

Strategic Writer for Design and Evaluation

Opportunity Summary

There is a world of work to be done, help us put our expertise to use! We often find new projects through an open-bid process, responding to Requests for Proposals from a variety of actors, mostly international non-profit and non-government organizations. Developing a proposal includes reading between the lines of an RfP to discern what a client truly needs, matching opportunities that fit with our experience and business interests, and helping to develop and write a compelling plan for carrying out the work while describing our unique approach. We are in need of a proposal writer to craft both project plans and language, turning possibilities of what we could do into a comprehensive bid for contract-based work.

We are looking for a detail-oriented person who finds satisfaction in coordinating inputs, harvesting strategy, pulling together and shaping language from past proposals and from the leadership team, and writing, editing and managing the proposal development and submission process. We will look to this position to take initiative and have confidence in taking our ideas, our past proposals and a request for proposals and shaping our response thoughtfully, completely and strategically toward a clear and compelling offer. Our expertise is in the processes of evaluation, social design, and strategy development—experience in and familiarity with these disciplines will make this role much easier and fluid.

- + Job Type: Part-time, staff
- + Subject matter: international development broadly (cross-disciplinary interest in public health, community-led development, agriculture, gender, youth, entrepreneurship, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, or other human rights or development issues); behavior change; social transformation; equity, decolonization, and anti-racism
- + Discipline: research, evaluation, design, strategic planning, or other aligned practices
- + Primary language: English
- + Closing Date: rolling, open until August 31, 2021

- + Hours: 5-10 hours/week, not always even work flow depending on deadlines (We are looking to prepare and submit 1-3 proposals per month)
- + Pay range: \$35-60/hour, depending on prior experience
- + Location: We are based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA (CST) and happy to have someone join us periodically in our near-downtown office. However, this position need not be co-located with us. We encourage anyone within UTC +3 to -7 time zones to apply.

This is a growth position. We are looking for someone who wants to grow with our company. We have found that proposal development is a great way to get to deeply know who we are and what we are up to. Potential paths beyond this position could be representing our company with potential partners/clients (sales, promotion, development), client work in design or evaluation, project work turning ideas into shareable writing, project management, and more. What work would you like to grow into?

Who we are

Picture Impact is a collaboration between evaluators, designers and strategists. We are a small, nimble, women-owned company with a global network of partners whom we draw on to build the right team for each project. Our approach is complexity-aware, people-centered and utilization-focused. We look at people and behavior, think in systems, and find ideas and perspectives across silos and sectors. We apply this approach in a diverse array of contexts, subjects, and purposes.

We are Minneapolis-based, working globally, most often with projects and teams in sub-Saharan Africa. Picture Impact's portfolio is wide-ranging in subject matter—from HIV/OVC case management, to smallholder agriculture, to highlighting and scaling program innovations, to supporting child and maternal health. What ties this work together is how we intentionally activate and support the change process while enhancing the capacity of program users and implementers.

Who we are seeking

The role

Get to know our company and our work while helping us find new business opportunities. In this role you will help us watch for, find, and prioritize various matches for our expertise. Together, we will discuss how a project fits with our team, our strategic approach, and our competitive advantage to applying for any given assignment. You will help us translate these

rich strategy conversations into a budget and workplan that matches a clients' requirements and a succinct and compelling written proposal that explains our company, our approach, and our understanding of the work to be done.

Often, this writing process is also one of translation, finding a sweet spot between potential clients' definitions of their needs and our own interpretation and preferred language. As a proposal writer, you will also be part educator—clearly explaining new ideas, terms, and reasoning. You will find beautiful words to kindly but firmly hold appropriate boundaries and constructively push toward new ways of thinking.

Our approach is driven by an awareness that comes from a range of fields: design thinking, human centered design, behavioral economics, data visualization, low literacy communication, Developmental Evaluation, Utilization-focused Evaluation, Adaptive Management, participatory methods (action research, photo voice, interactive interviewing, immersive observation), the list goes on! We would love to find someone with familiarity of a handful of terms from this list, and a high level of interest and capability in Googling the rest. You need not be an expert in these methodologies, but a wordsmith who can quickly understand and apply core concepts to explain how and why we might match a specific approach to a requested scope of work.

In addition to a thinking and writing partner, we are looking for someone with a high attention to detail and a strong propensity for time-sensitive deliverables. This position will help us sort through the fine-print, keep track of what needs to be completed, nudge us on deadlines, organize meetings as needed, and reach out to potential partners or for clarification to procuring organizations.

Ways you might know this is for you:

- + Are you a strong communicator, able to convince others of new ideas or explain complicated things easily?
- + Do you spend time (physically, educationally, or intellectually) in international development (social change, movement building, and related areas may also suffice) and/or think it would be interesting to understand work trends in this field?
- + Are you deadline motivated and take pleasure from completing discreet projects?
- + Do you have a love of the writing process? Crafting ideas and putting words to paper?
- + Do you enjoy making a list and checking it twice?
- + Are you a reader of the fine print? Do you pay attention to details, especially in your writing?
- + Are you self directed while staying connected to a team?
- + Do you practice the work of decolonizing development, antiracism and dismantling white supremacy culture?

