



WOMENHEART

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Brand Strategy & Awareness Communications Consultant

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

Proposals Due: June 5, 2026

Issuing Organization	WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
RFP Title	Brand Strategy & Awareness Communications Consultant
Engagement Type	Consulting services (independent contractor)
Anticipated Engagement Period	June 15, 2026 – June 15, 2027
Estimated Budget Range	\$4,500 - \$5,500 per month
Proposal Submission	communications@womenheart.org
Primary Contact	Celina Gorre

1. About WomenHeart

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's only patient-centered organization solely dedicated to advancing the heart health of the nearly 48 million American women living with or at risk of heart disease, the leading cause of death for women. Founded in 1999 by three women heart attack survivors, WomenHeart advances its mission through advocacy, community education, and the only national patient support network for women living with heart disease.

Our mission is to improve the lives of women with or at risk for heart disease while fighting for equity in heart health.

2. Project Background and Purpose

After more than 25 years of impact, WomenHeart is at an inflection point. Heart disease remains the #1 killer of women, yet only about half of women recognize this. Closing this gap is central to WomenHeart's mission.

To meet this moment, WomenHeart seeks a strategic communications consultant (individual or firm) to lead a brand strategy and awareness initiative that will:

- Collaborate with the CEO to build WomenHeart's thought leadership and positioning strategy.
- Sharpen and modernize the WomenHeart brand for the next chapter of our work.

- Define the WomenHeart voice and presence across the women's health and cardiovascular health ecosystems.
- Significantly expand national awareness of WomenHeart and the urgency of women's heart health, with intentional reach into communities most affected by heart health inequities.
- Embed health equity and accessibility as foundational principles of the brand — not afterthoughts.
- Equip staff, Champions, partners, and donors with a clear, compelling, and consistent narrative.
- Strengthen WomenHeart's positioning relative to peer health and patient-advocacy organizations.
- Elevate the annual WomenHeart Summit as a national platform for women's heart health and a year-over-year driver of visibility and impact.
- Identify new and strategic markets to expand WomenHeart's presence.
- Increase the organization's visibility in ways that directly support development, fundraising, and partnership growth.

We are seeking a partner who can shape direction at the leadership level, then guide implementation in close collaboration with WomenHeart staff.

3. Scope of Work

The selected consultant will lead the following workstreams. Bidders are encouraged to propose refinements based on their expertise. Health equity and accessibility (Section 3.6) are expected to be integrated throughout all workstreams, not isolated.

3.1 Discovery and Audit

- Audit current brand assets, messaging, website content, social media, collateral, earned media coverage, donor communications, and case for support materials — assessing not only effectiveness but also accessibility (WCAG conformance, plain-language readability) and inclusivity of representation.
- Conduct a competitive/comparative landscape analysis of peer organizations in women's health, cardiovascular disease, and patient advocacy.
- Synthesize findings into a written discovery report with clear strategic implications, including identified gaps in equitable reach and accessibility.

3.2 Brand Strategy

- Develop or refine WomenHeart's brand platform: thought leadership, positioning statement, value proposition, brand pillars, personality, and tone of voice.
- Develop a core messaging architecture, including key messages tailored to priority audiences (women at risk, women living with heart disease, women of color, Spanish-speaking women, women with disabilities, caregivers, healthcare providers, hospital partners, individual donors, corporate sponsors, foundation funders, policymakers, and media).
- Recommend updates (if warranted) to visual identity, taglines, or naming conventions. Visual recommendations should account for color contrast, legibility, and inclusive

representation. The consultant is not expected to execute full visual design but should articulate clear direction and partner with WomenHeart's design resources as needed.

- Deliver brand guidelines that staff, Champions, vendors, and partners can apply with confidence, including explicit standards for inclusive language, representation, and accessibility.

