

Request for Proposals *for* Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultants

- Issued: September 21, 2020
- Due: October 30, 2020

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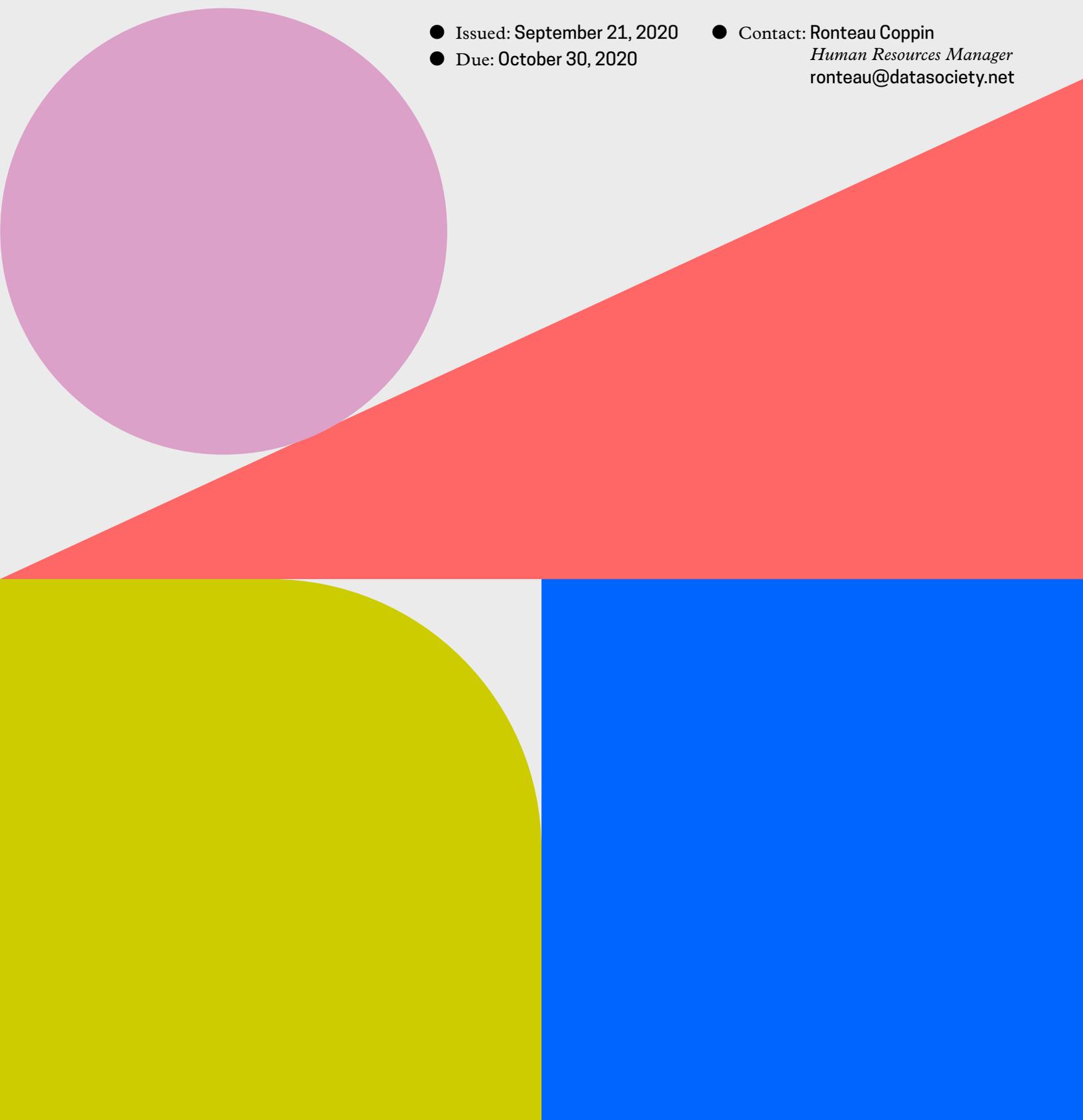


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● Background

Purpose of the RFP

Data & Society requests proposals for an outstanding Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant to help devise and implement policies, practices, programs, and organizational behaviors that foster authentic diversity, equity, and inclusion within Data & Society, positioning the organization internally and externally for greater engagement and impact with diverse communities. This includes helping to increase racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and ideological diversity across our staff, board, and membership while expanding our culture of inclusion within the organization.

