Request for Proposal – Children's Aid Foundation of Canada Gala: Teddy Bear Affair

Overview:
Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAFC) invites qualified and experienced event planning firms to submit proposals for its annual fundraising event, the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada Gala: Teddy Bear Affair. With a 40-year legacy, and as one of Toronto's longest-running black-tie events, the Teddy Bear Affair has raised more than $40 million since 1987 to support children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.

The Foundation is seeking an event partner to produce the 2027 Gala and help guide the future of its largest annual fundraising event. The selected partner will ensure the continuity of critical unrestricted funds that allow CAFC to empower children, youth, and families to dream, heal, find hope, and thrive.

What we are looking for: The ideal partner will combine creative event strategy, disciplined budget management, proven fundraising-event execution, and a collaborative approach that advances the Gala's mission, guest experience, and unrestricted revenue goals.

About Children's Aid Foundation of Canada:
Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is the only national foundation exclusively dedicated to addressing urgent needs and improving outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system. We raise and grant funds and develop high-impact programs that are delivered in partnership with approximately 100 agencies and community-based organizations across the country. With the support of our donors and partners, we help children and youth involved with the child welfare system access the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. Learn more at cafdn.org.

Event Details:

Event Name	Children's Aid Foundation of Canada Gala – Teddy Bear Affair
Date	October 3, 2027
Venue	Fairmont Royal York
Size	600–700 guests
Audience	Philanthropists, business leaders, and government officials
Budget	$775,000, inclusive of event management company fees and exclusive of taxes
Fundraising Goal	Target gross revenue of $1,900,000
Format	Cocktail reception, seated dinner, remarks and entertainment from the stage, and after-dinner dancing

Tone	Inspirational
Purpose	Fundraiser for children and youth involved with child welfare

Gala Objectives:

1. Raise Funds: Achieve a minimum of $1,900,000 in gross revenue, to support programs for children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.

2. Increase Awareness: Increase awareness of the challenges faced by children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.

3. Inspire Engagement: Inspire attendees to actively engage with our cause and become donors beyond the event.

Proposal Requirements:

The selected event planning firm will be responsible for the following aspects of the Gala, and proposals should clearly explain how each requirement will be achieved.

Outline your proposed concept, including event experience, fundraising approach, and strategies for managing and organizing the Foundation's signature fundraising event. Please also describe your approach to project management and collaboration with internal stakeholders, including how you establish workback schedules, manage deliverables, facilitate decision-making, and ensure key milestones are achieved on time and within budget.

Proposals should clearly identify which elements are mandatory requirements and which are preferred or value-added capabilities, so the review team can assess baseline compliance and areas of differentiation. This can include:

1. Event Creative: Develop a compelling creative concept that brings the event to life, engages guests, and aligns with the Foundation’s mission and purpose.

2. Venue Management: Propose venue options for consideration, secure an appropriate venue and manage all logistical aspects, including load-in/load-out, floor plans, catering, room blocks, and technical requirements.

3. Vendor Management: Select and coordinate production, AV, décor, and other event vendors, and manage related logistics and technical requirements.

4. On-Site Event Management: Develop a detailed setup and teardown plan, establish a dedicated on-site point of contact, and oversee vendor coordination throughout the event.

5. Program Development/Creative Strategy: Create a compelling, cohesive creative program, including, entertainment and other moments that deliver an exceptional guest experience.

6. Mission Moment: Work with the Foundation's team to create an engaging and inspiring moment that shares the Foundation's work and purpose with guests. The moment will include collaboration with and support from Lived Experts (former youth in care) in storytelling/public speaking, in conjunction with the Foundation's Youth and Lived Expert Engagement Manager.

7. Fundraising Strategies: Support the Foundation's fundraising strategies, including silent auction solicitation and management, on-site/fund-a-need donations, raffle, and sponsorship opportunities.

8. Guest Experience: Ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience for all attendees, including registration, hospitality, and event flow.

9. Marketing and Promotion: Manage the development and production of marketing materials, including invitations, sponsorship recognition, and printed/digital event collateral including signage and program.

10. Budget Management: Develop and manage a detailed budget, demonstrate a strategy to keep the cost-to-funds-raised ratio under 40 cents to the dollar, and include a sample financial reporting format that shows projected and actual revenue, expenses, net proceeds, and key fundraising metrics.

11. Post-Event Reporting and Data Collection: Compile and analyze event data, identify lessons learned, deliver a detailed financial report, and provide recommendations for future events.

Key Considerations:

Proposals must address the following considerations:

1. Opportunities for:
    a. On-site fundraising
    b. Other fundraising opportunities
2. A plan to keep the cost-to-funds-raised ratio under 40 cents to the dollar

Proposal Submission Guidelines:

Interested firms are asked to submit the following materials:

1. Company Profile: Provide an overview of your company, including your experience producing comparable fundraising events. Please include 2-3 examples of comparable fundraising galas, outlining the event budget, attendance, fundraising results, and your firm's role in each event.

2. Event Proposal: Outline your proposed concept, including fundraising approach, and strategies for managing and organizing the Foundation's signature fundraising event.

3. Revenue: Provide a high-level strategy outlining how you would support growth in sponsorship revenue, live fundraising, auction revenue, guest acquisition, and donor stewardship. Please identify opportunities you believe would strengthen fundraising performance and attendee engagement.

4. Budget: Provide a detailed budget breakdown, including all costs associated with organizing the event and event planning fees broken out by category.

5. Timeline: Provide a high-level timeline outlining key planning milestones, deliverables, and event execution activities.

6. Measurement and Evaluation: Describe the key metrics you would use to evaluate the success of the event beyond funds raised, including any measures related to attendee engagement, sponsorship, stewardship, donor acquisition, retention, or overall event performance.

7. References: Include references from at least three past clients or partners for comparable events and provide work samples including event budget, attendance, fundraising results, and your role

Proposal Submission Deadline and Selection Process:

All proposals must be submitted by November 23, 2026, via email to Katharine Chen, Senior Manager, Events, at kchen@cafdn.org., subject line: 2027 Gala RFP Submission. Questions may be addressed through a Q&A meeting between October 26 and November 6, 2026, or by reviewing the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) attached. Proposals will be evaluated based on creativity, relevant experience, cost-effectiveness, fundraising strategy, budget discipline, and alignment with the Gala's objectives. Shortlisted firms may be invited to a presentation or conversation the week of December 14, 2026. Selection will be made by December 31, 2026.