Core skills

Writing and Editing

- + Love of and skill in writing, from technical to creative
- + Ability to shape and translate ideas for various audiences and explain complex topics with concision
- + Strong critical thinking
- + Confidence and comfort describing boundary-pushing and mindsets outside the norm
- + Excited to pitch what we are selling and willing to do so strategically
- + Fluent in English, with native-language proficiency. If you have another language fluency, that would be fantastic
- + A deep enjoyment of grammar, proper punctuation, and other copy edits

Idea development

- + Transforming thinking into a well defined argument, pitch, and proposal
- + Building a project budget
- + Creating and presenting a work plan that matches requested deliverables, desired timing, and realistic expectations
- + Quick ability to research, learn, and apply new frameworks and ideas

Attention to detail

- + Pleasure in completion of checklists and requirements
- + Managing and giving love to all the details requested within RfPs and ToRs (special budget formats, collected CVs, signed conflicts of interest forms, and other hoop jumping)

Collaboration

- + Google suite is your preferred content collaboration platform.
- + Coordinating internal teams for idea generation and editorial feedback
- + Reaching out to potential consultants and additional team members

Within the team

We are a creative thinking team with an abundance of vision, high energy, and lovers of new ideas. We are seeking a team member who is results oriented, well organized, and likes to establish systems, schedules, and processes. You move things forward to make them happen and take enjoyment from project completion. You are able to analyze a situation and see the path forward. You are practical and like plans and deadlines. You take pride in reproducing products and services to their finalization with a high standard of quality.

Commitment to working on anti-racism

As a design and learning studio owned by two white, educated women working internationally—practicing in many different contexts across Africa—it is abundantly clear that we must fearlessly and critically interrogate ourselves and the systems in which we operate.

Anti-black racism, colonialism, white supremacy culture, occupation of native lands, and many intersecting axes of oppression are intimately intertwined with our work. We recognize that dismantling these systems and beliefs, re-imagining right relationships and wholeness, and catalyzing transformation is the work of a lifetime.

As a company it is important to us that all team members are open to these conversations, walking their own journey and interrogating how these issues show up and influence their own lived experiences. We find value in working hard to show up in new ways together.

Lived experience

We do not feel the need to specify what your background is—there are many ways people may have acquired the core skills for which we are looking.

Maybe you graduated 5-10 years ago and are looking to engage in exciting (and potentially somewhat new to you) subject matter while practicing your core competencies.

Maybe you've played this role in a larger company and are seeking to contribute to something that is off-the-beaten path, smaller, and more aligned to your values.

Maybe you have a less traditional CV and this sounds like the next right step to give your gifts to the world.

Specific experiences we find most aligned to our approach include:

- + 5+years of working experience in a team-based environment
- + 5+ years of work regularly requiring polished, written content
- + 2+ years experience with how programs and projects are built and run—this could be through nonprofit experience, research experience, or project management experience.
- + 2+ years being immersed in other cultures. This could mean you have lived abroad, are a migrant to the U.S. and have deep cultural ties to your country or culture of origin, or you have traveled extensively abroad. We work primarily in Eastern and Southern Africa, but will also appreciate new cultural perspectives on our team
- + A Masters Degree in international development practice, social work, public affairs (international focus), community planning, design or action research, anthropology, public health, human rights, or an aligned discipline.

Understanding in at least two of these areas will give you a strong base to work from in this position:

- + Knowledge of, or experience in, evaluation design, particularly Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Developmental Evaluation and Principles-based Evaluation. Awareness or experience in complexity-aware methods is highly desirable.
- + Knowledge of, or interest in, instructional design, experiential learning and adult learning practices, training design.
- + Knowledge of, or interest in, qualitative research approaches including participatory and interactive data collection methods, semi-structured and open-ended interviews, immersive observation and other ethnographic approaches.
- + Knowledge of, or interest in, analysis and synthesis approaches such as grounded theory, open coding, framing.
- + Knowledge and facility with a number of frameworks. The ones we use the most come from adaptive management, innovation, and community change (e.g., “what, so what, now what” or “diffusion of innovation”).
- + Understanding of the ideas behind participatory design, social design, design thinking, or Human Centered Design of services, programs, systems, processes, communication or tools for behavior change.

How to apply

Join us!

To apply please send us:

1. A letter of interest sharing with us how you rock the details and delight in executing on ideas, how working with us will contribute to your thinking and perspective, and how your lived experience/field/discipline makes you a great fit for this work.
2. An abbreviated resume/CV (no more than 2 pages), OR a portfolio of work, OR a link to your own website, OR your LinkedIn profile (truly, we are happy with just a link, we don't need to create more work for you). Choose the medium you think best represents your experience and the expertise you are looking to apply to this work.

Please send files in PDF format to connect@pictureimpact.co with subject line: Proposal writer and developer.

We will be setting up interviews and making decisions on a rolling basis through August 31st.

Our hiring process

We will conduct initial 30 minute phone/zoom/skype conversations with applicants that have the lived experience and core skills we are seeking, and seem to be a good overall fit for our company.

We will invite up to three finalists for a second--longer and more interactive--interview. At this point we will ask for contact information for two professional or academic references, and one reference of your choosing from your greater community (friend, peer in volunteer work, faith leader, neighbor). This should be someone who can speak to who you are in the world beyond how you show up at work. Please let these people know we may be reaching out to them.

We are a quirky and high touch / high relationship team. We find it appropriate to consider the first 90 days a time to really get a sense of fit as we get to know each other more fully. Every month we will reflect together on the fit-to-role, fit-to-culture, and fit-to-values. At the end of 90 days we will reflect on this work relationship and make a mutual determination of continuation.