About Data & Society

Data & Society is an independent nonprofit research organization. We believe that empirical evidence should directly inform the development and governance of new technology. We study the social implications of data and automation, producing original research to ground informed, evidence-based public debate about emerging technology. We combine academic rigor with creative outreach to connect, convene, and sustain expert and practitioner networks. Since 2014, Data & Society has defined the field with original research and programming to break down disciplinary silos and connect provocative thinkers across sectors. Our work acknowledges that the same innovative technologies and sociotechnical practices that are reconfiguring society – enabling novel modes of interaction, new opportunities for knowledge, and disruptive business practices and paradigms – can be abused to invade privacy, provide new tools of discrimination, and harm individuals and communities.

The intersection of race and data-centric technologies has informed much of our research. An example of recent work includes “Advancing Racial Literacy in Tech,” a report by Mutale Nkonde, Darakhshan Mir, and Jessie Daniels that urges tech companies to adopt racial literacy practices. Our blog publishes leading thinkers who scrutinize the weaponization of technological systems against vulnerable communities, and who analyze xenophobic and racist narratives in health reporting, misinformation and other areas. Our events team supports gatherings on topics such as ethics, equity, transparency, and innovation in machine learning,

and also platformed expert speakers on several relevant themes: “discriminatory design” in technology; challenging racist structures that allow data to be wielded as a weapon of immense political influence; and the limits and possibilities for using digital technology to push for racial equity in the United States and across the globe.

Just as we are committed to challenging the power and purpose of technology in society, we must be equally committed to challenging our own biases and shortcomings. We are committed to exploring these issues and learning and growing as an organization. In holding various organization-wide discussions over the past few months, senior leadership acknowledges that we must put forth a valiant and concerted effort to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront. This call for an organizational strategy on DEI and anti-racism – to be built in concert with a more robust research agenda on the intersection of technology and race – are major priorities for our institution.

Mission

Data&Society advances public understanding of the social and cultural implications of data-centric technologies and automation. Through interdisciplinary research and field-building, we work to ensure that knowledge guides development and governance of technology. We want to see a future in which the values that inform data-centric technologies are visible and intentionally chosen with respect for human dignity.

Values

Our research and engagement hews to the following values:

- **Independence:** Independence is the foundation of rigorous empirical research. We select our projects, choose methodologies, and make publishing decisions based on our analysis of the issues at hand. We do not accept funding that would compromise the independence or rigor of our work.
- **Integrity:** Organizational integrity requires trust, accountability, and transparency. We build trust and accountability through our independent research, our transparent funding relationships and organizational practices, and our inclusive outreach to a wide range of communities and individuals.
- **Equity:** Individuals and their communities require respect and dignity. We recognize and embrace differences among us, and center these differences because of a fundamental respect for diversity and a desire to challenge existing power relations in data-centric fields. This requires equitable hiring and retention, centering community experiences in our research, and adhering to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all organizational activities.

- **Creativity:** Non-traditional approaches challenge existing structures of power. We support interdisciplinary work and the fundamental value of creative expression. Externally, we support innovative thinking that engages multiple audiences, especially on concepts that challenge dominant narratives about data-centric technologies. Internally, we enable research and engagement that take risks with practices and output.

