

5. Scope of Services

The services requested by the County under this solicitation are for Fresh Food Pathways Program Manager Services.

5.1. General Requirements:

The Consultant selected will provide the following services, including but not limit to:

5.2. Project Work Scope and Overview

The Fresh Food Pathways project aims to support the connection between two types of communities/populations:

- Rural and urban individuals and communities who have already developed creative, long-standing, and community-rooted solutions to systemic and institutionally imposed limited access to diverse fresh food choices. These communities have faced challenges such as housing segregation, educational segregation, healthcare inequities, mortgage and housing redlining, low-wage jobs, wage stagnation, lack of rights and protections, inequitable access to public resources and public political enfranchisement, in addition to more burdensome access to fresh, healthy, nutrient-rich, culturally appropriate foods in mainstream food retail.
- Locally owned and managed, smaller-scale food and farm businesses and entrepreneurs: Despite facing food system-based challenges, they have continued to adapt and produce food for their community. These businesses face challenges connected to inequitable market forces resulting from consolidation and industrialization of processing and distribution channels and inequitable and racially based policies related to the distribution of resources and opportunities.

Project Goals

The project goals are to:

- Increase access to local, fresh, healthy, and affordable food in communities with limited economic means and access to infrastructure, systems, health, and food options. This will be done by implementing mobile (i.e., temporary, movable, and informal) produce markets (stands, transaction areas, and tables) in areas with high need and interest. The markets will offer a variety of culturally appropriate fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other healthful foods at affordable prices. A twofold approach will achieve this:
 - Emergency food assistance with regular distribution opportunities
 - Market-based support for regular food purchases with food education and community participation opportunities.

- Support the local food economy by connecting consumers with local farmers and food entrepreneurs. The Mobile Produce Markets (MPM) will source their products from local and regional farmers and food businesses, which will help to support the local economy.
- Address the root causes of inequities in the food system by prioritizing small-scale producers and entrepreneurs. The mobile produce markets will prioritize working with small-scale farmers and food entrepreneurs, who often face challenges accessing markets and resources. This connection is meant to prime relationships between farmers and consumers by the proposer:
 - Assisting farmers in the aggregation of marketable crops by type, size, weight, volume, standard specifications, food safety
 - Assisting farmers in meeting the overall market needs of the Fresh Food Pathways project and other institutional food purchasers. This may include services such as but not limited to helping farmers create a farm plan or assisting with packing materials for standardized delivery requirements for markets.

Project Activities

The project activities will include administering a pilot project that will:

Engage and Outreach to Communities of Interest:

- A. Meet with community members, local organizations, and other stakeholders to gather input on the project.
- B. Provide Market Analysis that will:
 - 1. Refine County lists of qualified persons in need
 - 2. Identify Areas of Need and Interest for Mobile Produce Markets.
 - 3. This may be neighborhood or community areas characterized by having limited food purchasing choices, low income, and disproportionate incidences of illness such as but not limited to obesity, hypertension, and diabetes.
- C. Create a Business Plan
 - 1. Create a Mobile Produce Market business plan for marketing, aggregating, and distributing local, fresh, healthy, and affordable food through mobile produce markets or equivalent services.
 - 2. Hiring market staff at living wages from within the communities where the markets will operate.
 - 3. Ensure that the markets are accessible to all community members.
 - 4. Establish purchasing relationships with local farmers to meet market demand.

5. Establish a regular schedule (bi-weekly preferred) to distribute food for emergency food relief (donation) and sale in these qualified communities without food access.
6. Partner with community organizations to implement MPM. The project will partner with community organizations that have experience working with low-income communities and promoting healthy eating.
7. Run a financially sustainable MPM that will support local farmers by:
 - i. Regularly purchase food from local farmers and sell food in Areas of Need and Interest.
 - ii. Provide technical and aggregation-distribution assistance to local farmers and market operators. This may include helping farmers with the creation of a Farm Plan.
 - iii. Help local farmers to be financially successful and sustainable.
 - iv. Assist farmers in meeting food safety requirements.

Deploy a full-scale program based on lessons learned during the pilot project term.

Project Timeline: The project will be implemented over two years starting in early 2024.

