



REINVESTMENT FUND

HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE Request for Qualifications for Professional Services

PROGRAM SUMMARY

All Americans deserve access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Research indicates that when people have local access to fresh food, they make healthier choices about their diets, have better health outcomes, and benefit from improved local economic development. Equitable access to healthy food is enabled by a food system where enterprises across the food supply chain can thrive and deliver fresh, healthy, and affordable products. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how essential grocery stores, food suppliers, and their employees are to communities. The economic impact of the pandemic will only further constrain low-income families' ability to afford and access healthy food. The goal of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative is to address this critical issue by investing in food retail and food enterprises throughout the food system that contribute to improved fresh food retail access in low-income and underserved communities across the country.

Established by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill), HFFI is a public-private partnership administered by USDA Rural Development that seeks to improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas. In 2017, Reinvestment Fund was appointed to serve as the National Fund Manager (NFM) for HFFI at USDA. As the NFM for HFFI, Reinvestment Fund will leverage private capital, provide financial and technical assistance to regional, state and local partnerships, and channel capital to fund eligible projects that will improve access to fresh, healthy foods in underserved rural and urban areas.

Grant awards and technical assistance (TA) are available through HFFI for eligible fresh, healthy food retailers and enterprises to overcome the higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved areas. TA will be offered to selected organizations and grant program applicants where resources would help clarify and support the development of a healthy food access project in an underserved area.

To learn more about the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at Reinvestment Fund, visit www.investinginfood.com.

SERVICES NEEDED

To support the goals of this project, Reinvestment Fund is seeking expert professional services providers to serve as consultants ("consultants") to provide technical assistance and industry-specific consulting services to HFFI TA Grant Awardees ("TA Awardees"). Consultants may be either individuals or organizations.

Services may include:

- Conducting market research or feasibility analysis for healthy food retail and non-retail food industry projects;
- Developing business and strategic plans and/or assessing existing plans for a variety of ventures that process, distribute, aggregate, market, and sell healthy, fresh, and affordable foods to underserved communities and markets, including for-profit, non-profit, cooperative, and public-private partnership models;
- Identifying problems or barriers to a community or enterprise successfully increasing access to healthy food for underserved areas, and recommending solutions;
- Assistance with site identification, inventory identification and sourcing, staffing, nutrition programs, and other implementation efforts for a healthy food retail or food systems enterprise project;
- Project management, financial management, and/or supporting larger capitalization efforts for a healthy food retail project;
- Assessing a project's impacts and its business case;
- Providing technical expertise and advice for a particular food business model, industry subsector, or organizational need, such as architectural design, local food sourcing, cooperative governance, or mobile market management (among others); and
- Developing community engagement, participatory research, community ownership, and/or supporting capacity building for those efforts.

Reinvestment Fund seeks professionals and firms with general business planning expertise as well as specialized expertise in the above areas as it pertains to food retail, healthy food access, and food systems. Respondents to this solicitation do not need to be able to provide all listed services to be considered.

PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

Respondents who have previously submitted qualifications to Reinvestment Fund to serve as a technical assistance provider do not need to submit their qualifications again. Submissions in response to this RFQ will be acknowledged and reviewed by staff at Reinvestment Fund, and if appropriate, added to our network of TA providers. Reinvestment Fund staff will reach out to respondents if and when a good fit consulting opportunity arises. Multiple projects, including one-on-one engagements and engagements with a group of TA recipients may be assigned to Consultants.

A new cohort of organizations selected to receive technical assistance will be identified by Spring 2021. It is expected that consulting agreements and projects will begin in and after Spring 2021 and continue for up to 12 months, with the possibility for variation or extension based on the needs of the organizations receiving TA.

DISCLAIMERS

Responding to this solicitation is not a guarantee of a contract. This RFQ is merely an invitation for submission of proposals and does not legally obligate Reinvestment Fund to accept any of the submitted proposals in whole or in part. Reinvestment Fund reserves the right to negotiate with any or all firms with respect to price, cost, and/or scope of services. Only the execution of a written contract shall obligate Reinvestment Fund in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such contract. Names of submitting organizations and individuals, as well as application content and any attachments, are kept confidential, except to those Reinvestment Fund staff involved in the review process.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals and organizations are invited to apply for this opportunity. Organizations responding will need to identify specific individuals in their organization that will conduct the work and include details of their qualifications. Subcontracts are not permitted.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Please provide an overview of yourself or your organization, including:

Name:
Employer Identification Number:
Address:
Email:
Website:
Staffing plan (if organization, include names of all consulting staff; consultants listed must be employed by the organization applying):
Hourly consulting rate and/or estimated flat rate for scopes of services detailed in the demonstration of qualifications:

DEMONSTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Please provide a response to the following prompts. Organizational respondents will provide responses for reach individual on their staffing plan.

1. Indicate your area(s) of expertise (please check or highlight)
 - Market study or research
 - Financial projections, pro-forma development, financial modeling;

- Food retail business management
 - General strategic and/or business planning
 - Fundraising
 - Marketing and/or communications
 - Community engagement, ownership, and or outreach
 - Information management/software/data management, or technology development
 - Specific business model or industry expertise [please specify]
 - Other (please specify)
2. Describe your experience in delivering services in this area of expertise include scope, duration and outcomes of past projects. Include any experience working with grocery stores, other food retail projects, nutrition programs, and/or food systems. Include examples of data sources, analytical tools, resources, and methodologies you typically use in your work.
 3. Please provide a sample of a deliverable you have provided for a previous client that demonstrates your work products in this area of expertise. This document will be kept confidential, except to those Reinvestment Fund staff involved in the review process. You may de-identify your client or other identifying information in the sample document.
 4. List three references that can speak to your area of expertise and competence as an organizational consultant in the above identified areas.
 5. Please include a copy of current resume, bio, or curriculum vitae for all staff listed on the staffing plan.

Please send responses to this RFQ and all questions to info@investinginfood.com with the subject line: Technical Assistance RFQ.