

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
For Faith in Rural Communities
Freelance Writer for Storytelling Book**

Introduction

The North Carolina Rural Center (RC) seeks to retain a highly qualified freelance writer to develop a storytelling book that captures the formation and growth of faith in rural communities, as well as the ministries churches have started as a result of our coaching in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). This document constitutes a Request for Proposal ("RFP"). The respondents to this RFP shall provide a proposal, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide all or part of the services to RC as described in the scope of work.

Respondents with questions and requests for information should email Andrew Hudgins, at ahudgins@ncruralcenter.org no later than May 1, 2025. Only written responses from RC will be considered official.

All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. ET on May 1, 2025. Inquiries, amendments, or submissions received after the time and date listed above shall not be considered for evaluation. All proposals should be provided in one PDF file and delivered to ahudgins@ncruralcenter.org.

The RC reserves the right to reject any submissions as it deems necessary. This RFP does not obligate RC to pay any cost incurred by respondents in preparing and submitting a response, nor does it obligate RC to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services.

Rural Center Mission and Core Values

The NC Rural Center's mission is to develop, promote, and implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians. We serve the state's 78 rural counties with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources.

Our Core Values are to:

- **Strive for Excellence** – By continuously learning, improving, and working collaboratively with rural and underserved communities and partners to leverage resources and develop innovative solutions, we make meaningful change.

- **Practice Authentic Leadership** – By cultivating authentic leaders in and outside of the Center, we build trust, credibility, and help rural and underserved individuals take their communities to the next level.
- **Lead with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – By acknowledging that unjust structures and policies have resulted in historic and systemic oppression, we commit ourselves to being a more racially and economically just organization.
- **Deliver Meaningful and Measurable Impact** – By placing our focus on the achievement of long-term and sustainable results, there is a greater chance that our activities will lead to noticeable impact within our communities.

Project Overview

Founded in 1987, the North Carolina Rural Center has been committed to empowering rural communities through leadership development, economic growth, and civic engagement. Recognizing the vital role that churches play in community life, the Rural Center launched Faith in Rural Communities (FIRC) in 2018 to equip churches with the tools to strengthen their communities using Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) principles.

Faith in Rural Communities supports churches in reimagining their roles as community anchors, leveraging their existing strengths to create impactful ministries. The initiative includes three key programs:

1. **Connect Church** – A year-long coaching program that helps churches identify and use their existing assets to engage in impactful community ministry.
2. **Community Connect** – A statewide learning network that connects churches doing community engagement work for shared learning and collaboration.
3. **Good Neighbor Experiment** – A five-month curriculum designed to help churches cultivate deeper relationships with their neighbors and transform their communities.

Over the years, these programs have helped over 100 churches across North Carolina shift from charity-based outreach to sustainable community partnerships. Many churches have launched new ministries focused on economic development, social connection, and public health, improving the well-being of their community in measurable ways.

The storytelling and photographic book will document the impact of these programs, capturing the formation and growth of Faith in Rural Communities and the transformative work of churches engaged in ABCD. The book will serve as:

- A historical record of FIRC and its programs.
- A recruitment tool for potential church applicants.
- A resource to engage foundations and funding partners.

- A means of increasing awareness in North Carolina.

Scope of Work

The NC Rural Center seeks a freelance writer who can:

- Write **seven articles (approximately 1,000-1,200 words each) on seven churches** (one church per article), identified by NC Rural Center staff, focusing on the ministry the church started as a result of our coaching. Some articles may be guided by a specific theme, such as elements from our curriculum or an aspect of community development. Articles should include interviews with key church and community stakeholders.
- Write an **introduction (approximately 1,000-1,200 words)** covering the creation and growth of Faith in Rural Communities at the NC Rural Center. This should include quotes from:
 - Patrick Woodie, President & CEO of NC Rural Center
 - Carolyn Rhodes, COO of NC Rural Center
 - Heather Kilbourne, Senior Director of Faith in Rural Communities
 - A representative from The Duke Endowment
 - A representative from the Lilly Endowment
- Write a **closing summary** for the book (less than 1,000 words) that includes a call to action.
- Edit **five existing articles** written by other writers to ensure a unified narrative voice.
- Maintain a **narrative tone with journalistic elements**, ensuring clarity and engagement.
- Advise editorially on **the book's overall structure**, focusing on balance and variety of perspectives.

The NC Rural Center will manage the photography and book design aspects in coordination with the selected freelance writer.

Project Timeline

The project will begin immediately upon selection. The successful respondent will enter into a contract for services with RC. The scope of work in such a contract will be based on what is presented in this RFP but may be negotiated. The initial contract duration between RC and the successful respondent is expected to begin upon the date of contract approval. The contract is intended to have an initial term of three months.

Budget

Respondents to this RFP should provide a proposed fee structure for providing services.

Qualifications

Qualified applicants must have significant experience relevant to all the above responsibilities. A deep knowledge and appreciation of churches, specifically in rural communities, is preferred.

Proposal Format

Respondents must submit one electronic file in **PDF format** with a table of contents and corresponding page numbers for easy reference. The proposal must include:

1. **Cover Letter** – Identify the submitter (name, mailing address, phone number) and include a general statement of interest.
2. **Experience** – Provide a brief history of relevant experience in written storytelling, especially work with faith communities.
3. **Professional Writing Sample and/or Published Piece** – At least 700 words.
4. **References** – Provide two references, including contact information.
5. **Fee Structure** – Proposed fee structure for services.
6. **Disclosures** – Describe any conflicts of interest.

Evaluation and Selection Process

Proposals in response to this RFP will be evaluated based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the proposals submitted and their alignment with the stated goals for our leadership development programs. During the review process, staff may request additional clarifying information from any consultant who submits a proposal. An internal evaluation committee will review the proposals from respondents and evaluate and rank them to make a final selection. Committee members may conduct virtual interviews with the top-rated consultants before making a final decision.

Deadline

Proposals should be submitted to Andrew Hudgins as one electronic PDF file to ahudgins@ncruralcenter.org. Complete submissions must be received by 5:00 pm ET on May 1, 2025 and will be notified of selection by May 15, 2025. Submissions or other materials received after this deadline will not be considered.