Giving Voice, in Partnership with CTU, submits the following - Request for Proposal (RFP)

**Consultant Responsibilities:**

Giving Voice (GV) seeks to engage a consultant who will help the organization define and establish a realistic five-year strategic plan. The plan will include concrete and practical ways: to expand the Giving Voice digital network, enhance communications across the nation, learn and use related software and technologies for instant translation, build relationships, grow leadership through training among younger Women Religious Sisters and expand funding sources.

**Organization Information:**

Giving Voice (GV) is a peer-led organization that creates spaces for younger women religious to give voice to their hopes, dreams and challenges in religious life. Further, it is a network of relationships that seeks to open spaces for younger women religious to build relationships, learn from one another, and build skills for the future with peers across religious congregations. As a peer-led network of younger sisters, GV uses the Circle Process (developed by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea) as its organizational model. The Circle Process is centered on three principles: rotating leadership, shared responsibility, and reliance on wholeness. Initiatives identified in this strategic planning process will be designed to prepare younger sisters to deepen their network and assume positions of leadership.

**Project Description:**

Over the years it has become apparent to GV that more, easier and better communication is needed to further relationships and the organization. GV also wishes to find ways to prepare younger Catholic Sisters to assume leadership positions in their communities, ministries, and the Church. GV is also committed to developing the sustainability of the organization through the identification of expanding funding sources.

**Identified Challenges:**

- **Age peers**- While there are approximately 3,000 younger sisters in the U.S. today, they are spread across 450 institutes or congregations, resulting in a limited number of age peers within their own community.

- **Leadership Development**- Sisters under the age of 60 make up only 9% of U.S. women religious, resulting in a limited pool of qualified leaders for future leadership.

- **Increasing Diversity**- Younger sisters are a very diverse group, especially compared to the dominant age cohort in the U.S. While 90% of professed sisters in the U.S. are Caucasian, 42% of sisters in initial formation are from other racial and ethnic groups (21% Hispanic/Latina, 14% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Black/African American, 1% Other).

- **Time Urgency**- Religious life in the North American context is poised to enter a period of rapid demographic change. While the number of sisters has decreased 69% since 1965, the decrease in the next two decades will be even more dramatic given that the vast majority of today’s sisters are over the age of 65. Within the next 5 to 15 years, members of the younger generation of sisters
will be called upon to move into positions of formal leadership in their communities, ministries, and the wider church.

Opportunity:

The project will provide younger women religious the opportunity to engage in creative visioning, strategic planning, relationship building, leadership development, technology awareness and attending to the identified needs of younger sisters within the Giving Voice network.

Project Objectives:

Objective One: To enhance the capacity of the Giving Voice network to do creative visioning, strategic planning, relationship building, and leadership development.

1. Develop a strategic planning process - The planning process will be participative and include a diverse representation of younger GV sisters. The plan will highlight the needs and solutions for leadership development. Further, it will define multiple ways for younger sisters to network.
2. Key Identifier of the Strategic Plan - The plan will include ways to broaden the GV network and provide opportunities for leadership development.
3. The Strategic Initiative process will be attentive to the participation of younger sisters ministering in the U.S. whose first language is not English. This may include the need for translators, translation equipment and/or the translation of written materials.

Outcomes:

1. A diverse group of 30-50 younger GV sisters will participate in the strategic planning process.
2. This Strategic Plan will identify key initiatives to broaden GV network and provide opportunities for leadership development.
3. There will be a 20% increase in participation by younger sisters, in online GV spaces, within 3 years.

Objective Two: To implement the initiatives designed into the strategic plan, expand outreach and increase diversity.

Outcomes:

1. Fifty to one hundred younger sisters will be trained in the Circle Process or other leadership skills.
2. Within 3 years, at least 10 new communities will have their younger sisters involved in the GV network.
3. Within 3 years, the participation of younger sisters will be more representative of the population and diversity of younger sisters in terms of language, culture, and ethnicity.
4. Appropriate and deep trainings will increase the pool of potential leaders in GV.
5. Confidence for and leadership skills of younger sisters will increase.
6. A larger database of contacts and members will be established

Objective Three:
To identify sources of long-term financial viability for the GV network and to raise visibility of GV with various publics.

Outcomes:
1. Within 3 years, increased revenue will pay for a half-time administrative assistant position.
2. There will be 5-10 media mentions per year (more in conference years).
3. Viable funding sources, such as foundations, individual donors, and grants will be identified.
4. A media outreach process and campaign for all events and retreats will be in process (start in 2015).
5. An annual appeal will increase funding by 25% within 3 years.

Estimated Project Duration:
Project duration is three years.
Successful Consultant Candidate will be notified by March 2015

Assumptions and Agreements:
Consultant candidates, with experience and knowledge of women religious, especially younger women religious, will be given preference.
Work with non-profits and/or other religious entities is strongly recommended
Ability to begin in the near future
Consultation fee is negotiable and based on related consulting experience

Submission Information:
Catholic Theological Union is the fiscal sponsor for Giving Voice.
Submission Open: February 6, 2015
Submission Deadline: March 6, 2015
Mail to: CTU with Attention: Giving Voice, 5401 S. Cornell Ave., Chicago, IL 60615
Email Acceptances: mailbox@giving-voice.org please put “Consultant Candidate for GV” in the email subject line.
For clarification please contact GV Core Team members at mailbox@giving-voice.org Contacts for core team are: Sarah Kohles, OSF, Leslie Keener, CDP, and Priscilla Torres, OP