BROOKLYN ORG
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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: THE BROOKLYN SIGNALS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST

Brooklyn Org invites researchers, institutions, firms, and community organizations to share how they would help us build the Brooklyn Signals Report: a recurring, independent report on how Brooklynites are actually doing, neighborhood by neighborhood.

This is a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), not a solicitation. We will not award a contract or grant through this process. Your input will shape a Request for Proposals (RFP) that we expect to release in early 2027.

We are deliberately leaving many design choices open. We want to learn from the field how this work could be done, what it would cost, and who is best positioned to do it.

ABOUT BROOKLYN ORG

Brooklyn Org is a champion for Brooklyn. We are a partner and platform for local philanthropy, that gives everyone a part to play in creating change from the ground up.

Over our 15+ year history, we have moved more than $150 million to nonprofits in partnership with generous Brooklynites, through our community-powered grantmaking and Donor Advised Funds.

Our network of changemakers—Brooklynites, Brooklyn backers, businesses, and broader believers in equity and justice—is powered by a shared vision of making Brooklyn a beacon for the world.

We bring three assets to this work that no other institution in Brooklyn combines: a grantmaking portfolio across the borough, deep relationships with the nonprofit leaders and workers who serve Brooklynites every day, and a community of donors and fundholders who look to us for guidance on where their giving can matter most.

THE BROOKLYN SIGNALS REPORT

The report will be Brooklyn Org's annual, independent research effort to document how Brooklynites in every neighborhood are faring, so that government, philanthropy, and the public can act on real evidence about the borough.

We want the report to do four things:

- **Drill down into the data and show how Brooklynites are doing.** Go beyond borough-wide averages to show conditions by neighborhood and across Brooklyn's many communities.
- **Explain why conditions are what they are.** Connect the trends in the data to the systemic issues behind them, drawing on the knowledge of people who work in Brooklyn's communities every day.
- **Establish Brooklyn Org as the go-to source on Brooklyn**. Produce findings that policymakers cite when they set budgets, design programs, and write legislation, and that reporters turn to first.
- **Track change over time**. Build a recurring product with consistent measures, so Brooklyn can see what is improving and what is not.

We have been inspired by efforts such as Pew's State of the City report for Philadelphia, Robin Hood's Poverty Tracker with Columbia University, the Boston Foundation's Boston Indicators, and Toronto Foundation's Vital Signs. We are not asking respondents to copy any of them. We want something built for Brooklyn.

HOW BROOKLYN ORG WILL USE THE FINDINGS

The report is not a report for the shelf. Brooklyn Org will use it in four ways, and respondents should design with these uses in mind:

- **Public policy and public conversation.** Findings timed to the city and state budget and legislative calendars, shared through an annual release event, briefings with elected officials, op-eds, and media.
- **Grantmaking priorities.** Findings will help Brooklyn Org choose the issues, neighborhoods, and populations where a portion of our grantmaking will focus.

- **Capacity building.** Findings about the nonprofit sector will help us direct support to the operational needs of the organizations serving Brooklynites.
- **Donor education**. Findings will help Brooklyn Org's donor-advised fundholders understand on-the-ground conditions and the opportunities to make a difference.

Brooklyn Org will select priorities through its own processes, and any related grant opportunities will be open and competitive. Taking part in this RFEI, or in report research, will not affect eligibility for Brooklyn Org funding.

WHAT WE KNOW AND WHERE WE WANT YOUR IDEAS

What we know	Where we want your ideas
The focus is Brooklyn, with neighborhood-level detail	Which geography to report on (community districts, ZIP codes, neighborhoods, or another unit)
The report will compile publicly available data specific to Brooklyn	Which datasets and indicators to use, and how to compare Brooklyn with the other boroughs
Brooklyn's nonprofit leaders and workers will help interpret the data and surface the systemic issues behind it	How to gather and weave in their knowledge, and the experiences of the Brooklynites they serve
The report will include a community engagement or survey component	Which methods to use: surveys, interviews, focus groups, community researchers, or others
Findings must represent Brooklyn across neighborhoods and demographic groups	How to reach every community, including those that existing data tends to miss
The work must be independent and rigorous	Scope, phasing, frequency, outputs, team structure, and cost

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Whatever the design, we expect the report to reflect these principles:

- **Rigor and independence**. Methods that researchers, policymakers, and journalists will trust, with findings that the research team stands behind.

- **Representation.** Results that hold up across Brooklyn's neighborhoods and its racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, age, and income groups.
- **Practitioner and community knowledge.** Data interpreted with the people who know Brooklyn's communities best, not only about them.
- **From conditions to causes**. Findings that connect what is happening to the systemic issues driving it.
- **Built to recur**. Consistent measures that can be tracked year over year.
- **Transparency**. Clear methods, open data where possible, and honesty about limitations.
- **Actionable**. Findings that point toward concrete changes in policy, budgets, systems, and practice.

QUESTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

Please answer the questions below in order, so we can compare responses. Tell us how you would do the work, not only what you would do. Where you see trade-offs, describe them. If you would only take on part of the report, answer the questions that apply and say which parts you would take on.

A. Who you are and why you are suited to this work

1. Describe your organization and the team who would do this work.
2. Why are you well suited to produce the report? What distinguishes your approach from others who might respond?
3. Share two or three examples of comparable work, with links, and tell us what difference that work made.
4. What is your experience with and connection to Brooklyn and its communities?
5. Would you work with partners or subcontractors (for example, a survey firm, a design firm, or a community organization)? If so, who, and what role would each play?

B. Public data for a Brooklyn-specific analysis

1. Which existing datasets would you draw on (for example, the American Community Survey, the NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, and city and state agency data), and why?
2. What geography would you report on, and how would you handle data that is published at different or overlapping geographies?
3. Which indicators would you prioritize, and how would you choose them?
4. Where are the most important gaps in existing data about Brooklyn, and how would you address them?