3.3 Awareness and Communications Strategy

- Develop an integrated awareness strategy with measurable goals, prioritized audiences, channel mix, and a content/editorial framework.
- Recommend a media relations and thought-leadership plan that elevates WomenHeart's executive leadership, scientific advisors, and Champions as authoritative voices on women's heart health.
- Recommend a digital and social media strategy aligned to the brand platform, including platform priorities, content pillars, and performance KPIs. The consultant will coordinate strategic direction with WomenHeart's social media consultant (if engaged), who will handle day-to-day execution.
- Identify high-impact moments (e.g., American Heart Month, Wear Red Day, the annual WomenHeart Summit, the Science & Leadership Symposium, policy milestones) and propose tentpole campaigns to maximize reach and engagement, including in communities historically underserved by mainstream heart health messaging.
- Recommend strategic partnership opportunities, corporate, media, hospital system, faith-based, community-based, and influencers, that can amplify awareness in priority communities.

3.4 WomenHeart Summit – Annual Visibility and Brand Amplification

The WomenHeart Summit is WomenHeart's annual signature convening, uniting patients, providers, advocates, partners, and policymakers to advance women's heart health. Held in early February each year, it sits squarely within American Heart Month and is one of the organization's most important moments for awareness, thought leadership, and partner engagement. The selected consultant will help WomenHeart elevate the Summit's profile and impact each year, including:

- Develop a multi-year Summit communications strategy that builds momentum year over year, rather than treating each Summit as a standalone event.
- Refine the Summit's brand identity, theme positioning, and messaging in alignment with the broader WomenHeart brand platform, ensuring consistency across years while allowing for fresh annual narratives.
- Develop a pre-Summit awareness campaign (typically launching in the fall and intensifying through January) that drives registration, media interest, and partner engagement, fully integrated with American Heart Month and Wear Red Day.
- Recommend an earned media strategy for the Summit, including target outlets, story angles, expert spokespeople, embargoed announcements, and pitch timing.
- Develop messaging and positioning to support speaker recruitment, sponsor cultivation, and partner participation, with development team alignment so the Summit also serves as a fundraising and stewardship moment.

- Recommend an onsite/livestream content amplification strategy: social coverage, real-time storytelling, livestream promotion, press management, and Champion engagement during the event.
- Plan post-Summit content harvesting and repurposing — recap content, takeaways, video clips, op-eds, and policy follow-through — to extend the Summit's reach for months afterward.
- Recommend metrics to track Summit visibility year over year (e.g., earned media impressions and outlet tier, registration growth, sponsor engagement, social reach, post-event sustained mentions).
- Coordinate closely with WomenHeart's events lead and Communications Manager on messaging, materials, and external communications, while leaving event production, logistics, registration, and program curation to the WomenHeart team and event vendors.

3.5 Development and Visibility Support

A core goal of this engagement is to translate brand and awareness gains into measurable visibility that supports WomenHeart's development team. In close partnership with the Sr. Director of Development, the consultant will:

- Refine the donor-facing narrative and case for support, ensuring alignment with the brand platform and clear articulation of WomenHeart's health equity work.
- Recommend strategies and messaging to raise WomenHeart's profile among priority funders, including major individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations; including funders focused on health equity, women's health, and patient advocacy.
- Identify visibility opportunities (e.g., thought leadership, earned media, signature moments, speaking platforms, awards) that elevate WomenHeart's standing with prospective funders and partners.
- Recommend messaging and positioning support for cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship touchpoints, without taking on fundraising execution itself.
- Advise on aligning brand and communications around key development moments such as the annual gala, the Wenger Awards, giving days, and campaign launches.

3.6 Health Equity and Accessibility

Health equity and accessibility are not a single line item; they are expected to be embedded across discovery, strategy, messaging, and implementation. Specifically, the consultant will:

- Center the lived experience of women most affected by heart health disparities — including Black women, Latina women, Indigenous women, Asian American and Pacific Islander women, women in rural communities, women with low incomes, and women with disabilities — throughout discovery and strategy.
- Recommend culturally responsive messaging strategies and "trusted messenger" approaches that resonate with priority communities, rather than translating a single dominant-culture message.
- Recommend a plan for multilingual communications, beginning with Spanish-language considerations, including whether content should be transcreated rather than directly translated.