Project Budget: The total project budget is approximately \$962,000. At a minimum, proposals must allocate 80% of funds to Mobile Produce Markets services and a maximum of 20% to Emergency Food Assistance programming.

This RFP will be open to all organizations interested in implementing mobile produce markets in Alachua County.

Alachua County's Strategic Food System Aims

The Fresh Food Pathways project is based on previous efforts to map and respond to emergency food needs during COVID-19 and the [Alachua County Commission's Strategic Guide FY 2022](#). The project aims to address the root cause of issues and inequities in the food system by bolstering the local food system in such a way as to increase community engagement, control, and health.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Support the foundation of the local economy and food system by supporting direct relationships between consumers, small farmers, and food entrepreneurs.
- Improve access to local community and neighborhood markets for consumers and their control over food choice purchases.
- Recognize the strengths of communities that have developed creative solutions to systemic challenges to producing and selling food.

- Address root causes of inequities faced by those who work in the food chain, specifically low and sub-living wages, hazardous working conditions, and lack of power to improve their conditions.
- Encourages novel interpretations of the Mobile Produce Market concept to fit community needs, market demand, and financial sustainability of the operation.

Partnerships and Models

Proposals will define its community partnership, members, and qualifications.

- The proposal should show how the project will be implemented through partnerships with community organizations and groups already serving the community. This may include the newly established Alachua County Community Healthy Workers program in the Department of Community Support Services.
- The proposal will also show its ability to focus on community engagement and knowledge building. This may involve one-on-one conversations, attendance at community events, neighborhood meetings, speaking engagements, relationship-building activities, and pilot planning with community partners.
- The proposal will identify communities of high need and interest for the MPM. It will be essential to shift the framing of these communities from one of deficit to one that recognizes their strengths and resilience.
- The proposal will identify how it will support existing strengths by hiring market staff at living wages from within the communities where the markets will operate. It will describe how the Proposer will formally consult with community members.

Project Administration and Organization

The Fresh Food Pathways Pilot Project will be implemented from early 2024 through 2025. The full-scale project will be implemented from 2025 through 2026. Approximately \$962,000 is allocated to pop-up MPMs in two to six COVID-impacted communities in Alachua County.

The Proposer will describe how the project will:

- Increase food access by selling ($\geq 80\%$ of services) and donating ($\leq 20\%$ of services) fresh, nutrient-rich, locally sourced foods in communities with limited access in Areas of Need and Interest.
- Estimate the number of families served and the beneficial outcomes of its service.
- Support the local food economy by connecting consumers with local farmers and food entrepreneurs.
- Address root causes of inequities in the food system by prioritizing small-scale producers and entrepreneurs for purchasing and aggregating food.

- Leverage partnerships with community organizations and groups already serving the community. The proposal will also focus on community engagement and knowledge building to meet the community's food needs and financially sustain the markets.
- Host an annual November Emergency Food Assistance Giveaway and Outreach event in stakeholder communities starting in November 2023 and before Thanksgiving.

The specific deliverables of the of the Project Administration and Organization are as follows:

- Community Engagement Plan: The Proposer will engage the community and farmers in the planning and implementation of the markets.
 - The Proposer will provide the County with an engagement strategy for the community and farmers. The plan must address food security and sovereignty.
 - An Annual November Emergency Food Assistance Giveaway and Outreach event
 - Supply holiday food supplies to families in need.
- Business Plan: Create a business plan for the pilot pop-up Mobile Produce Markets. The business plan should:
 - Describe a pilot pop-up Mobile Produce Markets or other novel interpretations of the MPM concept in up to two COVID-impacted Areas of Need and Interest in Alachua County over the first year. The project will expand to serve up to six communities in the second year of service or at roll out of the full-scale program.
 - The markets will be in areas meeting the economic and demographic requirements that also have a high need and interest for fresh, healthy foods.
 - The project will service up to 500 individuals previously identified through the County's Emergency Food Assistance program.
 - A community-based organization or coalition will operate the markets.
 - The markets will be staffed at living wages at or above the County's minimum wage requirements by people from the communities where they operate.
 - Create a food safety plan for producers to consumers meeting all regulatory requirements.
- Anticipated Outcomes: In addition to the Performance Reporting requirements, the Proposer is encouraged to provide other anticipated program outcomes to evaluate better the effect of the markets on access to fresh, healthy foods, the local food economy, and equity in the food system. These Anticipated Impacts will be part of regular Performance Reports to the County for the Proposer's reimbursement requests.
- Budget and Timeline of Activities: A project budget with major funding categories and unit service costs.

