



Request for Proposals

Aurora Institute Symposium 2020

RFP RELEASE DATE: **AUGUST 12, 2020** | SUBMISSIONS DUE: **AUGUST 20, 2020**

PROJECT TIMELINE: **AUGUST 2020-NOVEMBER 2020**

Overview

Aurora Institute requests a proposal seeking a digital events firm to support the programmatic and technical development and execution of its flagship event, the Aurora Institute Symposium 2020, held virtually on October 26-28.

We are seeking event support in a new way that brings together technical virtual meeting skills, video, audio, performance – to inspire and challenge new ways of thinking about content delivery for a virtual event.

Organizational Background

The mission of Aurora Institute is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all.

The world has changed; so too must our education system.

Around the country – and the globe – schools are changing to modernize how teachers teach and how students learn – replacing traditional, time-based structures with new innovative, mastery-based, student-centered learning models.

Educators and school leaders are driving this transformation and re-imagining teaching and learning with new school designs to ensure all students build knowledge and skills, can apply it to real-world problems, and build the competencies they need to become lifelong learners.

Aurora Institute is well-positioned to advance systems change in education because of its long-standing role of powerfully driving systemic impact by advancing policy and best practices of personalized learning across America:

- Aurora Institute is a recognized national thought leader on competency-based education and personalized learning and holds a unique position to advance policy in all 50 states that is grounded in local- and state-level practice examples.
- Aurora's unparalleled network of practitioners, researchers, service providers, and policymakers allows Aurora to add value across the field by connecting and activating

knowledge at the national, regional and local levels and accelerating the work of other organizations across the field.

- Aurora operates as a think tank to drive the future of education, developing and sharing key insights and addressing critical questions in the field.
- Aurora supports the development of personalized learning approaches and publishes reports on key topics and tough issues that equip and empower educators and leaders to catalyze and scale personalized, competency-based learning models.

Our collective efforts are disrupting inequitable K-12 education practices and supporting all youth to successfully design their futures.

About the Aurora Institute Symposium 2020

The Aurora Institute Symposium 2020 will be held virtually on October 26-28. This year's theme is: "A New Dawn for Every Learner."

The annual Symposium expresses a vision of a world where all people are empowered to attain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to achieve success, contribute to their communities, and advance society. Together, we are working toward redefining what education is and what it can be.

The Symposium brings together experts, practitioners, teachers, policymakers, technical assistance providers, and researchers to offer an opportunity for deepening understanding on a variety of new student-centered learning models while affording a big picture, national view on the future of K-12 education. It is a forum to showcase the field's brightest ideas; emerging trends; and the models, strategies, and tools that are transforming K-12 schools around the globe. Attendees come to learn and share practices that foster deep learning, real-world application of critical skills, and an orientation toward lifelong learning.

The Symposium on October 26-28 will offer 3 days of active virtual learning and hosting a series "all fall" virtual recorded webinar sessions leading up to this main event. We want attendees to leave delighted, enlightened, and equipped to take action in their school communities.

Aurora is the largest active community of practice pushing comprehensive systemic transformation to student-centered learning.

Attendees include: educators, principals, administrators, superintendents, practitioners, nonprofit leaders, state policymakers, researchers, school board members, design thinkers, philanthropists, and learners of all ages.

The Symposium is a conference focused on transforming education systems to personalize learning for each student and achieve dramatically better results, especially for low-income and underserved students.

Aurora hosts the Symposium with meticulous selection of programmatic content and sessions to create a high-quality, leading-edge experience for attendees.

The Challenge

The original event was scheduled for October 25-28, 2020 in San Antonio, Texas. After much deliberation, we decided it is necessary to cancel the in-person 2020 Aurora Institute Symposium for everyone's health and well-being due to COVID-19 – and move to a virtual format. In addition, we are hosting a series of virtual “all fall” webinar sessions leading up to the main event on October 26-28.

We are excited to partner with a digital events firm to inspire and challenge new ways of thinking about content delivery for a virtual event to deliver a high-quality, exceptional virtual Symposium.

Scope

Aurora Institute intends to partner with a digital events team to host a virtual Symposium on October 26-28, 2020, and to host a virtual one-day National Policy Forum in November 2020 (date TBD). Aurora Institute invites professional service providers and consultants to assist in:

- Creative idea generation for hosting deeply interactive, engaging virtual events to drive the future of education.
- Provide services for event management and logistics required for hosting a high-quality and engaging virtual event over multiple days and weeks.
- Bring student voice forward as a major component of the entire event. Youth involvement including ability to secure student presentations, video clips by students in K-12 education and/or youth performances. Curate short video clips using content from “all fall” virtual webinar recordings to showcase during main Symposium event on October 26-28.
- Provide advice and strategic counsel on creating a seamless user experience when attendees register for the event through the Aurora Institute website.
- Provide guidance and support for technologies for the event, including digital strategy, approaches, and best practices for utilizing Zoom features and functionality for virtual plenary sessions, breakout rooms, and student performances, recordings, and video.
- Provide guidance on attendee registration cost structures by attendee type.
- Provide technical support for the event, including video production, live streaming, and recording.
- Provide strategic advice for facilitating sessions and driving online community conversations.
- Speaker management, including managing speaker communication, hosting session walk-throughs, speaker preparation on best practices for virtual convenings, training on use of digital event technology, and other technology-related assistance.
- Provide support and guidance on best practices with virtual networking for attendees.

