



**2023 Food Systems  
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)  
Guidelines**

**February 28, 2023**

## **GUIDELINES**

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## Guidelines

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### INTRODUCTION

The [Seattle Human Services Department \(HSD\) Youth and Family Empowerment \(YFE\) Division](#) is seeking applications to provide the [Seattle Food Committee](#) (SFC) and [Meals Partnership Coalition](#) (MPC) networks with the following services:

- I. nutritious food sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy);
- II. transportation of procured food; and
- III. network administrative support.

Applicants may apply for more than one service area and can partner with either the SFC, MPC or both, in implementation. HSD will fund a maximum of two agencies per service area – one per network. For example, one agency may be contracted for nutritious food sourcing for the SFC and another agency for the MPC. Alternately, one agency may be contracted to provide nutritious food sourcing to both networks. This may also be the case with transportation and administrative support.

HSD is committed to values-based purchasing, which seeks to align public dollars with core values such as equity, community health, local economy, environmental sustainability, and fair labor. HSD strongly encourages consideration toward aligning to these values while supporting Seattle's food system.

### FUNDING INFORMATION

HSD is investing **\$1,768,928** from the HSD General Fund toward this RFQ. The application submission deadline is **Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 12:00 noon PT**. This RFQ is competitive and open to organizations that meet the standard [HSD Agency Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#). Initial funding will be for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2024. Contract renewal for an additional three years will depend on agency performance and HSD funding availability.

All materials and updates to the RFQ are available on [HSD's Funding Opportunities](#) webpage. HSD will not provide individual notice of changes, and agencies are responsible for regularly checking [HSD's Funding Opportunities](#) webpage for any changes. HSD will not pay for any expense agencies may incur while preparing their applications, providing information requested by HSD, or participating in the selection process.

### TIMELINE\*

Date	Time	Activity
Tuesday, February 28, 2023		Funding Opportunity Released
Tuesday, March 7, 2023	2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Information Session. Join via 1. <a href="#">MS Teams</a> , meeting ID: 211 292 868 26, passcode: DqJZDp 2. Call 206-686-8357, conference ID: 567746610# Contact Tan Mei Teo at <a href="mailto:tan-meit@seattle.gov">tan-meit@seattle.gov</a> for technical assistance
Monday, March 27, 2023	5:00 p.m. PT	Last day to submit questions via email to <a href="mailto:tan-meit@seattle.gov">tan-meit@seattle.gov</a>
<b>Tuesday, April 11, 2023</b>	<b>12:00 noon PT</b>	Application Deadline (electronic submissions only). Use either: 1. HSD Online Submission System ( <a href="http://web6.seattle.gov/hsd/rfi/index.aspx">http://web6.seattle.gov/hsd/rfi/index.aspx</a> ) 2. Email <a href="mailto:HSD_RFP_RFQ_Email_Submissions@seattle.gov">HSD_RFP_RFQ_Email_Submissions@seattle.gov</a>

April 17 – May 12, 2023		Clarification to Narrative Responses, as applicable
Week of Jun 12, 2023		Planned Award Notification
Monday, January 1, 2024		New Contracts Start

\*HSD reserves the right to change any dates in the timeline.

#### A. Online Information Session

HSD will offer one online information session which will be recorded and posted to [HSD Funding Opportunities](#) webpage. Materials presented and the questions and answers will also be made available on [HSD's Funding Opportunities webpage](#) within five business days. Any agency interested in learning more about this RFQ is encouraged to attend but attendance is not required.

### BACKGROUND & STRATEGY

#### A. Background

Feedback that helped inform this RFQ was gathered from:

- Multiple community engagement sessions with Seattle food banks and meal programs;
- Document review, listening sessions, stakeholder interviews and online input from food banks, meal programs and food procurement agencies, led by the University of Washington;<sup>1</sup>
- City of Seattle Food Action Plan, a roadmap to create an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system that supports healthy, vibrant communities in Seattle; and
- local disparity data, alignment with regional funders' priorities, and from literature reviews of local and national best practices.

The following key trends were identified:

- pandemic-driven challenges, such as staffing shortages, supply chain issues and service model changes increased customer service and communication issues among food security partners; and
- global inflation has exacerbated pandemic-driven procurement challenges.

