



Request for Proposals of Planning and Facilitation Consultant

Boston REACH Grant
Community Initiatives Bureau

05/09/2024

I. Overview

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the local public health department for the City of Boston. BPHC's mission is to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities.

The U.S. Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) granted BPHC a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2023 award to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in chronic disease through specific policy, systems, and environmental change strategies. One of these strategies is to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Boston has elected to focus on farmers market as strategic neighborhoods points for residents to access fresh and healthy food.

In Partnership with the City of Boston Office of Food Justice (OFJ), BPHC is seeking a consultant to support a community engagement and planning process with farmers market stakeholders throughout Boston, with the goals of developing a sustainable plan to make fresh and healthy food at farmers markets more affordable and support farmers market to better meet community needs. The City of Boston's current citywide Farmers Market Coupon Program (FMCP) has operated since 2021 with the support of federal ARPA funds, and this pot of funds will be exhausted after summer 2024.

II. Background

Farmers Markets in the City of Boston are essential to developing more equitable food access in the City, because they expand access to fresh, healthy and affordable food as well as have a direct impact on the economic growth of local communities as they contribute to building a stronger social fabric and provide revenue to Massachusetts producers.

As part of a 2022-2023 process to develop Strategic Goals for OFJ and GrowBoston: the Office of Urban Agriculture, OFJ committed to the following strategies to build equitable access and distribution systems for fresh, culturally relevant, and/or regionally grown food citywide for food insecure communities:

1. Strategy 1: Subsidize or incentivize purchase of culturally relevant, locally grown, healthy fresh food to make it more affordable
2. Strategy 2: Strengthen capacity of farmers markets, corner stores and community-owned retail to understand and meet community needs
3. Strategy 3: Increase regional and local producers access to retail outlets' access to food produced in Boston, locally or regionally in food insecure communities to provide more residents with fresh, culturally relevant, and local food

Building on the FMCP, Boston Public Health Commission and the Office of Food Justice are seeking a consultant to support a planning process to determine how the City will continue to engage with farmers markets to promote Strategy 1, as well as develop citywide approaches to Strategy 2.

Background on the Farmers Market Coupon Program

In 2021, OFJ began implementing a citywide Farmers Markets Coupon Program (FMCP) to transition food access opportunities for families that were being served by emergency food distribution sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. The FMCP was designed to meet the needs of food insecure residents—especially immigrants and other residents ineligible for other nutrition assistance or government benefit programs (like SNAP)—and to support residents and markets in East Boston,

Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury. The program's overarching goals are to give its intended demographic the power to choose and buy the foods they need and want; to support local farmers by boosting their sales; and to support local economy and urban agriculture.

The program provides participating households with one \$25 coupon booklet each month (coupon face value: \$5.00) between the months of July and October; coupon booklets are distributed by 25 community-based organizations and community health centers throughout the city with emphasis on the targeted neighborhoods. Coupons can be used to purchase fruits, vegetables, eggs, meats, dairy products, baked goods, maple syrup and honey at all farmers markets in the City but one. The program has been funded through the Boston Resiliency Fund followed by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, all of which have been temporary stopgap measures. Between 2021 and 2023, coupon beneficiaries redeemed approximately \$1.6M across 22 participating markets. Funding for the program will be exhausted at the end of summer 2024.

BPHC and OFJ will co-convene a farmers market planning committee to build out and manage a planning process to address future efforts with farmers markets in the City. These will include: determining the future of affordability at farmers markets after the current FMCP ends; identifying barriers faced by produce vendors who sell at City of Boston farmers markets and strategies the City can pursue to address these barriers; and supporting markets in communities of color to better meet the needs of the communities they serve. **BPHC is seeking a consultant to facilitate the planning process, including facilitating farmers market working groups and soliciting and analyzing input and data from farmers market stakeholders on the existing FMCP and visions for future programs.** This input process will allow the City of Boston and farmers market stakeholders to determine the best ways to address affordability at farmers markets across Boston after summer 2024. We will work with the planning committee to design a new initiative or set of initiatives to operate at farmers markets beginning in 2025, when the FMCP will no longer continue as it currently operates.

Draft goals of the Boston farmers market committee:

- Develop and advise on a data collection process to get input from Boston residents including program beneficiaries and those using other food access programs at farmers markets, producers, CBOs, and other market managers. Process should prioritize engaging low-income Boston residents and CBOs that serve low-income residents as well as low resource farms and farmers markets.
- Develop and implement a plan for future initiatives across Boston to address affordability at farmers markets and support farmers markets in communities of color to better meet the needs of their communities, based on input received, needs of different markets and neighborhoods, resources available, and other constraints.
- Identify opportunities for OFJ to support farmers markets (including orgs and producers) to better meet the needs of communities of color in Boston (including culturally relevant food, culturally/linguistically relevant resources, best practices to build antiracist community spaces where people feel comfortable) and to support more regional food coming into Boston.

