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Request for Proposal

Support for Driving Equity in the Regional Food System

Background – Bainum Family Foundation and FARM Committee

The Foundation recently finalized a new strategic plan which focuses on efforts to advance equity in early childhood. As such, some investments targeted at food security will be phased out over the next three years. The food security team has established a transition strategy that seeks to adaptively respond to our partners in the sector while ensuring investments seek to drive sustainability. A primary goal during this transition is to fill sector knowledge gaps to assist in driving collective progress in the food system while also analyzing and contextualizing the Foundation's progress and impact to date.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) established the Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) in 2020 to support the development of long-term regional direction and collaboration toward a more resilient, connected food and farm economy across urban, suburban, and rural communities in the metropolitan Washington region. FARM is comprised of elected officials and subject matter experts responsible with making policy recommendations and collaborating to further regional food and agriculture goals.

More information about COG's FARM Policy Committee, including leadership and members, can be found at: <https://www.mwcog.org/committees/food-and-agriculture-regional-member-farm-policy-committee/>

Proposed Scope of Work:

The Foundation is seeking a consultant on behalf of the FARM Committee to advance efforts of the Catalytic Opportunities Work Group, a relatively new subcommittee of FARM. The Work Group seeks to outline the current condition for Black, Indigenous and Latino farmers as well as other farmers with a history of race-based social disadvantages in the region to build a body of evidence and drive policy recommendations. This effort works at the nexus of two of FARM's five major priorities:

- Supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and small farmers
- Leveraging procurement to support equity and the region's food and farm economy

The Work Group will use desk research and consultation with area experts to identify local barriers and opportunities to drive equitable participation in the regional food economy through institutional procurement. The joint activities of the Work Group and the Consultant will seek to define a near and long-term approach to mapping the disaggregated experiences and needs of marginalized farmers with the goal of strengthening market access and wealth creation for disadvantaged farmers. To this end, Black American farmers will be the focus of initial, more in-depth inquiry. The consultant will be expected to support the work and expertise of the Work Group, ensuring a collaborative, communicative and respectful working relationship.



The Consultant will be expected to work directly with the Work Group to:

- Develop a research road map which includes the following potential activities:
 - Desk and in-person/virtual information gathering on efforts to broaden procurement opportunities for Black, Indigenous, Latino and other farmers with a history of race-based social disadvantage in the region to create a meta-analysis of contemporary efforts and themes to educate and help guide the Work Group's subsequent steps;
 - Defining a near- and mid-term approach to mapping the disaggregated experiences and needs of target farmers;
 - Working with the Work Group to develop a list of COG members (e.g. local governments) and other Metropolitan Washington institutions (e.g. colleges and universities, hospitals, etc.) for outreach;
 - Surveying and interviewing select COG members and institutions about their existing and planned food procurement operations and the status of their engagement with for Black, Indigenous, Latino and other farmers with a history of social disadvantage in the region and/or supply chain operators supporting those farmers to identify opportunities within their networks;
 - Building or strengthening relationships with research institutions and community members to better contextualize the current barriers and opportunities for Black American farmers, and
- Lead the development of deliverables (including, but not limited to case studies on Black American farmers, institutions and food service management companies that have successfully increased procurement from Black American farmers, and procurement opportunities and barriers) aimed at various stakeholders, including policymakers, institutional procurement staff and other technical experts.
 - The Consultant will collect and synthesize data to support insights.
 - Communications should be accessible to a lay audience, with more in-depth technical information provided to frame any key recommendations for procurement and food service nutrition staff, as well as other technical experts supporting values-based food procurement.
 - The Consultant will collect feedback from Work Group members and incorporate this into final deliverables.
 - The Consultant will work collaboratively with Work Group members to list regional procurement opportunities by institution in terms of barriers and value (e.g. what is the capacity to be flexible, what dollars do they have to spend, etc?)
- Maintaining regular check-ins with COG staff, the Bainum Family Foundation, and at least monthly check-ins with the Work Group to align on activities, timelines and deliverables, deferring to the needs and expertise of the Work Group members.
- As needed and requested, preparing communication updates for the Committee to share with the larger FARM Committee.



Engagement Expectations and Deliverables

- **Regular meetings with the Work Group** to:
 - Develop an understanding of the Committee and Work Group structure, members, priorities, strategy, and evolution and progress of work to date
- **Review of data, reports and resources on regional food system issues, practices and stakeholder priorities** to provide context and insights on existing efforts/studies to inform analysis and recommendations
- **The engagement will culminate in one or more deliverables** packaging major takeaways and recommendations with the potential to create internal and external facing end-products based on audience.

This engagement should leverage the consultant(s) expertise, knowledge of and understanding of racial discrimination in agriculture (including historical and current harms towards Black, Indigenous, Latino and other farmers with a history of race-based social disadvantage in the region), regional food systems, and information from the activities above to culminate in one or more deliverables which package major takeaways and recommendations that can be shared with relevant stakeholders to advance efforts of the FARM Committee to drive equity in the regional food system.

Request for Proposals

Timeline for completion of this scope of work is tentatively February to October 2023 and can be addressed in submitted proposals.

By **January 27, 2023** please send an introductory email with a brief, 3-to-5-page written overview of the proposed approach, proposed budget, and details on the consultant and/or consultant group qualifications and experience to:

- **Vtreski@bainumfdn.org**

Candidates residing in or proximate to Metropolitan Washington will be prioritized for consideration.

We are happy to review questions by email and/or to schedule a time to discuss any questions about this engagement. **We will be accepting multiple offers of interest and will request a short, virtual interview with finalists.** Pending an agreed upon proposal, we would like to start this engagement by no later than the end of February 2023.