

Increasing the impact of our work at the Resolution Foundation

This short design brief is an invitation to bid to become the Resolution Foundation design partner. Please contact shareen.meehan@resolutionfoundation.org with any queries.

About us

The Resolution Foundation was set up in 2005 as an independent research and policy organisation whose goal is to improve the wellbeing of *low earners*, that is, those with a below median income who are broadly independent of state support. There are 14.3 million adults living in 7.2 million low earning households across the UK. This is a broad and diverse group.

Our focus has led us to projects around specific issues where low earners lose out. Our first major project focused on the fact that low earners lack access to independent financial advice and guidance. Our pioneering work in this area led to the Thoresen Review and subsequent roll out of a national free generic financial advice service in 2010. Since completing this work, we have also looked at issues regarding long term care for low earners. More recently we have explored the impact of the recession on low earners, focusing in particular on jobs, housing and money matters.

Part of our mission is to raise awareness about the particular issues that this group faces. We argue that low earners are 'squeezed' - too rich to qualify for substantial state support, but too poor to benefit from the full range of opportunities provided by private markets. This group is economically independent, and proud of this, but their independence is fragile. Many low earners only just manage to make ends meet each month, and many again lack the important safety nets of savings, affordable credit and insurance.

The design challenge

We are looking for a design partner who will work with us to ensure that our work has maximum impact across all of our outputs. These include reports and briefing papers, powerpoint presentations, our website and a new blog.

We need you to help us address the following challenges:

- *How to make complex information 'grabbable'*: we deal with a lot of abstract information – in the form of numbers, charts, graphs and tables. Our design solutions must engage directly in these charts rather than seeing them as pictures to be slotted around the text. Our design partner will know how to present graphs in visually appealing and accessible ways.
- *How to use design to underline our serious brand*: we are slowly building a reputation for ourselves as a serious and credible organisation whose work is grounded in rigorous analysis. Any design work will need to reflect our values as an organisation, at the same time as modernising our current visual brand. However a total rebrand is not what we are looking for at this stage.
- *How to develop design solutions that work online and offline*: increasingly we are moving towards online publishing and so our outputs need to work in both soft and hard copy. Our design partner will work with us to create added value online – for example through enabling

people to mash up our data. They will help us to integrate other forms of social media – e.g. slideshare, twitter, youtube – into our offer.

- *How to develop an achievable change process:* the Resolution Foundation has not to date invested heavily in design and so change needs to be managed in a sustainable way. Furthermore, as a charity we have an extremely limited budget so our design solutions will need to be lo-fi but effective.
- *How to craft a holistic design, print and publication process:* we are interested in design solutions that might enable us to better integrate design, print and publication processes. To date we have paid for each of these separately and this has been costly and ineffective.

Looking at our work so far

To give you an idea of how the Resolution Foundation presents its work currently, you can take a look at the following resources:

- Our [website](#)
- Our [low earners' audit](#), which is updated three times a year
- Our [latest report](#)
- A [presentation](#)

As you will see from these resources, there are huge opportunities to make our work more visually appealing and impactful. A similar organisation to ours, whose design work we admire is the [Centre for Cities](#).

Next steps: a credentials presentation

We would like to meet with a small number (three to five) creative agencies, to get a sense of how they work and to hear how each might help us to structure what needs to be done. We're expecting a discussion, which will help us to shape our final brief. We're not asking for ideas as part of this process.

We will apply some criteria to help us evaluate the agencies we meet. We are looking for agencies to demonstrate:

- An understanding of what we are trying to achieve by commissioning this work
- Expertise and experience in refreshing and re-clarifying an existing brand
- Integrated execution of communications across multiple channels
- Co-development with a client of a communications design and production process
- Creative solutions with other clients for making quantitative information appealing and impactful
- A possible cost model for our work with you with a simple explanation
- Relevant case studies showing approach as well as outcomes

Time scale

We hope to meet with agencies during January. This should help us to refine the brief which we will then use to invite agencies to come and pitch more formally. During the selection process we will follow up on any references agencies are able to provide.

We are yet to decide how to contract the selected agency and would appreciate advice and ideas from the agencies we meet. One scenario is that we commission a development project to create a look and feel and basic elements, assets and templates. Within this initial commission will be a small number of communications products. We could then aim to contract the selected agency as our preferred agency for 12 months with an agreed minimum value of work over that period. Similarly, we may decide that integrating our online and offline needs is too complex, so we remain open to the possibility that we could commission these separately.