



# Request for Proposals

**Mass insight**

education & research

69 Canal Street  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

[massinsight.org](http://massinsight.org)

# DEI Culture Partner October 1, 2021

Contact for Proposals:

Name: Francina Victoria

Title: School Improvement Consultant

Email address: [fvictoria@massinsight.org](mailto:fvictoria@massinsight.org)

Cc to: [kfriend@massinsight.org](mailto:kfriend@massinsight.org)

Phone: (857) 301-7855

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **About Mass Insight** – Page 3
2. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within Mass insight** – Page 4
3. **Project Goals and Overview** – Page 7
4. **Proposed Scope of Work** – Page 8
5. **Submission Requirements** – Page 9

Information shared herein that is not otherwise available in the public domain should be treated as confidential information and should only be used for the purpose of responding to the RFP.

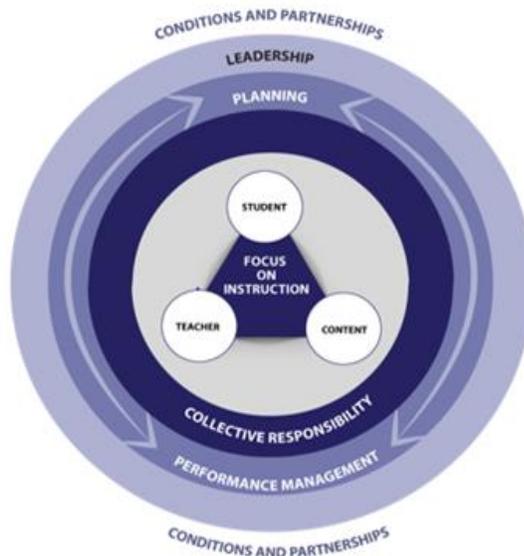
## About Mass Insight Education & Research, Inc.

Mass Insight Education & Research (Mi) is a nonprofit committed to pursuing equity in education. We envision a world in which student achievement and life outcomes no longer correlate with race, ethnicity, social class, or zip code. We work to bring this vision to life by partnering with states, districts, schools, and communities to implement customized strategies and build capacity to advance equity and opportunity in K-12 education, so that all students, and particularly those who have been systemically marginalized, are prepared to achieve their academic and personal potential.

Mass Insight's leadership in school transformation is nationally recognized. In 2007, Mass Insight Education & Research published *The Turnaround Challenge*, a research report and call to action that highlighted the need for intervention in America's lowest-performing schools – former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called the report “the Bible of school turnaround.” The report introduced the groundbreaking transformation zone model, which has been adopted nationally as a comprehensive school improvement strategy, and also established the framework for our school turnaround theory of action. Our theory of action puts increased focus on the instructional core and collective responsibility for student success.

We believe that schools can substantially improve the outcomes and success of their students, particularly those who have been systemically marginalized, by eliminating barriers to student learning through a focus on:

- **Conditions:** Schools have sufficient control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of disparate outcomes;
- **Planning:** Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans prioritize meeting the needs of all students and are informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;
- **Leadership:** The principal manages and communicates complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision, key priorities, and the success of all students;
- **Focus on Instruction:** Processes and supports continuously help teachers work together to improve and refine standards-based instruction so that all students can access and engage in rigorous learning;
- **Collective Responsibility:** The school faculty and staff demonstrate collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and the learning and success of all students;
- **Performance Management:** Consistent processes are utilized to monitor and measure plan implementation and outcomes, determine what's working, and inform efforts to improve; and,
- **Partnerships:** The school develops partnerships with families and community organizations to meet the needs of teachers and students.



Our work is organized around this Theory of Action. Mass Insight believes the school is the unit of change and improvement, and our work with schools and districts begins by understanding local strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

## **Mi's DEI Statements of Belief in Action**

*In order to advance our mission and move toward “a world in which student achievement and related life outcomes no longer correlate with race, gender, ethnicity, social class or zip code,” the Mass Insight staff and board have been working intentionally to address diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and in our work with partners. As a part of this work, we adopted the below DEI Statements of Belief in Action.*

### **Diversity:**

We believe that Mi will build stronger relationships, communicate more effectively, better understand existing systems and their impact, and generate better ideas if we have team and board members who share the race, genders, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds representative of the communities where we work. Mi makes a systematic and sustained effort to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse team and board that can maximize Mi's effectiveness and impact.

