



1624 Franklin Street, Suite 722  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 272-4435

[cafoodbanks.org](http://cafoodbanks.org)

## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

### **Supply Study: Bay Area Urban Farms & BIPOC Farms in California**

RFP Release	Friday, September 1, 2023
Pre-Proposal Conference Call	Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.
Submittal Due	Friday, October 27, 2023
Interviews/Presentation	Monday, November 6, 2023 (1:00-3:00 p.m.)
Notice of Intent to Award	Monday, November 20, 2023
Contract Award	TBA
Notice to Proceed	TBA

For information, including invitation requests, please contact Firdaus Jahan, Project Manager (510) 350-9909 or [firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org).

#### **Organizational Overview**

California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) is the state’s leading anti-hunger organization. Our mission is to end hunger in California. Together with our 41 Member food banks, we are working towards a well-nourished California where everyone has enough food to lead a healthy life. We do this by stocking food banks with farm-fresh produce and pantry essentials, helping eligible Californians enroll in food programs, and elevating the voice of hungry Californians in our statehouse, the country’s capital, and in the media. We work to ensure that food banks have the tools and resources they need to do what they do best: feed our communities.

This project collaborates with 5 Bay Area Food Banks servicing 9 Bay Area counties (Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Contra Costa, Solano, and Alameda) and CAFB. The following food banks will sponsor this project – Alameda County Community Food Bank, Food Bank of Contra Costa Solano Counties, Redwood Empire Food Bank, San Francisco Marin Food Bank, and Second Harvest Silicon Valley.

#### **Introduction**

With the support of Feeding America and the Bay Area Food Banks, the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) will explore a groundbreaking collaborative partnership that will harness the

collective purchasing power of five Bay Area food banks to source fresh produce/foods directly from Historically Under-Resourced farmers, who are marginalized by historical and systemic racism at the national, state, and local levels. The Bay Area Food Banks Historically Under-Resourced Farm Grown Produce Partnership has the potential to help heal the broken food system, fuel the power of Historically Under-Resourced farmers, and nourish food bank clients with highly nutritious and culturally relevant foods.

Our premise is that by pooling financial resources and establishing purchasing commitments with small diverse suppliers, we can support a competitive market price for fresh produce/foods provided by Historically Under-Resourced farmers. The impact will be felt on both the supplier and client ends. First, more Black, Latinx, Southeast Asian, and other Historically Under-Resourced farmers will receive increased investment, improving their economic stability. In addition, families and individuals experiencing hunger across the Bay Area will have increased access to culturally relevant fresh produce/foods.

### **Scope of Work**

#### ***Map and Inventory of Urban Farms in Bay Area***

Create a census of all farms (urban & rural) in the nine-county area mentioned to include commodities grown, the volume of each commodity, current market, volume available for sale and seasonality, self-certify identification as Historically Under-Resourced farmer, annual sales, geographic region, food safety program, ability to scale and grow other commodities, delivery/transport capabilities and liability insurance and if currently working with food banks and/or other non-profit organizations.

#### ***Map & Inventory of Historically Under-Resourced Farms Across California***

Identify California farms and develop a Matrix of the attributes listed above of all small and mid-size Historically Under-Resourced (Socially Disadvantaged) farms in California (all counties).

#### ***Identification of Barriers to Market Entry of BIPOC Farms***

Interview a representative cross-section of the identified farms to understand any barriers that could prevent them from participating in a contractual relationship with CAFB. If pricing is above market, understand key drivers that could help reduce prices such that food banks could develop an ongoing relationship with the farm.

Provide data to formulate a cost analysis/quantitative study on all barriers for Historically Under-Resourced farms to sustain the work of supporting food banks with specific commodities and volume. Examples could be accounting software to create invoices, transportation, refrigeration, etc.

From learnings, develop a “Best Case Scenario” plan and implementation playbook that outlines how to execute a Historically Under-Resourced focused produce/fresh foods

procurement policy with suggestions for policies and procedures for the group purchasing framework and identify logistical options for transporting produce from farmers to food banks.