As part of BPHC's efforts to have an equitable procurement process, BPHC will consider and encourage Certified Unrepresentative Businesses Enterprises (CUBE) that includes: Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBE), Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBE), Veteran-owned Business Enterprises (VBE), Service-disabled Veteran-owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBE), Disability-owned Business Enterprise (DOBE), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE), and local businesses to apply to this RFP.

Massachusetts-based businesses can get certified with no cost. For more information on how to become a CUBE, click on the following links [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) and/or [boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov)

III. Scope of Work

In partnership with BPHC and OFJ staff, hereby referred to as REACH team:

Part 1: Support the formulation and ongoing facilitation of a Boston farmers market planning committee between June 2024 and July 2025. Provide technical and administrative support to support a 10-12 member planning committee consisting of farmers market managers, farmers/vendors, urban farms and community-based organization (CBO) representatives. REACH community coalitions from E Boston and Mattapan will co-chair, with City agency staff as ex-officio members presenting and supporting meeting facilitation.

- Facilitate minimum of 13 monthly meetings between June 2024 and July 2025
- Meet with co-chairs prior to and after meetings to support development of committee, facilitate creating meeting agendas and desired outcomes
- Prepare materials for meetings including slide decks, facilitated activities, other background documents
- Facilitate shared decision making by committee members and City agency staff
 - Ensure committee members build strong working relationships, build trust and buy-in
 - Support committee to move towards consensus so that it can collectively guide future program development

Part 2: As advised by the FM Committee and REACH team, develop farmers market planning assessment, support development and implementation of and data collection and analysis between July and December 2024 and program design between January and March 2025. Assessment plan will likely include gathering data from residents, market managers, market vendors and producers, community partners and other stakeholders. Research will use primarily qualitative methods to identify facilitators and barriers to affordability and inclusivity at farmers markets for low-income residents, primarily in communities of color, preferences and needs of residents participating in food access programs at farmers markets, operational needs and hurdles for food access programs at farmers markets, as well as challenges faced by MA producers selling at farmers markets and needs of vendors with regard to farmers markets. The goals of data collection and analysis will be to identify potential models for Boston-based farmers markets and the City of Boston to support affordability and inclusivity at current and future farmers markets in the City Boston, with the outcome of developing a sustainable program or plan for the City of Boston.

- By end of July 2024, Produce an assessment plan with data collection methods and strategies. Work with City staff to determine any additional staff or community partner support needed for data collection

- July- December 2024: Lead implementation of the assessment including data collection and analysis, regularly sharing results with City staff and FM Committee and tweaking assessment processes as needed
- December 2024, share results and recommendations with City staff, Farmers Market Committee and other stakeholders
- December-March 2025: Support collaborative development of program design and implementation with farmers markets, City of Boston and vendors, including budgetary, operational and communications needs.
- April- July 2025: Support REACH team to begin implementation as necessary and continue to facilitate farmers market committee, as described in Part 1 of the project above

IV. Minimum Qualifications

Respondents must possess the following qualifications:

- a. At least 5 years of experience developing, documenting, implementing, and evaluating public health nutrition, food justice, food systems, food sovereignty and/or food access strategies. Knowledge of Northeast agriculture or direct to consumer marketing agriculture a plus.
- b. Knowledge of racial justice and health equity analyses and frameworks. Knowledge of racial and ethnic inequities in access to healthy and affordable food is a plus.
- c. Demonstrated experience working with Black or African American communities, and Hispanic or Latino communities (preferably in the city of Boston).
- d. Demonstrated experience facilitating and working collaboratively with diverse stakeholder groups and managing complex stakeholder dynamics. Experience working with farmers markets, Northeast farmers or food producers and/or BIPOC farmers a plus.
- e. Effective communication and project management skills to keep tasks moving forward in the most expedient manner possible, while at the same time being able to clearly explain issues, solutions, and best practices to BPHC staff.
- f. Demonstrated experience producing program assessment plans and methods, conducting qualitative data collection, conducting data analysis and summarization, creating recommendations, and writing reports in plain language.