### **Equity:**

We believe that Mi and its work should reflect the equity of opportunity and outcome we expect to see in the world. We use data to identify and eliminate inequities in our organizational policies and systems including team recruiting, hiring, compensation, evaluation, and retention. In our work with partners, we advance policies, structures, systems, and resources that foster equitable, high-quality education for all students.

### **Inclusion:**

We believe that Mi will be most effective if all team and board members feel that they can bring their full selves to their work. Mi makes intentional efforts to maintain a culture in which the strengths, knowledge, and skills of all are recognized, appreciated, and utilized. By empowering and engaging everyone in our organization, we can maximize our impact in schools and communities.

## **Mi's DEI Journey to Date**

Mass Insight has an organizational commitment to equity. We believe that all students should have equitable opportunities and access to high-quality K-12 education, regardless of zip code, economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, or language. Our commitment to equity is grounded in the belief that all students can achieve when provided with high-quality education and the support needed to reach and exceed common expectations. We also believe that equity and equality are fundamentally different. Achieving equity requires an intentional focus on overcoming the historical legacy of racism, discrimination, marginalization, and underinvestment that disadvantages specific groups of people. Overcoming this history requires providing differentiated and tailored supports and resources, dismantling inequitable systems and practices, and increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) orientation at the individual as well as organizational levels to mitigate biases and prejudice.

We know that this means we have to look internally at diversity, equity, and inclusion within Mass Insight, in order to meaningfully infuse DEI throughout our work.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been a core strategy in Mi's strategic plans since 2018. Starting in 2018, we began to engage all staff in explicit learning on identity, privilege, bias, and organizational culture. We realized that in order to meaningfully examine our organization and our

work through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, we needed to build our individual and collective understandings of these issues. To hold ourselves accountable for this important work, we included DEI orientation as a priority in our strategic plan and convened a cross-functional DEI committee to lead our organization-wide learning and improvement. DEI has been a central focus at each of our quarterly all-staff meetings over the past three years, and Mass Insight staff recently participated in a series of learning sessions to increase our personal and organizational orientation and commitment to DEI. Specific training topics have included foundational diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts (e.g., identity, bias, privilege, systemic racism, microaggressions, dominant culture, etc.). We have staff who are experienced in facilitating these processes in-house, and we also partner with external organizations, including Promise54, that focus specifically on helping teams build knowledge and skills to further DEI. Our partnership with Promise54, over the previous three years, supported us in developing staff training objectives and designing an arc of learning for long-term staff development with the goal that staff will understand how identity, bias, power, privilege, and institutional racism play out in our individual perspectives and actions, our organizational frameworks and Strategic Operating Plans, in schools, and in our society. We expect our staff to take action based on these understandings and based on new learnings from our continuous improvement efforts.

As a result of these efforts, Mass Insight has examined and revised our tools and processes through a racial equity lens. We have worked to identify and address potential implicit or organizational biases; our team members have facilitated and participated in small group learning and book studies; we have made progress towards organization-wide and personal goals related to strengthening our orientation to DEI. We have seen our staff increase DEI orientation as measured by all staff and teams adopting and working toward personal and team DEI goals, qualitative observational data from our Promise54 partners indicating growth in strengthening our internal capacity for DEI, and in positive changes in our district and school-facing work. For example, team members examined and revised existing tools and processes for school and district reviews to ensure that they maintain equity at the center of the work and eliminate biases. These changes have led us to conduct district and school equity audits with new partners.