- Apply plain-language and health-literacy best practices (e.g., aiming for materials at appropriate reading levels for general public health audiences) and articulate standards in the brand guidelines.
- Ensure all digital recommendations and brand standards meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility guidelines at minimum, addressing color contrast, alt text, captioning, keyboard navigation, screen-reader compatibility, and document accessibility.
- Recommend inclusive representation standards for imagery and storytelling — including age, race and ethnicity, body size, disability, gender expression, and socioeconomic background.
- Identify potential community partners and coalitions (e.g., community health workers, faith-based networks, disability advocacy organizations, multicultural media outlets) that can extend WomenHeart's equitable reach.

3.7 Working Structure and Internal Collaboration

The consultant will operate as a strategic partner embedded with WomenHeart's internal team. Key relationships include:

- Day-to-day partner: WomenHeart's Communications Manager, who will serve as the primary internal point of contact, coordinate scheduling and access to stakeholders, and support implementation.
- Coordination with social media consultant: WomenHeart may engage a separate social media consultant for day-to-day execution. The selected brand and awareness consultant is expected to set strategic direction, brand standards, and messaging guardrails, and to collaborate constructively with the social media consultant to ensure alignment.
- Partnership with Development: The consultant will work closely with the Sr. Director of Development and the development team to ensure brand and awareness work directly supports fundraising goals and donor engagement.
- Engagement with leadership: Regular check-ins with the CEO and periodic updates to the WomenHeart Board of Directors at key milestones.
- Ongoing PR and media relations advice in support of initial strategy and recommendations.
- Engagement with Champions: The WomenHeart Champion network is a strategic brand asset; the consultant should plan for meaningful engagement of Champion voices throughout discovery and as brand ambassadors in implementation.

3.8 Implementation Support and Capacity Building

- Provide a phased implementation roadmap with priorities, owners, timelines, and resource requirements.
- Coach and train WomenHeart staff (with particular attention to the Communications Manager and Development team) on activating the new brand and messaging, including inclusive-language and accessibility practices.
- Recommend a measurement framework with baseline metrics and ongoing KPIs to track brand health, awareness, equitable reach, accessibility conformance, and development-relevant visibility over time.

4. Anticipated Deliverables

At a minimum, the consultant will produce:

1. A Brand Platform document (positioning, pillars, voice, personality).
2. A Messaging Architecture for priority audiences, including donor- and funder-facing messages and audience-specific messages for priority equity communities.
3. Brand Guidelines suitable for staff, Champions, vendors, and partners — incorporating inclusive language standards, representation standards, plain-language guidance, and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility requirements.
4. An Awareness & Communications Strategy with prioritized tactics and a measurement framework.
5. A Development Visibility Plan summarizing recommended messaging, tactics, and visibility opportunities to support fundraising.
6. A WomenHeart Summit Communications & Visibility Playbook, a repeatable, year-over-year framework covering theme development support, pre/during/post-Summit communications, earned media, partner messaging, and measurement.
7. A Health Equity & Accessibility Framework that documents principles, standards, and ongoing practices the organization can sustain after the engagement ends.
8. An Implementation Roadmap with phased priorities and clear owners (staff, social media consultant, development, and outside vendors).
9. A leadership presentation summarizing the strategy and recommendations for the board and senior team.

5. Out of Scope

To set clear expectations, the following are not expected to be delivered by the selected consultant under this engagement, unless specifically proposed and separately scoped:

- Full visual identity / logo design execution (strategic direction only).
- Website redesign or development.
- Day-to-day social media content creation, posting, or community management.
- Direct fundraising execution (e.g., gift solicitation, grant writing, prospect research).
- Paid media buying or ad campaign execution.
- WomenHeart Summit event production, logistics, registration, vendor management, or program curation (the consultant supports the Summit's communications and visibility only).
- Translation services (the consultant will set multilingual strategy; execution may be handled separately).

Bidders may, at their option, propose any of the above as add-on services with separate pricing in Section 9.6.

