



Request for Proposals

For a

**Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study
for the Central Montana Area**

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I GENERAL INFORMATION

Request for Proposals (RFP) Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study

THE ABOVE DESCRIPTION MUST APPEAR ON ALL PROPOSALS AND RELATED CORRESPONDENCE

THIS IS NOT AN ORDER

RESPOND NO LATER THAN February 24, 2023 5:00 P.M. MST	RFP INITIATIVE: Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study	All consultants must respond in detail to each element of this RFP in order to be considered for contract award. Final copy of the proposal should be sent to the contact person via email below.
Proposer Name:		Abby Majerus Snowy Mountain Development Food and Agriculture Development Center majerus@snowymountaindevelopment.com (406) 535.2591

NOTICE: THE HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE IS FUNDING THIS FEASIBILITY STUDY THROUGH A GRANT TO SNOWY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT. SMD WILL PROVIDE THE MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT. THE SELECTED CONSULTANT TEAM WILL INTERFACE WITH THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CENTER DIRECTOR.

CONTRACTS AWARDED UNDER THIS RFP WILL NOT EXCEED \$100,000



II INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Procurement (or Introduction and Objective?)

Snowy Mountain Development (SMD) and the Snowy Mountain Food and Agriculture Development Center (FADC) are inviting responses for qualified Consultants to develop a feasibility study concerning a Food Hub Facility(ities) in the Central Montana area, namely centered around Lewistown and Harlowton.

B. Background of the Project

This project is a result of funds awarded to the Snowy Mountain Food & Agriculture Development Center by the Reinvestment Fund Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

The Snowy Mountain FADC applied for these funds recognizing that both local food producers and local food consumers are looking for a centralized option to sell and purchase local food products. Through work in the industry and interactions with clients, the FADC understands that there is substantial anecdotal evidence that producers would undertake more value-add options and there would be increased marketing options for locally produced agricultural products if only there was a more defined market and functional assistance to bring products to market. The concept has been discussed with numerous entities, both private and public sector, further supporting the interest in and desire to purchase food locally. SMD recognizes that it should not proceed to develop such an entity unless it can document the feasibility and commercial viability and that a comprehensive business plan to obtain grant and other funding for the creation and initial operation of such a project.

Situated in the geographic heart of Montana, the Central Montana region is home to nearly 22,000 residents spanning approximately 13,000 square miles. It is wholly rural, sparsely populated, economically isolated and regionally distressed. With nearly seven million acres in farmland, half of the region's economies are farm dependent. Despite the abundance of livestock, cereal grains, pulses and other food products grown or grazed near the backdoors of many residents, four counties in Central Montana are designated "food deserts" and all six counties are considered "food insecure".

In the 1950's, 70% of Montanans' food consumption was locally sourced. Today, residents travel great distances for locally grown food that has been shipped out of state to be processed and shipped back to into the state to be sold at markup. The informal hubs taking shape in Central Montana communities suggest demand for a change. This study will map food economy, size the nascent "hubs" assess suitable business and distribution models, identify sites, and prepare preliminary proformas by business model.

III INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

A. Disclaimer

This RFP does not form or constitute a contractual document. Snowy Mountain Development shall not be liable for any loss, expense, damage, or claim arising out of the advice given or not given or statements made or omitted to be made in connection with this RFP. Snowy Mountain Development

will not be responsible for any expenses which may be incurred in the preparation of this RFP. A professional consulting contract will be required of the selected consultant and if the contract fails to be negotiated, Snowy Mountain Development reserves the right to contract with another consultant.

B. Quote Valid

The proposer must honor its quote for a period of ninety (90) days after the RFP due date.

C. Certification

The proposer certifies that the proposal has been arrived at independently and submitted without any collusion designed to limit competition. The proposer certifies that the materials, products, services and/or good offered meet all requirements of the stated specifications and are equal in quality, value and performance with highest quality, nationally advertised brand and/or trade names.

D. Insurance Requirements

The proposer will provide proof of professional liability insurance and worker's compensation or an independent contractors license.

