

TRU Operations & Organizational Systems RFP

Dated 9/28/26

Summary

TRU is a Detroit-based advocacy nonprofit that has worked since 1999 to improve and expand public transit throughout the greater Detroit area. Our staff and budget has tripled in the past few years and our internal systems have not kept up. To maximize impact, minimize burnout, and ensure efficient use of limited resources, we seek an experienced operational consultant to audit, design, and implement scalable administrative systems, improve productivity, and optimize senior leadership time.

Background

Transportation Riders United (TRU) is a Detroit-based advocacy nonprofit that has worked since 1999 to improve and expand public transit throughout the greater Detroit area.

After several years as an all-volunteer organization, TRU had 1-3 staff members and a \$100-250,000 budget for most of 2005-2020. Through greater partnerships and increased grant support, TRU has tripled in the past few years to 5-10 people on the staff team and a \$750,000 budget. The same Executive Director has managed the group since 2005 and lacks the training in effective operations, systems, and staff management needed to move the organization into the next level.

We are seeking an experienced consultant to help us bridge the gap between high-level mission strategy and daily execution by turning fragmented administrative tasks into repeatable, scalable workflows.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will work closely with leadership to execute operational enhancements such as these, and potentially others the consultant recommends:

Workflow & Process Optimization

- **Bottleneck Analysis:** Evaluate operational frictions and map staff time sinks and recommend project management tools and task-tracking processes to reduce redundancy and wasted time.
- **Capacity Audits:** Evaluating staff bandwidth (recognizing multi-hat roles) versus operational demands and recommend systems to prevent burnout, such as on time-blocking and realistic workload limits.

Organizational & Workload Structuring

- **Role & Decision Clarity:** Establishing clear job descriptions, team KPIs, and decision-making frameworks
- **Leadership Optimization:** Evaluate executive and management workloads and calendar usage; establish clear delegation frameworks to shift routine operations away from senior staff to maximize strategic focus

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- **SOP Creation:** Audit core administrative, operational, and programmatic functions and set up clear, step-by-step micro-SOPs for the top 10 systems, using simple checklists or visual guides wherever possible

- **Knowledge Transfer:** Map single-point-of-failure tasks (critical processes known by only one person) and cross-document them to ensure operational continuity.

Technology Infrastructure

- **Central Task Workspace:** Evaluate usefulness of a low-cost project management platform (e.g., Asana, Trello) and if needed, set up initial systems and reusable task templates for recurring events.
- **File Architecture:** Reorganize cloud file storage in Google Drive with standardized folder structures, permissions, and document-naming conventions.

Communication & Training

- **Communication Protocols:** Streamline internal communications, evaluate the value of a chat tool, and establish team norms (e.g., email vs. text expectations) to reduce daily interruptions and inbox clutter.
- **Staff Training & Adoption:** Design and deliver hands-on staff training sessions to ensure long-term adoption of new systems, SOPs and productivity tools
- **Post-Implementation Support:** Provide follow-up support to troubleshoot post-launch friction, answer team questions, and fine-tune systems based on initial feedback.

Please understand that staff is already overwhelmed so recommendations should focus first on quick fixes for top bottlenecks and other quick wins, then on to long-term recommendations.

FYI - TRU is also [seeking a consultant to guide our strategic planning effort](#) during the same time period as this project. Consultants can be the same or different but will likely need to coordinate at some points.

Timeline: November 2026 - appx February 2027

Budget: \$10-15,000

RFP Deliverables:

- To submit a proposal, please email TRU Director Megan Owens at Megan@DetroitTransit.org by October 21, 2026. Questions can also be directed to Megan.
- Proposals should include your experience with groups and situations like ours, the work you propose to do with us, and your suggested budget and timeline.
- Evaluation criteria will include:
 - Experience supporting small nonprofits in scaling operations and systems
 - Experience with social-change / advocacy nonprofits
 - Experience with leadership coaching, nonprofit training, and change management
 - Understanding of our needs and limitations
 - Compelling proposal overall
 - Proposal cost-effectiveness
 - Knowledge of Michigan and Illinois nonprofit law and regulations
 - Bonus if business is owned and/or if the project is led by people of color, women, and/or Detroiters