6. Anticipated Timeline

WomenHeart anticipates the following timeline. Dates are subject to change; bidders will be notified of any updates.

Date	Milestone
May 20 th	RFP issued
June 5 th	Proposals due by 5:00 PM ET
June 8 th – June 11 th	Finalist interviews / presentations
June 12 th	Contract Awarded and Executed
June 15 th	Kickoff meeting with WomenHeart team

7. Budget and Payment

The estimated total budget for this engagement is \$70,000, inclusive of all professional fees, travel, materials, and expenses. Proposals outside this range may still be considered if the bidder offers a compelling rationale and phased options. Bidders must clearly itemize fees, hourly or daily rates by role, estimated hours, and any reimbursable expenses.

8. Qualifications

WomenHeart is seeking a consultant (individual or firm) that demonstrates:

- A minimum of 7+ years of senior-level experience leading brand strategy and integrated communications engagements.
- Demonstrated success with mission-driven organizations — ideally nonprofits in health, patient advocacy, or women's health.
- Experience translating scientific or medical content into clear, audience-ready communications.
- A strong track record of measurable awareness growth (media, digital, audience reach) and visibility outcomes that supported fundraising or partnership growth.
- Demonstrated experience embedding health equity into brand and communications work, including engaging diverse communities authentically and developing culturally responsive messaging.
- Working knowledge of accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 AA), plain-language principles, and inclusive representation practices, with examples of applying them in past work.
- Experience collaborating with development/advancement teams and partnering with internal communications staff and external specialists (e.g., social media consultants).
- Experience working with small, lean nonprofit teams in a collaborative, capacity-building manner.
- Excellent written and verbal communication, project management, and facilitation skills.

9. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be no more than 15 pages (excluding appendices and work samples) and must include the following:

9.1 Cover Letter

A brief introduction signed by an authorized representative, summarizing your interest, fit, and the proposed primary point of contact.

9.2 Firm/Consultant Background

- Overview, history, and size.
- Statement of relevant nonprofit, health, and/or women's health experience.
- Your approach to health equity, accessibility, and inclusion — in both your client work and your internal practice.

9.3 Proposed Approach and Methodology

- Your interpretation of WomenHeart's challenge and opportunity.
- A proposed approach, methodology, and phased work plan addressing the Scope of Work.
- How you will embed health equity and accessibility throughout discovery, strategy, and deliverables.
- Approach to collaborating with WomenHeart staff (Communications Manager, Development team, leadership), a separate social media consultant, and external vendors.
- Any recommended additions, refinements, or alternative ideas.

9.4 Team and Staffing

- Named team members who will be assigned to this engagement, their roles, bios, and percentage of time each will dedicate.
- A statement identifying the senior strategist who will serve as day-to-day lead.
- Where applicable, identify team members or partners who bring specific expertise in health equity, multicultural communications, accessibility, or community engagement.

9.5 Relevant Experience

- Case studies from comparable engagements within the past 5 years, including objectives, role, deliverables, and outcomes — at least one should illustrate brand or awareness work that supported fundraising or visibility growth, and at least one should demonstrate health equity or accessibility integration.
- Up to 2 work samples (e.g., brand platforms, messaging frameworks, awareness campaigns).

9.6 Budget and Fee Structure

- Total proposed cost, not to exceed.
- Itemized fees by phase, including hourly/daily rates by role and estimated hours.
- Proposed milestone-based payment schedule.

- Reimbursable expenses (if any) with assumptions.
- Optional add-on services and pricing, if applicable (see Section 5).

9.7 Required Disclosures

- Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including current or recent work with peer organizations.

10. Submission Instructions

Format: Submit one (1) PDF containing the full proposal and any appendices, plus work samples as separate PDFs.

Subject line: "WomenHeart Brand & Awareness RFP [Firm/Consultant Name]"

Submit to: communications@womenheart.org

Bidders will receive an email confirming receipt within two (2) business days.

11. Contact Information

For all questions and submissions related to this RFP: communications@womenheart.org