E. Disposition of Proposals

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of Snowy Mountain Development.

F. Correspondence & Questions

All questions pertaining to this RFP shall be submitted no later than **February 17, 2023** via email to:

Snowy Mountain Development
majerus@snowymountaindevelopment.com
Subject Line: Question on the HFFI Food Hub RFP
(406) 535.2591

Snowy Mountain Development will make every effort to provide a written response within 2 business days, starting February 6, 2023. Whenever responses to inquiries would constitute a modification or addition to the original RFP, the reply will be made in the form of an addendum to the Request for Proposals, a copy of which will be forwarded to all consultants who have submitted an "Intent to Respond" form (Attachment E). SMD is not responsible for any delivery errors caused by email servers.

G. Timeline

RFP Process Timeline Dates

Intent to Respond Cutoff	February, 10, 2023
Question and Answer Period Ends	February 17, 2023
Proposals (Due by 5:00 PM MST)	February 24, 2023
Evaluate and Select Consultant	March 3, 2023
Contract Execution	March 6, 2023
Project Initiation	March 6, 2023
Final Feasibility Study	September 15, 2023

IV RFP EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. Initial Evaluation

Proposals received will undergo an initial review by a steering committee for compliance with instructions stated in the RFP and compliance with proposal submittal date

B. Phase II Evaluation

The evaluation of consultants' proposals may include, but is not limited to, the following criteria:

- Consultant's experience with similar feasibility studies.
- Ability to meet Snowy Mountain Development requirements.
- Demonstrated knowledge of relevant research, analysis and food hub regulations.
- Availability (timetable) for providing goods and/or services.
- Breadth of services available.
- Reporting capability.
- References for other organizations/clients (for similar projects).

Top ranking candidates *may* be interviewed prior to final selection.

C. Evaluation Criteria

The proposals being requested will be scored on the following criteria:

Qualifications and Ability to Perform Requested Services

<i>Past experience with other feasibility studies similar in scope</i>	<i>25 points</i>
<i>Personnel qualifications</i>	<i>20 points</i>
<i>Letters of reference (2) from other organizations/clients (for similar projects)</i>	<i>5 points</i>

Execution of the Scope of Work

<i>Proposal provides adequate research and analysis to support food hub scenarios</i>	<i>25 points</i>
<i>Proposal comprehensively addresses the scope of work</i>	<i>20 points</i>
<i>Proposal provides a clear, achievable, and comprehensive timeline</i>	<i>5 points</i>

V SCOPE OF WORK

A. Scope of Work

The promise of regional food hubs is to provide the market to purchase locally grown and raised food products while simultaneously providing agricultural producers expanded marketing options. Diversifying marketing opportunities is a crucial component of agricultural operations' sustainability. Sustainable operations will create and retain quality jobs in production agriculture while generating additional revenue options that make it affordable for the next generation to take on the responsibility of the family operation.

The feasibility study will need to include the following:

- **Measure and map** Central Montana's food economy and food infrastructure including production, transportation, storage, processing, distribution, retail, value-added business partners and collaborators.
- **Identify current demographic and agricultural** trends including COVID's impact on the food economy.
- **Analyze producer and consumer market preferences**, barriers and opportunities as well as the current economic activity occurring in the nascent "hubs".
- **Assess** potential business models (i.e. privately-held, nonprofit, cooperative, publicly-held, informal) and market models (i.e. farm to business, direct to consumer, hybrid, multisided web platform).
- **Identify suitable locations** for a regional hub(s) and estimate the amount of square footage needed to meet demand for retail, food processing, commercial kitchen, cold storage, dry storage and other hub functions. Including probable costs for basic infrastructure.
- **Estimate an amount of start-up capital** needed to establish a regional hub(s) and prepare a five-year fund development plan to secure public and private funding to offset development and operational costs. Proformas need to be presented in a format that can be manipulated as circumstances change.
- **Discuss alternatives** for marketing, financing and operations and all associated costs and develop five-year proformas with assumptions on operating revenues and expenses.
- **Estimate** the number of jobs to be created and retained, the potential economic impact to the region at 5, 10 and 15 years of operations and discuss the potential social impacts to the region.

