

## **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)—Newark Community Doula Exhibit Design, Fabrication, and Installation**

[Please submit RFQ using this AirTable form.](#)

### **Scope of Work:**

Narrative Initiative, in partnership with the Burke Foundation, is seeking a firm to co-create the content design and manage the fabrication of an interactive in-person exhibit on the history, current contributions of, structural challenges, and key opportunities for community doulas in and around Newark, New Jersey. The panel exhibition should fit in an 800 - 1,000 square foot exhibit space.

By centering and elevating the important role of community doulas in promoting health equity and birth justice, we aim to improve maternal and child health. The exhibit will present a compelling case for how structural racism degrades the system for all birthing people, building a broad base of stakeholders that are invested in systemic solutions that improve outcomes for all communities. Themes of abundance, community, joy, and justice will be explored in ways that are grounded in Black communities, where we have data on the worst outcomes, as well as on community care. This exhibit will go a step beyond raising awareness—aiming to equip individuals to advocate for policies that transcend traditional frameworks of individually-centered care.

We are looking for a firm that can work with Narrative Initiative, stakeholders, and a local community advisory board to co-create a powerful and immersive experience for viewers.

Specific goals of the exhibit include:

1. Advance public understanding and awareness of the maternal health crisis and the power of community doulas to be a part of the solution;
2. Transform healthcare systems and providers to embrace, trust, and respect the work of community doulas as an integral part of the maternity care team;
3. Engage thought leaders and policymakers to build on promising existing work to enhance doulas' efforts.

Target audiences:

- Maternal health workers, especially nurses and doctors, who could champion the integration of community doulas;
- Community doulas themselves to help raise their own voices in and around the exhibit;
- Journalists on the maternal health beat;
- Funders not yet involved in maternal health;
- Policymakers at all levels who can advance systemic solutions.

A successful in-person exhibit will include multiple creative mediums—photo, audio, video, etc.—and walk viewers through the process of a community doula supporting a family; from the time of hire through the birth and postpartum period. We want viewers to leave with a greater understanding of the critical role community doulas play in the birth ecosystem and the ways that doulas are filling in the gaps for holes in our healthcare system and other social service systems.

The exhibit should be as interactive as possible; elevating stories of community doulas, families and birthing people that have utilized doulas, and organizations advocating for structural change. Individuals should leave with concrete ways to take action to advance the goals of the exhibit.

**NOTE:** The in-person exhibit must be designed for installation on a semi-permanent basis, with capacity for being assembled and disassembled in various community spaces, and should be modular. Comprehensive documentation of assembly and disassembly is critically important. High marks will be given to concepts that consider durability, safety, and ease of maintenance and repair.

#### **Approximate Project Size and Budget:**

The in-person panel exhibition should fit in an 800 - 1,000 square foot exhibit space. The estimated budget for this project is \$200,000, including design fees and fabrication.

#### **Project Timeline and Design Firm Responsibilities:**

The launch of the exhibit is tentatively set for **April 11, 2025**, during Black Maternal Health week.

The responsibilities of the design firm are as follows:

- Liaise closely with Narrative Initiative project manager;
- Co-create the content design for the community doula exhibit alongside Narrative Initiative, key stakeholders, and the local community advisory board;
- Develop an engagement strategy for content co-creation;
- Schedule design meetings with Narrative Initiative and local community advisory board;
- Develop up to three treatments through fabrication illustrating the key components of the exhibit, how these components are integrated with one another, and how the exhibit will be configured;
- Create a preliminary budget for development and installation of the exhibit, based upon approved design;
- Manage fabrication of the exhibit;
- Develop documentation of assembly and disassembly.

#### **Tentative Schedule for Selecting Design Firm:**

- May 24 - June 14, 2024: Call for qualifications
- June 14 at 5pm ET: RFQ due date
- Interviews with Selected Design Firms: Late June/Early July 2024
- Selection of Design Firm: Early July 2024

#### **Submissions:**

Design firms will submit:

- a) One page cover letter including a statement of your interest in this project, relevant qualifications and experience (including your background co-designing projects with community partners), and a high-level description of how you'd approach this project;
- b) A summary and photos of recent design projects (including at least one interactive project completed and at least one project that was co-created) and how they relate to this design task;
- c) A list of personnel and dedicated percentage time on the exhibit, along with a brief professional overview of those who would be directly involved in the project for its duration;
- d) A breakdown budget estimate covering:

- i) Research, planning & design
- ii) Construction/fabrication & installation
- e) A draft project timeline;
- f) Payment terms & conditions.

**Selected Design Firms Must Demonstrate:**

- Experience designing interactive exhibits for small museum/community spaces;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate content design process alongside community partners;
- Ability to operate within a tightly defined budget;
- Track record of meeting key milestones and advancing a project from broad idea to exhibit;
- Strong understanding of structural racism;
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to communicate across various sets of stakeholders;

**Selection:**

A screening committee of Narrative Initiative staff will review, and rank submitted proposals. The highest ranked proposals will be asked to virtually interview with a select group of Narrative Initiative and Burke Foundation staff.

This request for qualifications does not commit Narrative Initiative to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of submissions. Narrative Initiative reserves the right to extend the due date for submissions, to accept or reject any or all submissions received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified consultant, or to cancel the RFQ in part or in its entirety.

**Responses must be received by Friday, June 14, 2024 at 5pm ET**

**About Narrative Initiative:**

Led by Rinku Sen since 2020, Narrative Initiative helps social justice movements build their power to advance ideas through stories. Recognizing how systems define our engagement with the world, Narrative Initiative works to replace pervasive harmful narratives that undergird racist, inequitable systems with helpful narratives that create community bonds and free families to pursue their full potential. Rinku has a 35-year track record in racial justice organizing and journalism, and was the architect of the Drop the I word campaign, which resulted in the Associated Press removing “illegal immigrant” from its influential style guide in 2013. The team further includes Nikesha Williams, who has reported on maternal health issues for a decade, and Yokebed Burts, who is herself a doula. Our staff bring decades of experience in organizing, research, and media work.

**Contact Information:**

Questions about the project or RFQ should be directed to Rachael DeCruz, project manager, at [rachael@narrativeinitiative.org](mailto:rachael@narrativeinitiative.org)