



Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development
Government of the District of Columbia
Office of Contracts, Procurement and Grants
1015 Half Street SE, Suite 675, Washington, DC 20003
Phone: 202.724.8111

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
DCEB-2022-I-0002

Business Name:			Attn:		
Address:					
Phone #:			Email:		
Business License No:			FEIN#		
Issue Date: Monday, February 14, 2022	Due Date: Friday, March 4, 2022 On or Before 5 PM EST	Please respond via email to: juva.hepburn@dc.gov		Juva J. Hepburn (202) 724-7298	
QUANTITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION		Labor Hour		Total Cost
1	<p>The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), in collaboration with the Office of Planning (OP), is requesting input from organizations in the District that work with socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and distribute fresh and nutritious food to underserved communities (those that face, or at higher risk of, food insecurity) in the District, either directly or through a partner organization, on the design and approach to a new program to increase food access, strengthen the local economy, and establish partnerships with food producers. The program is anticipated to be implemented within the next year.</p> <p>Please see the Request for Information below.</p>				\$ _____
ALL SHIPPING MUST BE FOR DESTINATION					
ARE YOU LSDBE CERTIFIED?			CBE#		
If LSDBE Certified - Percent			Delivery Days:		
Submitted by: (Signature of Authorized Person)			DATE		
Print Name and Title:					

Request for Information (RFI)

Local Food Purchasing Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA)

1. Request for Information Overview

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), in collaboration with the Office of Planning (OP), is requesting input from organizations in the District that work with socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and distribute fresh and nutritious food to underserved communities (those that face, or at higher risk of, food insecurity) in the District, either directly or through a partner organization, on the design and approach to a new program to increase food access, strengthen the local economy, and establish partnerships with food producers. The program is anticipated to be implemented within the next year.

2. Background and Context

Throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, the District has increased program offerings and investments within the food system to ensure that residents are supported in meeting their food and nutritional needs. As part of the FY 2022 budget, Mayor Bowser committed \$58 million to the Food Access Fund to provide capital investments to increase equitable access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food by closing the grocery gap and strengthening grocery access programs. As part of that investment, \$4 million will be invested in the Nourish DC Collaborative, which supports small food businesses through grants, loans, and technical assistance. Additionally, the District delivered nearly 12,000 grocery boxes to residents quarantined at home due to COVID-19, and distributed over 1,000,000 pounds of free, fresh produce and groceries to residents throughout 2020 and 2021.

Despite these efforts, and the waning of COVID-19, District residents in underserved communities continue to face elevated needs and face higher rates of food insecurity. Though the overall rate of food insecurity in the District has returned to near pre-COVID levels (11% in 2021 compared to 10.6% in 2019), Black and Latinx households, households with children, and seniors continue to face elevated levels of food insecurity when compared to the general District population. These higher rates of food insecurity reflect the systemic challenges of the racial wealth gap and historic disinvestments in communities of color which require continued strategic investment and support. In December 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) released a funding opportunity for State and Tribal Governments for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA). The LFPA is a non-competitive grant which has been authorized under Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2). The District has been authorized to receive up to \$1.1 million, however, only one award will be made per State government.

The LFPA program is a part of the Build Back Better initiative with the purpose of improving food and agricultural supply chain resiliency. This will be achieved through the support of local, regional, and socially disadvantaged farmers and producers. The cooperative agreement allows the District to procure healthy, nutritious foods and beverages to meet the needs of its residents. This can be through utilizing the food procurements for food and nutrition programs, food banks, schools, and community-based organizations that directly support underserved communities and communities of color. In addition to supporting these communities, the purchases are strategic

investments that will create growth and new economic opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and producers.

3. RFI and Project Objectives

Through this RFI, DMPED and OP seek information from organizations that work with socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and/or provide support for underserved communities, to formulate an impactful intervention for the LFPA grant application to:

- Strengthen it's the District's local and regional food system;
- Help to support local, regional, and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers through building and expanding economic opportunities; and
- Establish and broaden partnerships between farmers/producers and the food distribution community (District government institutions, community-based food organizations, farmers' markets, etc.), to ensure distribution of fresh and nutritious foods in underserved communities.