V. RFP Timeline

Thursday, May 9, 2024	RFP available online at www.bphc.org/RFP by 10:00 AM EST . RFP will also be disseminated via e-mail to relevant networks
Thursday, May 9, 2024	RFP Legal Notice publication in The Boston Globe
Wednesday, May 15, 2024	Questions due in writing via email by 5:00 PM EST to: Boston REACH Project REACH@bphc.org

	<p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mary Bovenzi at mbovenzi@bphc.org</p> <p>Subject – FM Planning RFP Questions</p>
Tuesday, May 21, 2024	Responses to questions available for viewing on www.bphc.org/RFP by 5:00 PM EST
Friday, May 31, 2024	<p>Responses due by 5:00 PM EST</p> <p>Submit via email to: RFR@bphc.org and REACH@bphc.org</p> <p>Subject line – RFP for FM Planning and Facilitation Consultant</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE</p>
Wednesday, June 5, 2024	Eligible candidates may be notified of a Zoom video interview by 5:00 PM EST
Friday, June 7, 2024	Notification of Decision: All candidates will be notified by or before 5:00PM EST of the awarded vendor

VI. Period of Performance, Contract, and Location

The anticipated period of performance for this project is Monday, June 3, 2024 – July 31, 2025. The first contract period (Year 1) will be June 3, 2024- September 29, 2024. Subject to BPHC being awarded additional funds, the second contract period (Year 2) will be September 30, 2024- July 31, 2025. Option to extend beyond July 2025 subject to future project needs and funding.

Performance Location: BPHC project staff are located at 1010 Mass Ave., Boston, MA 02118. OFJ staff are located at 1 City Hall Square, Boston MA, 02201, Office hours 9:00 to 5:00 PM EST and occasional weekends. Farmers Markets are located throughout the City of Boston and operate on a seasonal and weekly schedule. Most meetings will take place virtually via Teams or Zoom, with the option to hold some Farmers Market Planning Committee and REACH team meetings in person. Data collection at Farmers Markets will take place on location.

VII. Proposal Requirements

Contract Award: The contract award is up to \$50,000 for Year 1 (June-Sept 2024) and up to an additional \$40,000 for Year 2 (Oct 2024-July 2025.) Due to the Farmers Market season in Boston, the expectation is the majority of the assessment and data collection will happen in Year 1. Should more funding becomes available, the project can be extended.

Budget Guidance:

- Submit a detailed, itemized line budget and justification with two budget periods. Period 1 is May-Sept 2024, and period 2 is Oct 2024-July-2025. Allowable costs include salaries and wages, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, indirect cost capture (overhead)
- Budget submission must include all expected costs associated with the facilitation of the FM

Committee, planning and implementation of the assessment between May and Sept 2024, and between Oct 2024-July 2025.

- For the May-Sept 2024 Budget period Indirect Cost Capture is capped at 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Base unless the vendor has a Federally Negotiated Rate Agreement. As of October 2024, the Indirect Cost Capture rate increases to 15% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Base unless the vendor has a Federally Negotiated Rate. If you have a Federal Rate Agreement, please submit it with your proposal. *MTDC Base definition: Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment costing \$5,000 or more for an individual piece of equipment, capital expenditures of \$5,000 or more, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.*
- All service contracts awarded by the Boston Public Health Commission may be subject to following the City of Boston’s living wage ordinance. This ordinance requires that all employees working on sizable city contracts earn an hourly wage that is enough for a family of four to live at or above the federal poverty level. This wage amount called the living wage, is recalculated every year. For more information, please visit <https://www.boston.gov/worker-empowerment/living-wage-division>.

VIII. Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents:

Cover Sheet: Limit 1 Page

- a. Applicant Name and Logo
- b. Proposal/Content Contact Name, Address, Telephone, Email
- c. Fiscal/Contracts Contact Name, Address, Telephone
- d. Applicant website and social media handles, if applicable
- e. Federal Tax ID #
- f. Proposed Budget Total

Proposal: Limit 12 Pages

- a. Description of applicant’s background and related experience
- b. Examples of recent past (1) stakeholder facilitation experience and (2) strategic planning processes, including examples/sample(s) of relevant work and outcomes
- c. Scope of work and timeline for period of performance (approximately June 3, 2024 – July 31, 2025)
- d. Two Itemized budgets: 1 for Year 1 (June 2024- Sept 2024) and one for Year 2 (Oct 2024- July 2025.) Include hourly rates and unit costs for activities and deliverables.
- e. Budget narrative describing how expenses in budget support goals and deliverables of RFP.
- f. Number all pages

Appendix: Limit 12 Pages

- a. Resumes/ CVs and descriptions of roles/responsibilities for all involved in the consultancy
- b. At least two professional references from clients who have contracted with applicant for services similar to those defined in this RFP

- c. Any relevant additional work samples not included in the proposal
- d. Number all pages

IX. Submission Instructions

Please respond on or before Friday, May 31, 2024, by **5:00 PM** EST.

Submit proposal and appendix as separate PDF documents in a single email to RFR@bphc.org and cc REACH@bphc.org

Subject line – RFP for FM Planning and Facilitation Consultant

RESPOND BY Friday May 31, 2024, 5:00 PM EST
NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE