



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strategic Community Assessment

September 29, 2026

Rapid City, South Dakota

Dear Prospective Consultant,

The John T. Vucurevich Foundation invites qualified consultants and firms to submit a proposal to conduct a Strategic Community Assessment for Rapid City, South Dakota.

As the Foundation looks to guide its next \$100 million in community investment, we seek a deeper understanding of our community's strengths, challenges, needs, and opportunities. We want to build on our community's existing knowledge, lift experiences of community members, and create a shared framework for strategic action that will contribute to a better future for the region and everyone within it.

The assessment should study both the needs and assets of our community. We are particularly interested in understanding the current landscape of partnerships, services, and funding; identifying opportunities for greater coordination and leverage; and finding areas where new investment or collaboration could lead to lasting change.

We envision the final product as a practical resource for the entire community, not solely for the Foundation. Findings should help other community organizations strengthen grant applications, inform decision-making, build partnerships, and pursue resources beyond those available through the Foundation. Equally important, the work should lead to greater alignment on priorities and opportunities for collective action.

We are seeking an experienced and creative partner that combines rigorous research and analysis with authentic community engagement, cultural responsiveness, and a strong focus on actionable recommendations.

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity. We look forward to learning about your approach and experience working in community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jacqui Dietrich', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jacqui Dietrich

President & CEO

John T. Vucurevich Foundation

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1. Organizational and Community Background

The John T. Vucurevich Foundation catalyzes philanthropy in western South Dakota by aligning organizations, funders, community, and people around the region's most pressing challenges. We turn shared priorities into coordinated action through strategic grantmaking, research-based education, and community engagement. By connecting the dots between housing, education, health, and economic opportunity, we work to create lasting change and improve lives across the Black Hills region. Learn more at www.jtvf.org.

Rapid City is South Dakota's second-largest city, home to approximately 86,000 residents. Located in the western part of the state, our community is geographically remote yet surrounded by remarkable natural beauty, including the Black Hills. Situated within the sacred geography of the Oceti Sakowin, Rapid City maintains deep connections with the region's nine federally recognized Tribal Nations, all of which have a presence in the community. As the economic, healthcare, educational, and tourism hub for western South Dakota and the surrounding region, Rapid City serves a diverse population that extends well beyond its city limits.

2. Project Vision

This is a partnership between the Foundation and the Systems of Care Collaborative (SOCC). The mission of the SOCC is to promote and improve interagency coordination of youth services in Rapid City.

The Foundation is investing in this work to create lasting value for the entire community. The assessment should produce a clear, credible understanding of community conditions while also equipping residents, nonprofit organizations, funders, and public partners to act on what is learned.

- **Elevate community voices**, particularly the voices of people with lived experience of the issues being studied.
- **Build upon existing knowledge** by synthesizing available research and data instead of duplicating work already completed.
- **Identify pathways to economic mobility and quality of life** with attention to root causes, barriers, community strengths, and opportunities.

- **Move from findings to measurable action** through clear priorities, practical recommendations, potential partners, and realistic next steps.
- **Create a shared community resource** that nonprofits and partners can use to strengthen grant applications, pursue outside funding, build partnerships, and support planning.
- **Improve alignment** by identifying service gaps, areas of duplication, and opportunities for collaboration or systems change.
- **Guide future Foundation strategy** by informing the Foundation's next strategic roadmap, partnerships, convening role, and philanthropic investments.

3. Why We Are Conducting This Assessment

Rapid City and the surrounding region continue to experience significant demographic, economic, and service-system change. The Foundation wants a current, community-informed understanding of both longstanding challenges and emerging opportunities.

The assessment will help guide future grantmaking, partnerships, convening efforts, and strategic initiatives. It should also provide value beyond the Foundation by creating accessible information that community organizations can use in program design, collaboration, fundraising, and advocacy.

4. Project Goals and Key Questions

- Based on priority areas, identify the community's most significant needs, opportunities, and assets.
- Understand root causes and the ways issues intersect across systems.
- Identify service, data, coordination, and funding gaps.
- Examine barriers and opportunities related to economic mobility.
- Develop practical recommendations that identify opportunities for investment or collaboration, potential partners, sequencing and measures of progress.
- Create findings that nonprofits and community partners can readily use in decision making, funding proposals and collaborative planning.

5. Scope of Work

The selected consultant will work with Foundation staff to refine the final scope. The work is expected to combine a synthesis of existing information, targeted quantitative analysis, meaningful community engagement, and funding and partnership analysis.

- Review, inventory, and synthesize existing community assessments, plans, reports, administrative data, and other relevant research to identify common findings, recurring needs, changes over time, and areas where additional research is needed.
- Identify important data gaps and determine where new data collection would add meaningful value.
- Analyze community conditions, trends, disparities, strengths, and root causes.
- Analyze relevant demographic and socioeconomic indicators and, where data allow, identify differences by population and geography, including service availability, capacity, access, and areas of unmet need.
- Engage residents and stakeholders, including people with lived experience, through accessible and culturally responsive methods.
- Examine how issues connect across housing, transportation, early learning, workforce and economic mobility, behavioral health, healthcare access, education, food security and basic needs.
- Distinguish between findings, strategic implications, and recommended actions.
- Validate preliminary findings with community participants and key partners before finalizing recommendations.