- Provide guidance on schedule management, based on best practices for hosting virtual events across many time zones.
- Assist attendees with technological difficulties before and during the event as they arise.
- Gather and share recommendations for hosting future in-person and virtual convenings.
- Create and execute a post-event attendee evaluation.

The event may encompass:

- Sessions and workshops on key issues to transform K-12 education systems, such as global best practices, K-12 competency-based education, personalized learning, online/remote learning in the midst of COVID-19, designing for equity, social emotional learning, and more; the audience is K-12 education practitioners and others working to transform K-12 education.
- Student voices sharing their experiences in future-focused learning environments and student performances.
- Discovery of new teaching and learning approaches.
- Networking opportunities for attendees to connect.

Event Timeline

Planning and execution of this event will run from August-November 2020. Major milestones and projected timing are as follows:

August-September 2020:

- Selection of events service provider.
- Invite and confirm keynote speakers and session presenters for Symposium. Manage speaker communication, and schedule walk-through meetings.
- Secure youth talent for performances and sessions throughout the event.

October 2020:

- Continued assistance in programmatic design: digital strategy, youth involvement, speaker management.
- Continued assistance in technical support: curate video clips from virtual “all fall” webinar sessions to show during main Symposium on October 26-28; best practices in technology and hosting virtual convenings.
- Host walk-through meetings for key presenters. Share best practices for presenting in virtual convenings, train speakers on use of digital event technology (if needed), and provide other technology-related assistance.
- Assist in hosting the Symposium 2020 on October 26-28, including overall production, managing Zoom, video production, live streaming, recording, and assisting staff and attendees with technological difficulties as they arise.

November 2020:

- Assist in hosting a one-day National Policy Forum in November (specific timing TBD) including managing Zoom, video production, live streaming, recording, and assisting staff and attendees with technological difficulties as they arise.
- Create and execute a post-event attendee evaluation.
- Host a post-event debriefing meeting with Aurora staff to share recommendations for future in-person and virtual convenings.

Budget

The budget for this work is approximately \$20,000 - \$30,000, and request that service providers respond with the best possible proposals. We expect to negotiate a “not to exceed” contract with deliverables.

Proposal Evaluation

Selection of the service provider will be determined by senior Aurora Institute staff. Important criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Experience in designing, managing, and hosting high-quality virtual events in K-12 education
- Verifiable events management success
- Thoughtfulness of and creative approach to this work
- Expertise in managing students and the inclusion of student voices
- Experience in using Zoom
- Connection and engagement in the field of personalized, competency-based education
- Evidence of track record of experience with diversity, equity and inclusion
- Cost

Submission Instructions

By close of business on August 20, 2020, submit proposals to:

Natalie Slocum
Strategic Partnerships Director, Aurora Institute
nslocum@aurora-institute.org

Proposals should not exceed 10 pages. Proposals must be submitted in a PDF format.

Proposals must include the following:

- A firm profile, length of time in business and a description of the firm’s core competencies, including experience with clients in K-12 education.
- Narrative of approach to this work.
- Portfolio and case studies of similar work completed for previous clients. If possible, provide links to archived videos of prior virtual events.

- A description of the firm's availability to begin the project in accordance with the anticipated schedule. Provide a proposed timeline for implementation and delivery.
- A budget, including a list of service fees for the completion of work as currently described in this RFP and the total estimated cost to complete the entire project.
- Biographies for key individual(s) assigned to the event including tenure with the firm; the number of hours each individual can devote on a weekly basis to this project, and an estimate of total number of hours to complete the project.
- Three references including the type of work done for each and the date of completion. Please include organization name, address, website, phone number, email and contact names.
- A summary explaining why your firm is most qualified.

Other Important Information

The selected service provider will be notified by August 27, 2020. Those not selected will be informed via email shortly thereafter. Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted to nslocum@aurora-institute.org with the subject line [Aurora Institute Symposium 2020 RFP Question]. Aurora Institute reserves the right throughout this process to select the provider that best meets its requirements and to hold discussions with any and all respondents. Respondents understand that neither issuing this RFP or receiving it constitutes any kind of agreement with or commitment by Aurora Institute. Submissions that do not include all of requested information, particularly line item budget, will not be considered.