Performance Reports

- The Proposer will use the Emergency Food Access qualified recipients' contact information provided by the County as a service foundation. The proposer is encouraged to support the food needs of as many individuals in communities as possible within the boundaries of an Area of Need and Interest.
- Performance reports will regularly record the Performance Indicators and Outcomes below. The Proposer is encouraged to suggest additional Performance Indicators and Outcomes.
- Performance reports will include address and related mapping information for the County to track progress through GIS mapping services.
- The Proposer is encouraged to use in-person meetings, surveys, social media, and other mechanisms to follow-up with community members to track and report Outcomes.
- County staff will use this information to measure the following Performance Outcomes and the required Performance Indicators.

- Performance Indicators

- Number of participating families
- Household family size

As of January 31, 2023, 492 families were approved to participate in its Emergency Food Assistance program. Previous Emergency Food Assistance funds spent in December 2022 served 920 people.

- Total amount of food distributed.
- Location of services. Define which communities are receiving services.
- Type and quantities of food distributed by donation and purchase.
- Sources (Farms with location information), Quantities, and Cost of Local Food

- Performance Outcomes

- Decrease in food insecurity as reported by families. These indicators will be measured after later food deliveries.
- Decrease in food-related health problems as reported by families. These indicators will be measured after later food deliveries.

Food System Support

- The MPM will prioritize purchasing their products from Alachua County farmers and food businesses with sales of no more than \$250,000 per year. Other purchasing sources are

secondary in priority and must still occur within the regional food system that meets the same financial criteria.

- The proposer may use the Small Farmer Capital Support Grant contact information as a reference for qualified farmers in Alachua County.
- The regional food system is within a 100-mile radius of the City of Gainesville.
- To strengthen the local food economy, the proposer will prioritize sourcing from:
 - Smaller-scale local farms and food businesses are economically disadvantaged and or from marginalized communities.
 - Farm and food businesses that meet the Good Food Purchasing Program's standards for fair labor practices.
 - Farm operations that protect workers from heat stress and other hazards and pay them living wages.
- The proposer will support the work of small community organizations and groups that are addressing food inequities in Alachua County. As part of this pilot project, the proposer will identify these groups' obstacles and work with the County or other institutional food purchasers to develop solutions.
- Mobile Produce Market Deliverables
 - The MPM will market, aggregate, and distribute fresh produce from local and regional farms as a first priority to Communities of Interest and Need. As a secondary priority, any excess or unsold foods in these areas may be sold to institutional or commercial food buyers at market rates.
 - The MPM will source from farms that meet the Good Food Purchasing Program's standards for fair labor practices. The MPM will also support the work of small community organizations and groups that are addressing food inequities.
 - The MPM will use various marketing and outreach strategies to reach potential customers. These strategies include but are not limited to canvassing, flyers, banners, loudspeakers, jingles, signage, broadcast, print and social media, digital outreach, ad campaigns, direct mail, and word-of-mouth. The MPM will also provide training and capacity building for community members.
 - The MPM will offer a variety of fresh produce and foodstuffs, including some staples. The MPM will accept multiple forms of payment, including food assistance program benefits. The MPM will offer nutrition education events, materials, incentives, and subsidized food costs.

- The MPM will also support the program's financial sustainability by working with community groups to develop sustainable policies and procedures. The MPM will also develop evaluation tools to assess the program's impact.

Key Deliverables for the MPM

- Source from local and regional farms.
- Support the work of small community organizations and groups.
- Use a variety of marketing and outreach strategies.
- Offer a variety of fresh produce and foodstuffs.
- Accept multiple forms of payment.
- Offer nutrition education events and materials.
- Support the financial sustainability of the program.
- Develop evaluation tools for regular Performance Reports.