C. How Brooklyn compares, and what makes it unique

1. How would you compare Brooklyn with the other four boroughs and with New York City as a whole?
2. Would you also compare Brooklyn with other large U.S. cities or counties? If so, which ones, and why?
3. How would you identify what is distinctive about Brooklyn, in its conditions, its communities, and its trajectory?

D. Connecting the data to systemic issues through nonprofit knowledge

One of Brooklyn Org's greatest assets is our connection to Brooklyn's nonprofit ecosystem: the leaders and frontline workers who see every day how conditions play out in people's lives. We want the report to draw on their knowledge to make sense of the data, and to produce a "thick" layer of evidence that explains the systemic issues behind the trends.

1. How would you engage Brooklyn nonprofit leaders and frontline workers to interpret trends in the data and connect them to underlying systemic issues, such as policy, budget, political, technical, and operational factors?
2. What methods would you use (for example, structured interviews, facilitated panels by issue area, consensus methods, or surveys of nonprofit leaders), and how would you make the results rigorous rather than anecdotal?

3. How would you capture the perspectives of the clients and community members these organizations serve, alongside the views of the organizations themselves?
4. Could nonprofits' own service data (for example, demand, waitlists, or caseloads) strengthen the analysis? How would you gather, protect, and use it?
5. How would you include nonprofits beyond Brooklyn Org's grantee network, so findings reflect the full sector?
6. How would you protect candor and independence, for example through anonymity and an arm's-length process, given that Brooklyn Org also funds many of these organizations?
7. Would you include findings on the health of Brooklyn's nonprofit sector itself (finances, staffing, demand, government contracting)? If so, how?

E. Representation across Brooklyn

1. How would you make sure findings represent Brooklyn across neighborhoods and demographic groups?
2. How would you reach communities that existing data and surveys tend to miss? Examples in Brooklyn include immigrant communities, Orthodox Jewish communities, residents with limited English, older adults, and people without stable housing.
3. Which languages would you work in, and how would you decide?
4. How large a sample, or how many participants, would you need to report reliably at the level of detail you propose?

F. Community engagement and resident voice

1. How would you hear directly from Brooklynites? Describe the methods you would use and why.
2. How would resident input relate to the public data and the nonprofit knowledge described above?
3. How would you involve community members in shaping the questions or interpreting the findings, if at all?

4. How would you compensate participants and minimize the burden on them?

G. Cost, timeline, and phasing

We have not set a budget. We want to understand what the market believes this work will cost. All estimates are non-binding.

1. Provide estimated cost ranges for two or three versions of the report (for example, a basic version, a recommended version, and an ambitious version), and describe what each includes.
2. What would it cost to repeat the work each year after the first edition?
3. What are the main drivers of cost, and where could costs be reduced without compromising quality?
4. How long would it take from contract to first public release?
5. Would you recommend a pilot or phased approach? If so, describe the phases.
6. Could you bring in-kind contributions, co-funding, or other resources to the work?

H. Governance, independence, and data

1. How would you propose handling data ownership, publication rights, and review of findings before release?
2. How would you work with Brooklyn Org's staff and any advisory group of donors, civic leaders, and community voices, while keeping the research independent?
3. How would you protect the privacy of participants and the confidentiality of any nonprofit data?
4. How would you make data and methods accessible, so nonprofits, donors, and the public can use them?

I. Reaching decisionmakers and the public

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1. What outputs would you produce (for example, a flagship report, issue briefs, neighborhood profiles, an interactive dashboard, or data files)?
2. How would you help findings reach policymakers at the right moments in the budget and legislative calendar?
3. How could findings be presented to help Brooklyn Org's donors and fundholders understand conditions and opportunities?
4. What headline measure or framing would make the BOP's findings stand out and be easy to track over time?

J. Risks and lessons learned

1. What are the biggest risks to a project like this, and how would you manage them?
2. What have you learned from similar projects that Brooklyn Org should consider?
3. Is there anything we have not asked that we should consider?

WHO SHOULD RESPOND

We welcome responses from universities and academic research centers, think tanks and policy institutes, survey and research firms, consultancies, community-based and nonprofit organizations, and data and design studios.

We especially welcome partnerships and consortia that combine strengths, such as a research institution working with Brooklyn-based community organizations. You do not need to be able to deliver the whole report to respond.

HOW TO RESPOND

- **Written response**. No more than 8 pages, answering the questions in order. You may attach up to three work samples or links, which do not count toward the page limit.
- **Submission**. Send responses to msedillo@brooklyn.org with "Signals Report RFEI Response" in the subject line by Monday, January 11th, 2027, at 11:59 PM.

TIMELINE

1. **RFEI released**: November 23, 2026
2. **Questions due**: December 14, 2026
3. **Answers posted**: December 17. 2026
4. **Responses due**: January 11, 2027
5. **RFP released**: Early 2027

Respondents may be invited to follow-up conversations. Responding to this RFEI is not required to respond to the RFP.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- This RFEI is for information and planning only. It is not a request for proposals, an offer, or a commitment to contract or fund.
- Cost estimates and other information provided are non-binding.
- Brooklyn Org will not reimburse any costs of preparing a response.
- Brooklyn Org may use ideas from responses in designing the RFP. Please mark any information you consider proprietary, and we will not share it outside Brooklyn Org and its advisors.
- Brooklyn Org may contact respondents for clarification, and may modify or cancel this process at any time.

CONTACT

Please direct questions **to Michael Sedillo**, BKO's Chief Impact & Growth Officer at **msedillo@brooklyn.org**.