

Partner Network Strategy Consultant RFP

Q&A

Consolidated answers by topic

1. Process and submission mechanics

Q. The RFP references a questions deadline but no date is listed. What is the deadline for submitting questions?

A. The reference to a questions deadline was an oversight in the RFP; no date will be published. Given the short window between posting and close, bidders are welcome to send questions and we will do our best to respond in a timely manner.

Q. Does the required work sample count toward the five-page proposal limit, or may it be submitted as a separate attachment?

A. No. The work sample is not counted toward the five-page proposal limit and may be submitted as a separate attachment.

Q. Do staff CVs count toward the five-page limit?

A. No. Staff CVs and the work sample do not count toward the five-page limit; please submit them as separate attachments.

Q. Will Sesame Workshop hold introductory or pre-proposal calls with prospective bidders?

A. No. Given the short window between the posting and the application close we are not holding meetings for this RFP. We are keeping the process consistent for all respondents and answering questions in writing instead.

Q. Is the opportunity open to consultants based outside the United States, and can the project be delivered remotely?

A. There is no geographic restriction on where bidders are based, but the engagement requires demonstrated knowledge and expertise in U.S. early childhood development and U.S. partner networks and coalitions, as set out in the Evaluation Criteria section of the RFP. All proposals will be evaluated against the RFP's stated evaluation criteria.

2. Budget and cost

Q. Is there a budget range, cap, ceiling, or target figure for this engagement — for the full scope or by section?

A. Sesame Workshop is not publishing a fixed budget or budget range, for the full engagement or by section. Bidders should propose a budget envelope and fee structure that aligns with their proposed scope and approach. If bidding on specific sections, include a fee per section or for the combination proposed.

For reference, cost is one of our formal evaluation criteria (15% weight). We are looking for reasonableness relative to scope, a realistic timeline, and transparency on your day or hourly rate.

3. Timeline and pacing

Q. Is there a preferred project timeline or pacing (short sprint versus longer engagement)?

A. The RFP anticipates a 12–16 week engagement across all four phases, beginning October 12. Within that, bidders should propose the timeline and pacing that fits their approach.

Q. The 12–16 week timeline spans the winter holidays. Should we plan around our own closure dates, or are there dates on Sesame Workshop's side we should account for?

A. Please plan around your own closure dates; that is helpful for us to know, and there is no hard deadline forcing the 12–16 week window. We would also expect limited availability on our side and among partners between Christmas and New Year, so building around that week is sensible.

4. The draft strategy framework

Q. Can respondents review the draft strategy framework, or a high-level summary of it, before proposals are due?

A. No. The draft framework is internal at this stage and will not be shared before selection, including in summary form. It is being developed in parallel, and Phase 1 (Discovery and Synthesis) is where the selected consultant would pick it up and help translate it into the complete strategy.

5. Scope and deliverables

Q. For the Landscape Analysis (Deliverable 2), is a synthesis of existing research expected, or original research? And at what depth?

A. The RFP does not prescribe a specific research method or depth. Please propose whichever approach — synthesis of existing materials, new research, or a mix — best reflects your expertise and the intent of the deliverable. The RFP describes it as a focused analysis of trends and factors to pressure-test our model; we are not prescribing whether that is trend and category identification or a more comprehensive mapping.

Q. How implementation-ready should the outputs be — strategic recommendations and workflow designs, or more developed tools and templates?

A. We are not prescribing a specific level of implementation-readiness. Propose the depth you think best serves the engagement. We will evaluate that under Proposed Approach and under Value and Cost, weighing the level of readiness against the proposed cost.

Q. Does Sesame Workshop already have a defined universe of existing and prospective partners, or is identifying and prioritizing new partners part of this engagement?

A. This is one of the areas we would like the selected consultant to help us think through as part of the engagement itself, rather than settle in advance at the RFP stage. We have some existing partner relationships and internal thinking on this, but where the line falls between working with what exists and identifying new partners is part of what the Discovery and Synthesis phase is meant to surface.

Q. Are Phase 1 stakeholder conversations and Phase 3 working sessions expected to be virtual, in person, or a mix?

A. Please scope for primarily virtual sessions. If you think specific moments would benefit meaningfully from being in person, note that as an option with associated costs. We will align on the final format with the selected consultant in Phase 1.

Q. How many partners are in the network today? How many internal stakeholders will be involved? Will the consultant engage external partners directly?

A. These are part of what we would like the selected consultant to help us work through once the engagement is underway rather than settle at the RFP stage. Discovery is designed to surface most of this. Because some of this information is not shareable at this stage, please state your working assumptions in the proposal and propose an approach flexible enough to adjust.

Q. Standing position on questions that go beyond the RFP stage

A. Where questions get into the level of detail we would expect to work through collaboratively with the selected consultant once the engagement is underway, we have declined to answer at the RFP stage and asked bidders to state their working assumptions instead. This has been applied consistently and covers questions on:

- How far along the draft framework is, and whether the consultant is refining it or developing significant new strategy.
- The composition and role of the core project team, any cross-functional stakeholder committee, and leadership.
- How Sesame Workshop currently identifies, manages, and learns with partners, and what is and is not working.
- What success would look like one year after implementation.
- Whether there is an opportunity for follow-on implementation support.
- How this strategy relates to Sesame Street in Communities, and whether the SSIC partner base is the starting point.
- Whether priority content themes, program settings, and U.S. geographies are already defined.
- How learning loops, partner insight capture, and impact measurement should be designed.