6. Community Engagement Expectations

Community engagement is a core component of the project, not a separate or symbolic activity. The proposed approach should intentionally include people who experience the challenges being studied and reduce barriers to participation.

- Residents and people with lived experience
- Nonprofit and direct service organizations
- Native American community members and Native-led organizations
- Local and state government
- Business and workforce leaders
- Healthcare and behavioral health providers
- School districts, early learning providers, and higher education

- Faith communities, advocacy organizations, and philanthropic partners

Approaches should consider multiple accessible participation methods, trusted community partners or messengers, appropriate participant compensation, trauma-informed practices, and opportunities for participants to identify both challenges and potential solutions.

7. Partnership and Funding Analysis

For each priority area,

- Identify current funding sources, key funders, and organizations actively working in the area.
- Map existing partnerships, networks, and collaborative efforts to understand the current landscape and areas of alignment.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen coordination and leverage community assets and resources.
- Consider relevant peer-community or peer-foundation practices and innovative models.
- Recommend any strategic opportunities for funders to maximize impact through grantmaking, convening, partnerships, capacity-building, or systems change.

8. Deliverables and Action Planning

Deliverables should be designed for different audiences and for practical use. At minimum, the final scope is expected to include the following:

- **Executive summary:** A concise, decision-oriented overview of key findings, priorities, and recommended actions.
- **Strategic community assessment:** A comprehensive synthesis of data, community voice, strengths, gaps, trends, disparities, and root causes.
- **Funding & Partnership Analysis:** A map for each priority area of existing funding sources, funders, service providers, and collaborative efforts.
- **Action framework:** Prioritized recommendations with proposed ownership, partners, sequencing, resource considerations, and measurable indicators.
- **Community-use materials:** Accessible data, issue briefs, citations, and presentation-ready findings that nonprofits can use in grant applications and partnership development.
- **Presentations:** At minimum, a presentation to the Foundation's Board of Directors and a community-facing presentation or learning session.

- **Data tools:** A well-organized source library, data appendix, and—if feasible and useful—an accessible dashboard or comparable updatable resource.

9. Project Timeline and Working Relationship

Respondents should submit a qualifications-based proposal with a preliminary, planning-level timeline and cost range based on the information provided in this RFP. The Foundation recognizes that the strongest final work plan will be developed collaboratively with the selected consultant.

Following selection and contract discussions with Foundation staff, the selected consultant will be expected to submit:

- A detailed work plan and confirmed scope.
- A milestone-based timeline, including key decision points and review periods.
- A detailed budget and estimated costs.
- Key assumptions, dependencies, and clearly priced optional tasks.
- An implementation schedule identifying consultant and Foundation responsibilities.

The Foundation intends to **release the assessment findings by mid-2027** and will work with the selected consultant to establish a feasible timeline based on the final scope of work.

10. Proposal Requirements

Please include all the following information in your proposal:

- Cover letter and organization or consultant overview.
- Understanding of the project vision, intended community value, and key opportunities or risks.
- Proposed methodology, including the balance of existing-data synthesis, new research, community engagement, analysis, validation, and action planning.
- Community engagement plan, with specific strategies for reaching and supporting people with lived experience.
- Relevant project examples, including work that resulted in implementation or measurable action.

- Experience producing information that nonprofits or community partners have used to pursue outside funding.
- Proposed project team, roles, availability, and relevant qualifications.
- Preliminary planning-level timeline and cost range.
- Assumptions that could materially affect scope, schedule, or cost.
- At least three client references for comparable work.
- Any proposed optional services or enhancements, separately described and priced.

11. Evaluation and Selection

The Foundation anticipates evaluating proposals based on the criteria below.

Criterion	Draft Weight
Understanding of project vision and community value	20%
Methodology and path from findings to action	30%
Community and lived-experience engagement	25%
Relevant experience and quality of prior work	15%
Cost, value, and feasibility	10%

12. Submission Instructions and Contact Information

Submit proposals via email to btice@jtvf.org as a PDF no later than **October 30, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. MT.**

Submit questions regarding this RFP to **Barry Tice**. Calls and email inquiries are welcome.

After reviewing submitted proposals, the Foundation will invite a shortlist of finalists to participate in an **online interview** to discuss their proposal and approach.

Applicants will be notified of the Foundation's selection decision by **November 30, 2026.**

Submission Contact:

Barry Tice, Senior Director of Partnerships & Impact

Email: btice@jtvf.org

Phone: 605-343-3141

235 Founders Park Drive, Suite 103, Rapid City, SD 57701