



Strategic Plan Request for Proposals September 19, 2012

Purpose

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition is requesting proposals from experienced organizational consultants to guide and advise our coalition's leadership and membership through a strategic planning process.

Background Information

Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) is a diverse collaboration of city and county agencies, non-profit organizations, community members, and businesses that work together to improve access to healthy food for all Cuyahoga County residents and strengthen and expand opportunities within the local food economy. FPC was established in 2007 by four convening organizations, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), Cleveland Department of Public Health, New Agrarian Center, and Ohio State University Extension as an extension of the Steps to a Healthier Cleveland initiative. The coalition is not incorporated as an independent 501c3 organization nor is it a part of either municipal or county government. Both CWRU and OSU Extension act as fiscal agents and convening organizations for the coalition with OSU Extension providing day-to-day operational and administrative support and CWRU providing research and evaluation expertise for the coalition. FPC is comprised of four active working groups; Food Policy Research Working Group, Health and Nutrition Working Group, Land Use Working Group, and Local Purchasing Working Group. Each of these working groups is led by a co-chair from a partner agency or organization and comprised of eight to fifteen members who work together to develop initiatives that impact local policy and systems changes at public and private institutions. FPC also organizes quarterly education forums, free and open to the public, on a variety of topics related to local food systems that highlight innovative local projects and best practices.

Additional information on the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition can be found at www.cccfoodpolicy.org.

Community Context

There is a growing awareness about local food and urban agriculture in Cleveland, Northeast Ohio, and across the country. Community gardens, urban farms, food trucks, local food procurement at public and private institutions, farm to school, food assistance programs at farmers markets, and healthy corner store initiatives have all experienced tremendous growth and increasing interest by community members, elected officials, and businesses and neighborhood organizations from a variety of sectors.

FPC has led several successful policy initiatives to support these community projects and enterprises over the last five years. Several zoning changes have been adopted by municipalities in Cuyahoga

County that support urban food production including gardening, urban farming, composting, on-site farm stands, and raising livestock and honey bees. Administrative policies that offer water access for irrigation, license and lease agreements for urban agriculture on public land, and grant programs for market farming have also been enacted. Due to the leadership of the Health and Nutrition Working Group, the majority of farmers' markets in Cuyahoga County accept the Ohio Direction Card and offer an extra \$10 in Produce Perks to these customers to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables. Municipalities and institutions including Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and City of Cleveland have adopted local purchasing initiatives and policies that seek to increase procurement of local food from farmers and businesses throughout the region.

With these successes, there are still ample opportunities to continue this work:

Urban Agriculture

City of Cleveland has adopted several policies to support urban agriculture and some municipalities in Cuyahoga County are enacting their own policy changes to support food production and marketing in their communities. How can FPC best serve the 59 municipalities in Cuyahoga County to support local agriculture?

Local Purchasing

Many institutions and companies have increased their procurement of local farm products and locally produce goods but there are limitations within local food infrastructure including processing, distribution, aggregation, and storage that make it challenging to develop stronger backward linkages within the supply chain between regional producers and food manufacturers. In addition, access to capital for local food entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses is limited. What role should the FPC play in supporting opportunities for business development and expansion in the regional food economy?

Health and Nutrition

FPC has invested resources and time into developing access to healthier food through corner stores, farmers' markets, and school and summer meal programs. How can FPC leverage its partnerships and member resources to have broader, more meaningful impact on access to affordable, healthful, and high quality food in communities throughout Cuyahoga County?

FPC Organizational Structure

FPC has operated in what most consider to be a more "organic" structure. This has allowed the Coalition to respond quickly to needs and opportunities, operate with loosely defined expectations, and be accountable to one another (member-to-member) as opposed to a formal governing body. Given the potential opportunities noted above coupled with a dynamic and ever-changing local food system, what is the best organizational structure for FPC that will allow it to maintain some of its beneficial organic qualities while also instill some formalities and greater accountability?

Project Need

FPC is at a crossroads. With five years of strong, effective collaboration and successful policy initiatives, FPC has accomplished many of the goals it established in its formative first years. It has developed

strategic partnerships with local elected officials, foundations, and policy makers. It has become a model for food policy council's across the country. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention selected FPC from food policy council's across the country for an evaluability assessment on the impact of food policy and food policy council's on childhood obesity. University of North Carolina's Center for Training and Research Translation recently completed a logic model and evaluation plan for the FPC based on a comprehensive review of all written work of the FPC and in-depth interviews with FPC leadership and members. From participation in both of these processes, it became clear that the FPC has developed a unique model of collaboration that has been effective at accomplishing the goals and objectives established by the working groups. It has attracted a diverse group of stakeholders from many sectors of the food system including public health, economic development, community development, planning, healthcare institutions, and sustainability. With the growth of local food and interest in the food environment in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, there are new opportunities emerging for FPC and its membership. FPC developed mission, vision, goals, and organization structure in 2007 and refined these elements in 2009. FPC has never completed a formal strategic planning process and believes the time is right to engage the membership and strategic partners to review successes, challenges, stakeholder representation, membership capacity, and coalition decision making and develop a plan that will chart a course for success over the next three years.