B. Proposal Contents

- Cover letter: include the firm or individual(s) name(s) that will be providing the requirements stated in this RFP, with signature.
- Scope of work: explain the process you will follow to accomplish the deliverables listed above, including major milestones and evaluation. Briefly describe your firm's project management process.
- Qualifications: describe overall services you can offer in response to the stated requirement and include experience working with some or all stakeholders (i.e. growers, food service directors from schools, hospitals, county facilities, food and agriculture focused businesses, local government agencies)
- Cost detail: include an itemized estimate for deliverables; provide specific costs for individual features where applicable. (Attachment B)

-If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of subcontractors you must clearly state this in your proposal. Subcontractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. SMD reserves the right to approve all subcontractors assigned to the project.

-The price you quote should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.

- Client list and samples of related work/successes: Include a brief description of the role you/your firm played in each project.
- Provide at least two references for projects with similar deliverables to those outlined for this project. Indicate which services were provided to each customer.
- Include resumes for key personnel working on this project.
- Validation Questions Form (Attachment A)
- Conditions and Non-Collusion Agreement (Attachment C)

ATTACHMENT A

Validation Questions for Consultant

GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) Company Information
 - a. Address:
 - b. Contact Name:
 - c. Contact Phone:
 - d. Contact Email Address:
 - e. Website/URL:
- 2) How many years has your company been doing business in your industry?
- 3) Total full-time employees
- 4) What are your standard payment terms?
- 5) Can you provide documentation that your firm can meet Snowy Mountain Development's minimum insurance requirements before services on this project are rendered?

FUNCTIONALITY

- 1) A certificate of insurance must be provided prior to signing the contract, commencing on the day the contract begins. Are you willing to comply with these requirements?
- 2) You must instruct your insurance broker/carrier to notify Snowy Mountain Development should your coverage change. Are you willing to do this?

QUALITY AND SERVICE

- 1) Do you have a quality assurance program? If yes, please attach a copy or a link to the document online.
- 2) Are your employees required to take a mandatory drug test?

LEGAL ISSUES

- 1) Are there any pending lawsuits against your company? (Include current mediation or arbitration matters.) If yes, please briefly explain.

ATTACHMENT B

Budget & Budget Justification

Central Montana Food Hub Feasibility Study	Maximum Amount
Personnel/Labor	\$
Scope of Work	\$
Supplies	\$
Travel	\$
Other	\$
Total Cost	\$

*This is a sample only. Feel free to create your own budget layout.

Budget Justification Narrative:

ATTACHMENT C

Conditions and Non-Collusion Form

To receive consideration, this form must be signed in full by a responsible, authorized agent, officer, employee or representative of your firm.

Conditions and Non-Collusion Agreement

We have read and agree to the conditions and stipulations contained herein.

We further agree to furnish the services specified at the prices stated herein, to be delivered to the location and on that date set forth herein.

In signing this proposal, you also certify that you have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal; that this proposal has been independently arrive at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this proposal has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the due date at time to any other proposer or competitor; that the above statement is accurate under penalty of perjury.

Legal Name of Firm/Corporation

Authorized Signature

Address

Printed Name

City/State/Zip

Title

Telephone Number

Date

ATTACHMENT D

Intent to Respond Form

RFP: Feasibility Study for Regional Food Hub(s) in Central Montana

Dated: _____

Please scan and email the following Intent to Respond form Abby Majerus by February 10, 2023.

To: Snowy Mountain Development

Attn: Abby Majerus

Email: majerus@snowymountaindevelopment.com

From:

Contact Name:	
Company Name:	
Company Address:	
City/State/ZIP:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

We acknowledge that the intend to respond to this RFP by the specified due date.

Company Name

Printed Contact Name

Date

Title

Signature of Contact Person

*By signing the above, I certify that I am authorized by the Company named above to respond to this request.