● Project Overview

Data & Society is seeking a consultant to advise leadership, management, and staff around advancing anti-racist policies at Data & Society. We expect that this individual or organization has the ability to work alongside the Human Resources Manager, the Executive Director, and our organizational managers to guide us through the process of developing a strategic plan with specific actions and outcomes as to how we can best approach diversity, equity, and inclusion in our internal policies and practices. In bringing on this consultant, Data & Society intends to intensify our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, not just within our internal community but also in our engagement with external networks. Overall, we want a customized and comprehensive work plan (inclusive of best practices, training, etc.) suitable to Data & Society's needs. The consultant will lead both the in-house research and design of strategies that support and engage community members in various diversity initiatives.

● Scope of Work



- Design and facilitate discussions across our organization to create or co-create a DEI framework, as well as a common language (e.g. a public statement), that clearly articulates a set of values, principles, and definitions that will guide our work internally and externally.
- Design and facilitate a set of organization-wide, continuous learning opportunities for all staff and board that reflects a broad range of self-awareness, ranging from introductory level to advanced DEI trainings and train-the-trainer models to intentionally build leadership at all levels of our organization. Specifically, we are interested in “teaching to fish”: growing the ability for more staff members to facilitate frank and respectful internal discussions on racial equity. Topics should include, and not be limited to diversity, equity, and inclusion; incorporating a framework of racial equity in

all our work; and disrupting white supremacist and also misogynistic, ableist, and heteronormative cultures.

- Provide consultative services to staff, researchers, board, and related consultants to shape the development of our new organizational strategic plan and prioritize policies and procedures.
- Assess one year after contract commencement how well D&S is meeting its DEI goals and recommendations for possible course corrections, as well as provide a three-year timetable for assessment, adjustment, and reflection.
- Optional: Provide resources and develop analytic tools and dashboards, etc. to measure our progress quarterly and annually to continuously improve and to hold ourselves accountable for ongoing learning, training, and engagement. It is imperative that any dashboard created be inclusive of interviews and qualitative assessments of staff experiences.

At the end, success would come in the form of the consultant:

- Ensuring that all organizational operations and policies incorporate a framework of racial equity and anti-racism.
- Crafting a concrete DEI Statement that is posted on our website, in our personnel manual, and circulated in our community.
- Giving management and leadership the appropriate tools and best practices to facilitate difficult internal conversations about race, thoughtfully and candidly.
- Determining very clear, qualitative and measurable goals around staff diversity, equity, and inclusion.

● Required Documents

If you would like to submit a proposal, please submit a package providing the following:

1. Executive Summary

- Brief history and description of your firm/organization
- The general nature of your work and how the diversity of your team creates greater value, insights, and viewpoints in the work you produce for your clients.

- Provide examples of similar work, along with contact information for organizations you have served.
- Describe the qualifications and experience of staff who will be assigned to this project. Provide additional information on the proposed project manager/director, including their CV.
- Provide a description of the approach you and your firm use when consulting with organizations on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Tell us what you believe most firmly in your practice. What guides your practice of DEI work?
- Any known facts which would or could create a conflict of interest with Data & Society if you were granted a contract.
- A list of three verifiable client references.

2. Statement of Proposed Work

- **Methodology:** Detail what your approach will be for gathering data on the current state of D&S, and how you will continue to gather information once the contract is awarded.
- **Work plan:** Propose how you would phase this project, propose a timeline, and estimate how many hours will be needed to complete this project.
- **Budget and deliverables:** Provide a detailed budget, description of the specific deliverables that will be produced, and estimated delivery dates.

● Timeline



| ACTIVITY | DATE |
|--|--------------------|
| RFP Released | September 21, 2020 |
| Final date to submit questions and requests for additional information | October 20, 2020 |
| Proposal Due | October 30, 2020 |
| Selection of finalists, interviews, and presentations | November 2020 |
| Contractor Selected | December 2020 |
| Contract Start Date | January 2021 |

Questions and requests for additional information must be submitted in writing to Ronteau Coppin, Human Resources Manager at ronteau@datasociety.net before 5pm ET on October 20, 2020. D&S reserves the right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all the questions and requests for additional information and may either respond individually or post replies to questions in the RFP listing on the [D&S website](#).

Proposals must be submitted through the [online submission system](#) no later than 5pm ET on October 30, 2020.