fundraising strategies not included here:

- Foundation prospecting / sustainability: Reviewing prospects identified in 2022 by a prior consultant, as well as identifying additional prospects (including past NCCRC funders) and conducting outreach to high-level targets to further assess their viability. The consultant also would advise on how to increase the chances of securing ongoing funding from current major funders. (In FY25, approximately 87% of the NCCRC's funding is coming from foundations.)
- Annual campaign: Evaluating the NCCRC's current annual campaign and making recommendations on how to significantly improve the yield. This would include modifying the campaign messaging and/or timing, exploring the use of matching / challenge gifts, and engaging with the NCCRC's Steering Committee (which currently functions solely in an advisory capacity; the NCCRC does not have a "Board" because it is an unincorporated project). (At present, the NCCRC typically raises \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually from approximately 50 donors, and an additional \$15,000 annually from major donors.)
- Fee-for-service: Evaluating the viability of instituting a fee-for-service model with individual jurisdictions seeking support, including differing tiers of service / charges based on the nature of the entity seeking assistance, as well as seeking input from the NCCRC's community on the receptivity to such charges. (In FY25, about 15% of the NCCRC's revenue is coming from fee-for-service contracts with organizations operating at the national level.)
- Monetized membership: Evaluating the viability of creating a fee-based membership plan with differential tiers of membership for both individuals and organizations, as well as membership incentives. (At present, there is no membership structure for individual participants in the NCCRC, but about \$4,500 is raised per year from 6-7 organizations that pay membership dues.)
- Monetized educational events: Considering the viability of charging fees for participation in NCCRC webinars, in-person events, or training series, as well as exploring sponsorship for such events. (At present, all educational programming is free.)

The fundraising consultant will also:

- Examine how long-term national fundraising trends affect the proposed plan.
- Collaborate with the PJC's Development Director to ensure the work aligns with the PJC's fundraising for other projects, as well as with PJC campaigns to raise unrestricted funds, and to determine additional fundraising capacity and/or expertise needed at the PJC to implement NCCRC's multi-year fundraising plan.

- Collaborate with the NCCRC's strategic planning consultant in order to ensure the fundraising plan is aligned with the NCCRC's strategic goals and direction.
- To the degree feasible within the contract, begin cultivating relationships with some foundations identified by the consultant, and develop a plan for continuing those relationships beyond the consultancy period.

Required Experience

- Proven experience in creating comprehensive, diverse, multi-year fundraising plans.
- Strong track record with annual campaigns and foundations:
 - Expertise in annual campaign development, particularly in increasing the number of small dollar donors within a large network as well as the amounts contributed by these donors.
 - Experience in foundation research, cultivation, and stewardship.
- Intimate understanding of national fundraising trends:
 - Ability to analyze long-term national fundraising trends and apply insights to shape sustainable fundraising strategies.
 - Awareness of the changing landscape of philanthropy, including the impact of technology and the social-political climate, on donor behavior shifts.
- Excellent collaboration & communication skills:
 - Experience collaborating with multiple stakeholders, such as development teams, steering committees, and other external consultants.
 - Strong written and verbal communication skills to align fundraising efforts with the overall mission and strategic plan.

Strongly Desired Experience

- Experience in the nonprofit sector:
 - Knowledge of the legal services, advocacy, or civil rights sector, particularly experience with right to counsel or similar access to justice missions.
 - Experience working with organizations focused on social justice, race equity, and/or systemic change.
 - Experience working with smaller organizations.
- Exploring & advising on monetization options:

- Experience evaluating and implementing fee-for-service models, including tiered service pricing based on client needs.
- Experience with creating and monetizing membership structures.
- Experience assessing and implementing paid registration and/or sponsorship models for programs (including webinars, conferences, or training events), as well as developing partnerships with potential sponsors.
- Technological familiarity:
 - Grant research tools such as Instrumentl, Foundation Directory Online, GrantStation, or Candid.
 - EveryAction or similar donor databases.
 - Trello.

Project Timeline (subject to revision)

- Oct 14, 2024: Deadline for priority consideration
- October 21, 2024: Final application deadline
- October 28- Nov 1, 2024: Interviews and selection of consultant
- November 2024 - February 2025: Conversations with NCCRC staff and PJC development staff to flesh out project parameters; development of plan
- March 1, 2025: Review of plan with staff
- April - Dec 2025: Execution of proposed plan with regular check-ins and adjustments as needed.

Compensation

Up to \$20,000 in FY25 (July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025) and up to \$20,000 in FY26 (July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026).

To Apply

Please submit a cover letter, resume, team bios, references, proposed services/timeline plan, and budget to John Pollock, jpollock@publicjustice.org with the subject line “Fundraising Consultant RFP Application.” Applications will be accepted until October 21, 2024.