## **Definitions**

**BIPOC** – Black, Indigenous, People of Color

**Counties** – (9) Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma

**Small Farm** – GCFI (gross cash farm income) less than \$350,000

**Midsized Farm** – GCFI between \$350,001 and \$999,999

**Historically Under-Resourced** – A farmer or rancher who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group as defined by the USDA. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

## **Background**

This project aims to develop a replicable and scalable strategic procurement policy for Bay Area food banks that operationalizes equity, reflects food bank clients' ethnic/racial diversity, and builds a more resilient and just regional food system. The project is designed to embed equity into food bank purchasing practices by leveraging collective influence with decision-makers and financial resources to reflect our values in the fight against root causes of hunger. The partnership will accomplish this by building a supply base that reflects the people who use food banks and prioritizes partnerships with small, diverse local suppliers. The framework created through this project will be shared with the intention of developing a regional food purchasing policy that supports small diverse farmers. Also, besides the assurance of a solid market, food banks can assist farmers with logistics strategies, introduction in supply chain synergies, relationship building, and other possible markets.

This project will empower small diverse farmers and food suppliers, focusing on Black, Latinx, Southeast Asian, and other socially disadvantaged farmers in low-income areas (e.g., California's Central Valley) and/or urban farms in the Greater Bay Area. Our vision is that through institutional partnerships, farmers will have stable customers committed to purchasing predetermined amounts of crops. In addition, Bay Area Food Banks and other potential customers that would adopt this model are in a position to pre-pay for products

or pay very quickly at a market-competitive price after the product is received. This will overcome the cash-flow challenges that the target population is experiencing.

The five Bay Area Food Banks (BAFB) that form this collaboration represent a distribution of over 160 million pounds of fresh produce to their community. The Boundless Collaboration planning grant will study if it's possible to preserve a fair market price for Historically Under-Resourced farm grown produce by establishing ongoing relationships with diverse suppliers and harnessing the food banks' collective purchasing power to guarantee those purchases.

CAFB and BAFB are also included in the upcoming USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) LFPA (Local Food Purchasing Agreement) program. CDSS (California Department of Social Services) is the lead agency for the state, and we are currently awaiting contracts. CAFB has teamed up with CAFF (Community Alliance of Family Farms) and Fresh Approach to coordinate this program in the Bay Area and the majority of the state.

## **Proposal Instructions**

### **Contact Information**

Proposers are cautioned not to discuss this RFP with any Board Member or employee of CAFB. Neither proposers nor anyone representing the proposer are to discuss this RFP with any consultant or contractor engaged by CAFB for assistance in preparing a response to the RFP. Violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the proposer.

### **Pre-Proposal Conference**

A Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12 at 10:00 a.m. via [Zoom](#).

### **Questions**

All questions and or clarifications to this RFP must be submitted electronically to Firdaus Jahan, Project Manager (510) 350-9909 or [firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org), on or before the due date specified in the above timeline. Late requests will not be considered.

### **Contract Type**

A time and materials contract will be used for the services provided by the firm selected from this RFP. Any services provided by the consultant that are not explicitly covered by an approved contract with CAFB will not be reimbursed.

### **Addenda**

CAFB reserves the right to revise the RFP documents. Revisions and notifications thereof will be made by written addendum and distributed via e-mail. CAFB will not be bound to any modifications to or deviations from the requirements outlined in this RFP as a result of any oral discussions and/or instructions. Proposers must acknowledge receipt of any addenda in their proposal.

**Conflict of Interest**

Any person or firm that has assisted CAFB in preparing any aspect of this RFP or any support cost estimate associated with the Scope of Services related to this RFP is prohibited from submitting a proposal in response to this RFP. Firms that received assistance from any such person or entity or who will use the services of such person or entity in performing the Work will be disqualified. A firm that is prohibited from submitting a proposal in response to this RFP will not be prevented from participating in future projects to the extent that no direct conflict of interest exists at the time of the project. The determination of a conflict of interest, direct or incidental, shall be made by CAFB based on substantial evidence.

**Pre-Contractual Expenses/Cancellation of RFP**

CAFB shall not be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by the firm in preparation or submittal of their proposal. The proposer shall not include any such expenses as part of their price proposal. Prohibited pre-contractual expenses include any and all expenses incurred by the proposer before the issuance of the Notice To Proceed by CAFB. CAFB additionally reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to contract award without obligation in any manner for proposal preparation, interview, fee negotiation, or other marketing costs accrued by proposers associated with this RFP.