This past year, we had an internal Recruitment & Selection (R&S) Committee, drawing from all parts of our organization and supported by Promise54. This committee reviewed all of our R&S processes through an equity lens and recommended a number of changes. Some of these changes will take additional time and capacity to implement. However, we implemented as many of the recommendations as possible as we embarked upon this summer's hiring of 19 people. These changes in our processes enabled us to attract and hire a talented and diverse group of staff. The below table shows the growth in number and diversity of our Mi team over time. 2018-19 was the first year of Mi's prior 3-year strategic plan; 2020-21 was the final year of that plan, and Sept. 2021 represents the present day.

Year	Total Staff*	% BIPOC
2018-2019	28	12%
2020-2021	33	28%
Sept. 2021	52	40%

\*Captures staff that work 1/3 time or more.

Our team has grown by more than 57 percent since June, and our diversity has increased markedly. The growth in both numbers and diversity of our team means that we need to collectively envision the culture we want to create at Mi and work to create that culture, focusing on inclusion. Moving into our fourth year of organizational DEI learning and recognizing that there's more work to do, we seek to further differentiate training and provide more opportunities for our staff to investigate and strengthen the equity lens in our internal and external tools and approaches. We also recognize that our leadership team must play a significant role in leading and modeling DEI orientation at Mass Insight and want to ensure that our leadership team has the skills, knowledge, and confidence to do this well. As Mi continues its commitment to living its DEI beliefs by increasing the diversity of its team through new hiring and retention, making the team more inclusive, and incorporating its DEI commitments into its work in the field, we are seeking a partner to help us reach our current DEI goals.

Mi does not believe learning or working on DEI are tasks that will ever be finished. We are engaged in an ongoing journey to build understandings, mindsets, and skill sets we need. As such, DEI continues to be a core strategy in our new FY2022-FY2023 strategic plan, and the below goals and milestones have been established.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



*Mi continues its commitment to living its DEI beliefs by increasing the diversity of its team through new hiring and retention, making the team more inclusive, and incorporating its DEI commitments into its work in the field.*

### 2-year goals:

- Increase and retain racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity on the team and in organizational leadership
- Grow staff capacity for inclusive leadership
- Integrate DEI values into our practices and work with clients and market these approaches

### 1-year milestones:

- New staff survey provides a more detailed baseline on the inclusiveness of Mi's culture and action steps are identified and taken based on this data
- Establish and meet goals for the diversity of both hiring pools and actual hires
- Include DEI component in tactics and/or action plans for the other 3 strategies

### Tactics (1 year):

- Continue to design and refine and scale our recruitment/hiring/onboarding systems and processes with an eye on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Determine what to and how to measure progress/gather evidence over time around inclusion/DEI culture and inform staff development
- Identify concrete strategies for integrating DEI into each team/strategy's work

STRENGTH ON  
STRENGTH

## Partnership Goals and Overview

Mass Insight's goal is to partner with an individual(s) who can help the organization determine, measure progress, and gather evidence around inclusion and DEI culture to inform staff development and implement prioritized actions to increase inclusivity. This partner will play a critical role in the organization's overall DEI strategy, culture design, and training structure. In addition, the partnership will provide the partner with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the organization's work and evolving inclusion priorities.

While the RFP specifies a scope of services through June 30, 2022, we anticipate a successful initial engagement will lead to a longer-term partnership.

The objectives of the initial scope of work include:

1. Facilitate staff engagement activities, including surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand organizational context relative to staff experience and orientation to DEI and inclusive practices.
2. Analyze staff engagement data to help the DEI committee and leadership team design an inclusivity and staff learning plan focused on continued learning and personal development in order to build a more inclusive and equitable team.
3. Design an action plan and scope and sequence based on organizational data, staff learning needs, strategic initiatives, and input from the DEI committee;
4. Engage regularly with Mi's leadership team, including facilitating sessions for the leadership team. Based on data and identified learning priorities, advise on how the organizational leadership team upholds and implements DEI values.
5. Support Mi in ongoing measures to determine the extent to which teams are equitable and inclusive, particularly for staff from historically marginalized communities, including supporting Mi in selecting an annual survey. Design and facilitate quarterly sessions for all staff using the defined scope of work and arc of learning to improve organizational culture through the lens of DEI.

## Proposed Scope of Work

The expected term of this scope of work is through June 30, 2022, with an ideal November 2021 start time.

### Overview of Deliverables:

As a partner, we look forward to collaborating with an individual(s) who wants to immerse themselves in Mass Insight's work and help move us towards our DEI goals. The following questions and deliverables are intended to facilitate a collaborative process between Mass Insight and the selected individual.

### Questions we want to answer:

- What are the dynamics that are contributing to the current state of the organization's inclusivity? How can we improve them?
- How can the organization better utilize data to drive change and support the DEI strategic initiatives?
- What factors, if any, directly impact the leadership team's ability to uphold the organization's DEI values?
- How can we best understand our staff experience? What support does staff need to feel included and valued within the organization?
- What are the organization's short-term and long-term goals as we seek to create more inclusive and welcoming spaces for all?
- What resources should we be leveraging to facilitate our efforts to improve inclusion and culture, e.g, external partnerships, technology-enabled platforms, speakers.

### Deliverables and contract expectations:

- Conduct initial needs inventory. Review and analyze organizational data and facilitate a session with the DEI committee and leadership to discuss findings and next steps.
- Co-design and administer staff surveys (or help us select a survey) to understand specific staff experiences relative to inclusion and equitable practices.
- Design an action plan and scope and sequence based on organizational data, staff learning needs, strategic initiatives, and input from the DEI committee.
- Facilitate five mini-work (1-1.5 hours) virtual sessions for the Mi leadership team focused on topics identified based on the needs assessment. Facilitate an additional session in collaboration with CEO for Mi's Board.
- Facilitate three quarterly sessions (4 hours) based on the data review and action plan, two of which may be in person:
  - December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022
  - June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Support DEI committee and leadership team in understanding roles and responsibilities, and defining a structure of collective action.
- Attend monthly all-staff virtual meetings and support design (Fridays, 1-2:00 pm ET)
- Attend biweekly leadership team meetings, as needed (Fridays, 9-10:30 ET)
- Attend DEI committee meetings (biweekly)
- Create a gradual release model to ensure the organization is set up for success post-contract.

*\*Pending the CDC guidelines and organization-wide travel decision, two of the Quarterly meetings may be conducted in person.*

## Proposal Submission Requirements

### Contract Information:

The contract term shall be from start month through June 2022. The ideal start month is November 2021.

### Submission Requirements:

- Your organizational or professional values and how they drive your work
- A work plan describing methodologies, approaches, and roles and responsibilities for how the work will be accomplished. We have asked for a quick turnaround, so no fancy proposals required. Your proposals will not be evaluated on look and feel. Please include:
  - Key activities
  - Dates and timelines
  - Staff engagement plan
  - A detailed description of deliverables and outcomes.
- Past Experiences & References
 

Please share:

  - Professional biography
  - Experience providing desired services, including assessments and training support related to racial equity/diversity/inclusion and/or cultural competency
  - Relevant experience in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors
  - A sample list of past and/or current clients
  - Minimum 3 references from past and/or current clients
- Contract cost
- Selection of a partner will be made taking all of the above into account.

### Selection Timeline:

- Release of RFP – Oct 1
- Deadline for Questions from Vendors – Oct 6
- Response to Questions Emailed – Oct 8
- Deadline for Receiving Proposals – ~~Oct 22~~ Oct 25, 5pm eastern time
- Meetings with finalists – Oct 27 – Nov 3
- Selection – Nov 5

(\*This timeframe may be changed by Mass Insight if more or less time is necessary for a determination)

### Other Information:

- This is a contract relationship with compensation to be reported on Form 1099. The contractor is responsible for all applicable taxes.
- Expenses approved in advance will be reimbursed.

### Contact Information:

Direct all correspondence and questions to Francina G. Victoria, at the [FVictoria@massinsight.org](mailto:FVictoria@massinsight.org) following address, with a cc: to [KFriend@massinsight.org](mailto:KFriend@massinsight.org).

Mass Insight Education & Research, Inc.  
 857-315-5243  
 69 Canal Street, 3rd Floor,  
 Boston, MA 02114