Between 2016-2020, all Seattle households of color had higher percentages of incomes near or at the poverty level, with American Indian/Alaska Native (51%) and Black/African American (42%) households having the highest rates as compared to White (14%) households. This disparity is mirrored in households receiving basic food benefits. Black/African American (29%) and American Indian/Alaska Native (23%) households were at much higher percentages than White (5%) households.<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the onset of COVID-19 caused disruptions, exacerbating workforce shortages and supply chain issues.

Three years into the pandemic, inflation has increased food and gas costs, further increasing the disparities in access to income and resources for low-income families of color. In November 2022, the US Consumer Price Index noted prices for food prepared at home rose 12% and gas prices rose 10% over the last 12 months.<sup>3</sup> Responding to these impacts and disparities, SFC and MPC agencies share resources and strategies, data collection, and generate collective actions and solutions. Both networks host monthly meetings and provide regular trainings.

HSD expects funded agencies to work closely with the networks, their Nutritious Food Sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy) subcommittees, and an estimated 28 food banks and 28 meal programs receiving services through these networks. The Nutritious Food Sourcing subcommittees facilitate the logistics of nutritious food ordering for its network partners.

<sup>1</sup> Emilee Quinn, Lina P Walkinshaw, Jessica Jones-Smith. Bulk Buy Distributor RFQ: Final Report. University of Washington. December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample, 2016-2020

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consumer Price Index, November 2022. New Release. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf>

## B. Strategy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines **food insecurity** as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.<sup>4</sup> **Food access** is a key component of food security and refers to the conditions and resources individuals and communities have to acquire food. Access combines multiple features of food and food resources, including location, availability, affordability, acceptability, cultural relevancy, accommodations, and more.<sup>5</sup> In simplest terms, food access is about whether families and individuals can get to the food, afford the food, and whether the food is something they want to eat and can prepare.

The goal of this RFQ is to strengthen Seattle's coordinated food system to meet the food security and food access needs of its population through the following strategy:

*Improve food security and access to nutritious and culturally relevant food for low-income households in Seattle through system-level supports and strengthening the capacity of the food bank and meal program networks.*

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### A. Service Areas and Performance Commitments

To meet the strategy, this RFQ will fund three service areas to support the SFC and MPC (*see Table 1 for details*):

- I. nutritious food sourcing (formerly bulk buy),<sup>6</sup>
- II. transportation of procured food; and
- III. network administrative support.

Applicants must clearly state which service area(s) they are applying for and for which network(s). HSD may fund a maximum of two agencies for each area. If applying for multiple service areas, please submit only one application with separate service area budgets. If multiple agencies are collaborating, only the agency identified as the lead should apply.

### B. Criteria for Eligibility

All agencies receiving services funded through this RFQ must be SFC or MPC member agencies or affiliates at the time of contracting.

### C. RFP Specific Eligibility and Contracting Requirements

1. 2024 estimated contract allocations:

Service Area	Approximate Funding
Nutritious Food Sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy)	\$1,126,968
Transportation of Procured Food	\$461,333
Network Administrative Support	\$180,627
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,768,928</b>

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Agriculture, (2019). Definitions of Food Security. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>

<sup>5</sup> Bolt K, Carter L, Casey D, Chan NL, Chen R, Jones-Smith JC, Knox M, Oddo VM, Podrabsky M, Saelens BE, Schachter A, Ta M, Pinero Walkinshaw L, Yang A. (2019). Healthy Food Availability & Food Bank Network Report. Report for City of Seattle and Seattle City

Council. [https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/CityAuditor/auditreports/030519%20Corrected%20Healthy%20Food%20Availability%20Food%20Bank%20Network%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/CityAuditor/auditreports/030519%20Corrected%20Healthy%20Food%20Availability%20Food%20Bank%20Network%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Northwest Harvest, (nd). Community Perspectives: Improving Food Access. [https://www.northwestharvest.org/wp-content/uploads/Community-Perspectives-Report\\_Rev122021.pdf](https://www.northwestharvest.org/wp-content/uploads/Community-Perspectives-Report_Rev122021.pdf)

- Research on funding allocations will be done in partnership with independent researcher in late 2023 and 2024. Contract allocations may be adjusted in 2025 and beyond based on this research.
2. Funded agencies should have:
- experience operating nutritious food sourcing or transportation programs and maintaining any necessary insurance and licenses;
  - staff that meet applicable state licensing, certifications and/or training requirements; and
  - staff with the cultural and linguistic competency to work with Seattle individuals and families.