Scope of Service

The strategic plan should include but no be limited to:

- An assessment of the following components of FPC:
 - Mission, vision, and goals
 - Organization structure, including its decision making process
 - Capacity of convening organizations and working group leadership
 - Communications strategy
- SWOT analysis within context of local food initiatives in Greater Cleveland
- Facilitate processes (both in-person and using technology/social media) with FPC members, stakeholders and other interested parties for the purpose of gaining insights and consensus on the content and direction of the strategic plan
- Develop a detailed, 3-year strategic plan that clearly defines:
 - Administrative and programmatic priorities of FPC
 - Organizational structure and decision making process with clearly define roles and responsibilities
 - Key strategies and activities needed to implement goals and objectives
 - Timeline to accomplish goals and objectives that also identifies key FPC members' roles
 - An integration of appropriate components of UNC Center TRT's evaluation plan into FPC operations that indicates FPC's success in meeting goals and tracking outcomes

FPC will be responsible for implementing the recommendations within the strategic plan but will rely on the applicant to provide implementation support as needed, per letter of agreement.

Project Requirements

In developing this plan the selected applicant will be expected to:

- Develop a thorough understanding of FPC's membership, structure, and initiatives, past and present, through a combination of research and review of FPC documents, interviews with FPC members, staff, and external partners. FPC will provide background information via coalition documents, reports, and budgets.
- Complete all project work products and deliverables on time and within budget. FPC staff and members will not be expected to write work products and final deliverables. (Good!)
- Identify the responsibilities and time commitment of FPC conveners and members in the beginning of the planning process and hold all parties accountable for fulfilling responsibilities in a timely manner.
- Develop all timelines for the project, any key data sheets and materials, and provide weekly progress reports.
- Schedule meetings within proposed timeline with FPC strategic planning committee to provide updates on progress and in advance of any final documents or product deliverables. Any written work to be reviewed will be provided in advance of meetings (minimum three working days advanced notice) to all attendees.
- Facilitate all working sessions and meetings with the FPC strategic planning committee and its partners and stakeholders.
- Complete plan no later than April 30, 2013

Deliverables

The final three-year strategic plan document must meet the criteria outlined in the Scope of Service and is the responsibility of the applicant to produce, with support from FPC staff and membership as outlined under the project's requirements. This plan in its final format is due on or before April 30, 2013.

All documents, reports, meeting notes, and other written and electronic documents and products utilized through this process and scope of work must be provided to FPC (on behalf of The Ohio State University) in an electronic format on or before April 30, 2013.

Evaluation Criteria

In awarding a contract for consulting services to develop FPC's strategic plan, the FPC strategic planning committee will consider a number of criteria including the following:

- Demonstration of prior consulting experience in assisting a coalition or organization similar to FPC in size and scope
- Familiarity with local food systems, policymaking, and/or coalition building and its role in improving economic opportunity and public health
- Proposal addresses the scope of work, timelines, and engagement plan adequately
- Specific plan or methodology used to perform services
- Availability to begin project and complete it on or before April 30, 2013.

Proposal Process

Applicants should submit a complete proposal that highlights their qualifications no later than October 19, 2012

All proposals should include:

- Executive Summary
- Statement related to the project management and role of consultant team and FPC conveners and members
- A list of deliverables to be developed
- Timeline for project including key activity milestones and completion
- Detailed budget that outlines expenses; Please format under two main headings: Personnel Costs and Other Project Costs. Be sure planned expenses provide a detailed justification.
- Credentials and qualifications of key personnel who will undertake project and their specific roles as it relates to the day-to-day operation of the project, including percentage of time commitment to the project; Key personnel must be noted by full name and credentials. (Please do not list only titles and/or state that key personnel will be determined at a later date.)
- Two examples of clients of similar size and scope that the applicant has worked with, providing a brief summary of those projects. Past clients may be used as references; Please provide current contact information for each.

Proposals should be submitted via email or US mail to: (Proposal must be received on or before 5:00 p.m. on October 19, 2012.)

OSU Extension- Cuyahoga County
Attn: Morgan Taggart
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Cleveland, OH 44105
taggart.32@osu.edu

Selection Timeline

Proposals Due - October 19, 2012
Proposals Reviewed - October 22 – 29, 2012
Interviews conducted - November 1 – 15, 2012
Consultant selected - November 21, 2012

For additional information about this Request for Proposals, please contact Morgan Taggart at taggart.32@osu.edu or 216-429-8200 ext. 238. For more information about the FPC please visit <http://cccfoodpolicy.org> or <http://centertrt.org/?p=intervention&id=1143>