**Materials Furnished by CAFB**

All software, data, reports, surveys, drawings, and other documents furnished to the consultant by CAFB for the consultant's use in the performance of work shall be made available only for use in performing the assignment. They shall remain the sole property of CAFB. All such materials shall be returned to CAFB upon completion of work, termination of the contract, or other such time as CAFB may determine.

**Amendments to Proposals**

No amendment, addendum, or modification to proposals will be accepted after the Submittal Due Date and Time as specified in the Notice of this RFP.

**Budget: \$50,000**

Provide a detailed budget and explanation of costs. Included should be personnel, contracts/consultant fees, operational expenses, plus any in-kind or matched funding that may be available. If your costs exceed the stated budget, please provide additional details and rationale.

**Period of Engagement**

September 2023 through February 2024.

## **Proposal Elements and Submission**

Qualification, forms, and all materials related to this RFP are to be submitted electronically to Firdaus Jahan, Project Manager (510) 350-9909 or [firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org). on or before the due time and date specified in the above Notice of RFP.

### **Proposal Content**

Proposals must include a strategic planning approach, initial work plan and timeline, estimated cost and fee schedule, biography/qualifications of key staff, client list of comparable work, and three references.

If, at any time during the RFP process, a firm makes any changes to proposed key personnel or sub-consultants, the firm must notify CAFB in writing of those proposed changes as soon as they are known. CAFB reserves the right to accept or reject such proposed changes or to revise the evaluation scoring to reflect the proposed staffing changes. All submittals must be formatted based on the sections below.

### **Cover Letter**

Specific and required elements of this section include the following:

- Identification of all proposed sub-consultants, including a description of the work to be performed by the firm and each sub-consultant proposed for the Project and an estimate of the percentage of work to be performed by each sub-consultant;
- A list of all prime contracts (if any) awarded to the firm by CAFB for the last five (5) years. The list shall include a short description of the project, the award date, the completion date, the name of the assigned Project Manager, and the contract value;
- If the proposer has ever been terminated from a contract, describe the facts and circumstances in detail;
- A statement that the proposal is valid for 180 calendar days from the date of submission;
- A signed statement by an officer of the prime firm who can bind the firm to the Agreement and attest that all information in response to this RFP is true and correct;
- And a memorandum from a principal of each sub-consultant indicating the specific portion of the Project the sub-consultant will be performing.

### **Qualifications, Related Experience, and References**

This section of the proposal should establish the ability of the proposing firm to satisfactorily perform the required work by reasons of experience in performing work of the same or similar nature. Specific and required elements of this section include the following:

- Provide a brief profile of the firm, including the types of services offered; the year founded; form of the organization (corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship); number, size, and location of offices; and number of employees.

- Provide a general description of the firm's current financial condition; identify any conditions (e.g., bankruptcy, pending litigation, planned office closures, impending merger) that may impede the ability to complete the Project.
- Describe the firm's experience in performing work of a similar nature to that solicited in this RFP and the participation in such work by the key personnel proposed for assignment to this Project. Highlight the firm's and key personnel's experience with the work or services identified in the Scope of Services.
- Provide a list of past joint work by the proposer and each sub-consultant, if applicable. The list should clearly identify the project and provide a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Provide a minimum of three (3) references for work of a similar nature for both the firm and the Project Manager (for a total of six (6) references). Furnish the name, title, address telephone number, and e-mail address of the person(s) at the client organization who is most knowledgeable about the work performed. References may also be supplied from other work not cited in this section as related experience.

### **Proposed Staffing and Project Organization**

This section of the proposal should establish the method that will be used to manage the project as well as identify key personnel assigned and their qualifications. Specific and required elements include the following:

- Provide education, experience, and applicable professional credentials of proposed project staff.
- Identify key personnel proposed to perform the work in the specified tasks and include significant areas of subcontract work. Include the person's name, current location, proposed position for this Project, current assignment, level of commitment to that assignment, availability for this assignment, and how long each person has been with the firm. CAFB reserves the right to review, approve, and/or designate the positions and functions deemed "key" to the project and request information concerning key personnel not listed as such by the proposer.
- Furnish brief biographies of key personnel identified above, highlighting any applicable experience based on the scope of work, total years of experience, years of experience with current firm, and representative projects comparable to the scope of work, registrations, or certifications.
- Include a project organization chart that clearly delineates communication and reporting relationships among the key personnel and staff, including sub-consultants.
- Include a statement that key personnel will be available to the extent proposed or designated by CAFB for the duration of the Project, acknowledging that no person designated as "key" to the Project shall be removed or replaced without the prior written concurrence of CAFB.

