

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems

Request for Proposals

Local Food Council Network Coordination

Background

In 2012, the Michigan Food Policy Council (MFPC) convened a task force to explore a network of local food councils and conducted a survey of groups engaged in food system work. Over the course of 2014, the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) contracted with a consultant to determine the level of interest in a statewide network as well as the desired functions of a network. CRFS interviews corroborate earlier MFPC work to reveal strong support for a statewide network. A December 2014 report – “Advancing a Local Food Council Network in Michigan”¹ – summarizes those findings to date and suggests network roles. This report should serve to inform the formation of the network and should be read in conjunction with this request for proposals.

Project Description

We are requesting proposals to coordinate a new network in Michigan to be comprised of representatives from local food councils, or similar groups, and other interested partners around the state. This network will focus on building the capacity of local food councils in Michigan to work on policy issues, operate effectively and engage their communities. Preliminary work exploring the potential for a statewide local food council network identified the following six main roles of such a network:

- Provide a space for local councils to network with one another;
- Connect local councils to statewide policy information, issues and actions;
- Help local councils build capacity;
- Provide hands-on training to local food councils;
- Connect local policy information, issues and actions to other parts of the state;
- Connect local councils to national policy information, issues and actions.

Scope of Work

The contractor, whether an individual or a team, will work with leaders and members of local food councils, as well as other interested partners, to formalize a statewide local food council network that will serve the aforementioned roles. The contractor will work with network members, stakeholders, groups and networks spanning the state of Michigan to help develop strong relationships between the local food council network and other networks and initiatives across the state, to facilitate trainings and capacity-building for network members on desired topics, and to identify connections to relevant local, state and national policy, issues and actions. The contractor will also work with CRFS staff coordinating the Michigan Good Food Charter² initiative to help identify ways that charter resources can be useful to local food councils as well as connections between the work of the councils and statewide charter efforts.

¹ Rehmman, M. and Colasanti, K. (2014) Advancing a Local Food Council Network in Michigan. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Retrieved from:

http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/advancing_a_local_food_council_network_in_michigan

² See: www.michiganfood.org



A basic outline of the tasks for coordinating the network will include, but is not limited to:

- Hosting 6 network meetings per year (or alternative frequency as agreed upon by network members) including:
 - 3 meetings per year in person; coordinating dates with other statewide meetings/events already requiring travel
 - 3 meetings per year hosted virtually; platform TBD
- Facilitating communication among councils in between meetings
 - Determine appropriate communication mechanism and set up as needed
- Facilitating connections to other projects and networks, including but not limited to:
 - Inter-agency food policy committee
 - Michigan Food Hub Network
 - Michigan Farm to Institution Network
 - The Good Food Charter shared measurement project hosted by CRFS
 - Michigan Voices for Good Food Policy
 - Michigan Good Food Fund
 - Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan Coalition
 - Food & Community Connections – building local government in food systems
- Assisting in compilation and sharing of relevant resources with council members
- Producing a summary after each network meeting with meeting outcomes, goals for subsequent meetings and tasks to complete in the interim
- Producing a report summarizing activities and outcomes at the conclusion of the contract
- Working with CRFS staff on an on-going basis to ensure deliverables are being met

The individual or group awarded this proposal can expect the following of the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems:

- Clear deliverables within the mutually agreed upon contract
- Oversight and point of contact from CRFS staff
- Assistance in outreach to partners and stakeholders
- Leveraging of the networks staff represent to ensure project success
- Access to a page on the CRFS website for posting resources or other information relevant to the network as desired
- Access to network contact database
- Access to MSU listserv as desired
- Provision of available CRFS conference call, webinar and other meeting resources as needed
- Provision of meeting space and food and beverages for in-person meetings within a pre-determined budget
- Assistance coordinating trainings on policy work and racial equity as well as identification of additional resources, as needed, to support these trainings



Qualifications:

- Understanding of food policy councils and of current food systems work in Michigan.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in coordinating large groups or networks.
- Demonstrated project leadership, resourcefulness, and self-motivation.
- Demonstrated facilitation skills.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills and experience using a broad range of communication tactics.
- Ability to effectively engage and collaborate with diverse stakeholder groups such as academic faculty and staff, state agency and organizational partners, and community members.
- If a team, demonstrated experience working together.
- Knowledge and use of technology for completing job requirements.
- Available to travel throughout the state and possession of a valid, current driver's license.
- Understanding of and commitment to equal opportunity/affirmative action and diversity/pluralism.

Budget and Timeline

Proposals ranging from \$15,000 - \$20,000 for a 12 month period will be considered. Annual renewal of funding for network coordination for a maximum of an additional two years will be considered, at the discretion of CRFS staff, depending on extent of interest and progress measured. A competitive application process for future annual contracts may be used if deemed appropriate by CRFS staff.

Proposal Submission

To have a proposal considered, please submit an application package no later than January 16, 2015 to:

Liz Gensler, Academic Specialist
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
Phone: (517) 353-1914
Email: gensler@msu.edu

The application package should include your interest in and qualifications for this project, proposal for executing this project, a budget and explanation, curriculum vitae (CV) and/or resumes, and names and contacts for three references of people with whom you have had previous contracts. Please limit your application to a maximum of five pages, excluding CVs and resumes. Criteria of selection will include quality of proposals, qualification of candidates and a streamlined and reasonable budget.

If you have questions about the RFP or search process, you may contact:

Liz Gensler, Academic Specialist
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
Phone: (517) 353-1914
Email: gensler@msu.edu



CRFS Mission

CRFS works to engage the people of Michigan, the United States and the world in applied research, education and outreach to develop regionally integrated, sustainable food systems.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer and is committed to achieving excellence through cultural diversity. The university actively encourages applications and/or nominations of women, persons of color, veterans and persons with disabilities. Michigan State University employment opportunities are open to eligible/qualified persons without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status.

For more information about the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems please see:
foodsystems.msu.edu