*Table 1: Expected Service Areas and Performance Commitments*

	<b>Expected Service Areas</b>	<b>Expected Performance Commitments</b> (for either SFC and/or MPC network partners)
<b>Nutritious Food Sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy) (approximately \$1,126,968)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborate with an estimated 28 SFC and 28 MPC network partners on sourcing for nutritious and culturally relevant food</li> <li>• maintain a cost-effective program to meet networks' annual orders and work with the Nutritious Food Sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy) subcommittees on specific and customized needs during the annual calendar development and throughout the year</li> <li>• provide networks with written procedures detailing processes for food sourcing, allocations (including review of methodology), online ordering, declined food, etc.</li> <li>• attend coalition meetings and work closely with networks on workflow efficiencies, cost-saving measures and to resolve any service-related or communication issues</li> <li>• appoint main contact and use customer service log to track customer service requests or communication issues</li> <li>• use inventory software and/or tracking tools to forecast quality, quantity, and variety of food</li> <li>• comply with all applicable federal, state and local food safety laws, rules and regulations</li> <li>• proper management of food storage facilities, including refrigeration or temperature control, sanitation and pest control</li> <li>• proper training of staff on hygiene, food safety, illness prevention, etc. and meet applicable state licensing, certifications or training requirements</li> </ul>	<u>Quantity</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pounds/Servings of nutritious food procured monthly</li> <li>ii. Number of unduplicated food banks and/or meal programs participate in receiving procured food monthly</li> </ol> <u>Quality</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and percentage that received the type and amount of nutritious food ordered, per the nutritious food sourcing calendar</li> <li>ii. Number and percentage satisfied with the quality of services provided, as measured by annual customer service survey</li> </ol> <u>Impact (measured by annual customer service survey)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Percentage report that nutritious food sourcing helps them provide a consistent, predictable source of food for their clients</li> </ol>

<b>Transportation of Procured Food (approximately \$461,333)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the transportation needs of primarily procured food, including federal and state food assistance, for up to 28 food banks and/or 28 meal programs</li> <li>• maintain a cost-effective food transportation program to deliver procured food orders to network partners</li> <li>• work closely with food banks and meal programs to develop an equitable delivery schedule and transport food safely and timely and resolve any service-related or communication issues</li> <li>• adhere to the Food and Drug Administration and other best practice guidelines on transportation of food in large volumes</li> <li>• proper management and maintenance of vehicles and storage, including refrigeration or temperature control, sanitation and pest control</li> <li>• proper training of staff on hygiene, safety, etc., and meet applicable state licensing, certifications and/or training requirements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quantity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Pounds of procured food transported monthly</li> <li>ii. Number of unduplicated food banks and/or meal programs participate in receiving procured food monthly</li> </ol> <p><b>Quality (measured by annual customer service survey)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and percentage satisfied with the quality of services provided</li> <li>ii. Number and percentage received their orders at the scheduled time</li> </ol> <p><b>Impact (measured by annual customer service survey)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Percentage report that the transportation of procured food is beneficial to their program operations and meets their needs and requirements.</li> </ol>
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<b>Network Administrative Support (approximately \$180,627)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support and strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of food banks and meal programs through management, coordination, and administration of SFC and MPC networks, including monthly meeting support, training, etc.</li> <li>• attend monthly Nutritious Food Sourcing (formerly Bulk Buy) subcommittee meetings and assist in resolving issues</li> <li>• work closely with food banks and meal programs, and nutritious food sourcing or transportation contracted partners to resolve service-related or communication issues</li> <li>• establish partnerships with other food security and justice organizations, small businesses, food distributors, farmers, schools, etc.</li> <li>• provide training, resources and general support on best practices, racial equity and inclusion, etc.</li> <li>• support network data collection</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quantity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number of trainings/workshops partners, with at least one training on race and equity</li> <li>ii. Number of events convening to discuss emerging issues and best practices</li> </ol> <p><b>Quality (measured by annual customer service survey)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Number and percentage completing the trainings/workshops</li> <li>ii. Number and percentage satisfied with the quality of the trainings/workshops</li> <li>iii. Number and percentage satisfied with the quality of services provided</li> </ol> <p><b>Impact (measured by annual customer service survey)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Percentage report:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. increased knowledge and tools to combat food insecurity</li> <li>b. increased knowledge in how race and inequity impact access to food</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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