### **Project Approach and Work Plan**

This section of the proposal shall provide a narrative that addresses the Scope of Services and shows a clear understanding of the Project needs and requirements. Specific and required elements include the following:

- Describe the approach and work plan for completing the tasks specified in the Scope of Services. The work plan shall be of such detail to demonstrate the firm's ability to accomplish the project objectives and to meet the project schedule.
- Outline sequentially the activities that would be undertaken in completing the tasks and specify who in the firm would perform the work.
- Furnish a project schedule for each task and subtask in terms of elapsed weeks from the project commencement date.
- Identify methods that will be used to ensure quality control as well as budget and schedule control for the project.
- Identify any special issues or problems that are likely to be encountered during this project and how they will be addressed.
- Firms are encouraged to propose enhancements or procedural or technical innovations to the Scope of Services that do not materially deviate from the objectives or required content of the Project.

### **Contract Exceptions**

In submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the consultant certifies that it takes no exceptions to this RFP, including, but not limited to, the Agreement. CAFB does not anticipate making substantive changes to its Agreement. Proposers are asked to include a written discussion of any and all proposed exceptions or deviations from the Draft Agreement. Firms will be deemed to have accepted any and all terms and conditions not objected to or identified as an exception or deviation to this RFP. Exceptions must include any considerations for alternative types or amounts of insurance as specified in the Draft Agreement, including such types and levels for all sub-consultants. Exceptions, if any, may be reason for rejection of a proposal.

### **Appendices**

Information considered pertinent to this RFP or to the evaluation of qualifications of the proposer, which has not been specifically solicited in any of the aforementioned sections, may be placed in a separate appendix section. Appendices are not included within the page limit set forth above. Appendices must be relevant and brief and not include extraneous material that does not directly address an element of this RFP.

### **Cost Proposal**

Proposers are asked to submit only the technical information requested in this RFP. No cost proposal or work hours are to be included in this phase of the procurement process.



## **Acceptance of Proposals**

CAFB reserves the right to accept or reject any and all submittals to this RFP or any item or part thereof, or to waive any informalities or irregularities in a submittal. CAFB reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time without prior notice, and CAFB makes no representation that any contract will be awarded to any firm responding to this RFP. CAFB reserves the right to reject all submittals and to re-issue (or not re-issue) a new RFP for the same or similar scope of work. CAFB reserves the right to adjust or postpone key dates specified in the above Notice of RFP for convenience.

## **Consultant Selection Criteria and Weights**

The primary objective of CAFB is to prequalify Consultants and select a Consultant to perform the services specified in this RFP. CAFB has established criteria for this selection process as follows:

- The selection process shall be fair, open, and competitive.
- The selection of the firm will be based on clearly stated objectives identified in this RFP.
- Selection of the firm(s) shall be based upon demonstrated competence, professional qualifications, experience, proposer's approach, and opportunities to streamline tasks identified in the Scope of Work.
- Upon review of the proposals, a shortlist of firms most technically qualified to perform the work outlined in the RFP will be invited to a virtual interview.
- CAFB reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. CAFB is under no obligation to award a contract for the subject work. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee will recommend to the body or officer having authority to award the contract on behalf of CAFB ("Awarding Authority") to the selected firm. CAFB reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification from any or all proposers to this RFP but is under no obligation to do so.

## **Negotiations and Award**

CAFB intends to award a contract to provide the services as described in this RFP with specific performance and schedule details to be contained in the final contract negotiations. It is anticipated that the term of the contract will be based on a time and materials basis, expiring upon completion of services identified in the scope. CAFB reserves the right to contract with additional consultants.

## **Submission Information**

Please submit questions and final proposals to Firdaus Jahan, Project Manager, (510) 350-9909 or [firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:firdaus.jahan@cafoodbanks.org).