The District intends to use the information gathered from this RFI to apply for the funding opportunity through the USDA AMS in the amount of \$1.1 million. The District may select an organization from the respondents to this solicitation to partner/contract with for its grant application. By responding to this solicitation you acknowledge that your organization, should its program proposal be accepted, intends to work with the District to complete the LFPA grant application and will be the District's prime contractor for the period of performance.

4. Questions for Respondents

Comments and recommendations related to any elements of the above project objectives, context, etc. are welcome. Specific areas of interest are below. Respondents should address all questions. Responses submitted to the below questions will not be shared publicly. The information provided to DMPED will be reviewed and analyzed internally and any public summary of RFI findings will be aggregated and anonymized to protect the confidentiality of potential projects and individual opinions.

A. Program Brief

- i.Summary of program (including anticipated funding needed) that could be supported by this funding. Why is it important for the District's food system?
- ii.How does the proposed program achieve the **"RFI and Project Objectives"** described above?
- iii.How is the proposed program different from existing programs in the District?
- iv.How is the proposed program addressing an unmet, or insufficiently met, need for residents?

B. How will the organization apply its expertise and experience working with socially disadvantaged farmers to the proposed program?

- i.What are the objectives of the program and how will they be achieved?

- ii. What steps will be taken for supporting local and socially disadvantaged farmers?
 - iii. What steps will be taken to ensure underserved communities (those that face, or at higher risk of, food insecurity) are the recipients of the services being provided?
- C. Program Outcomes
 - i. What will be measured to ensure programmatic success?
 - ii. Outside of increasing spending for local, regional, and socially disadvantaged farmers and providing fresh, nutritious foods to underserved communities, are there any additional benefits of the proposed program?
 - iii. How does the proposed program promote equity within the District? Environmental sustainability? Health?
- D. Longevity
 - i. What actions would need to be taken to ensure the proposed program can continue to operate after the 2-year period of performance?
 - ii. What, if any, long term impacts would this program have on food security or food access in the District that would extend beyond the 2-year period of performance?
- E. Budget
 - i. What is the anticipated budget needed to execute the proposed program?

5. Respondent Information Requested

All respondents should include the following information:

- **Individual/Company Contact:** Company name(s) and title(s), mailing address, contact name, contact information (email and phone)
- **Respondent Summary and Profile:** Describe the company's experience and expertise in the local food system and supporting local, regional, and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers. Please include whether the organization currently works with socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and/or provides fresh, nutritious food to underserved communities, and if so, any organizations you partner with to deliver these services.

6. Questions for DC Government

Questions regarding this announcement must be submitted in writing by e-mail to the representatives' email addresses listed below in **Section 7. Verbal questions will NOT be accepted.** Questions will be answered by posting answers to the DMPED website; accordingly, questions shall NOT contain proprietary or classified information. **The Government does not guarantee that questions received after Friday, February 18, 2022 will be answered.**

7. Information Submission:

- A. Interested parties should submit all above information via email to:

Juva J. Hepburn, Contract Specialist, juva.hepburn@dc.gov with a copy to:

1. Ben Mindes, Director for Interagency Initiatives,
DMPED, ben.mindes@dc.gov
2. Tariq Sheriff, Food Policy Analyst, OP, tariq.sheriff@dc.gov

8. Due Date:

A. Responses are due by 5:00 pm EST on Friday, March 4th, 2022

RFI released	February 14, 2022
Last day to submit RFI questions	5:00 PM on February 18, 2022
DMPED response to questions	February 25, 2022
RFI submissions due	5:00 PM on March 4, 2022

9. Disclaimer

This document is a Request for Information (RFI) only. It is not being posted as a statement of work (SOW) at this time, nor does it constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Application (RFA) or a promise to issue an RFP or RFA in the future. Respondents are advised that DMPED will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI. All costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP or RFA.