

Local Food Assessment RFP

Frequently Asked Questions

Project Background

- What are the vision and mission of the project partners?

The mission of the project partners is to identify the economic impacts of strengthening the local food economy and develop a business plan that would identify the infrastructure and processes needed to further enhance the local food economy. The vision is to leverage opportunities within the food and agriculture sectors of the local economy to create jobs, businesses, and build community wealth for Northeast Ohio.

- Have the project partners prioritized or ranked the major objectives of the plan? If so, what criteria were used to establish the priorities or ranking? What are the key problems/issues that will be solved if the major objectives are met?

The project partners have not prioritized the major objectives of the plan at this point. If the major objectives are met, the study will inform local leadership in government, philanthropy, and the business community about the potential economic impact of developing a more regional food economy in Cuyahoga County and the Northeast Ohio region. In addition this plan would provide a strategic vision that would outline steps needed to achieve a strong regional food economy.

- Besides the report, *Re-imagining a More Sustainable Cleveland*, what other research or studies underpin the RFP?

Locally there are two other studies currently in progress and one that was completed in 2008. One study is being led by Ohio State University in partnership with the Fund for Our Economic Future to develop a comprehensive inventory of agricultural resources within the region and a portfolio of ten business projects that can serve as example to others. In addition the Countryside Conservancy is developing an agricultural atlas for Northeast Ohio that would identify agricultural assets within the region. Ohio State

University released a report NEOHFOOD: A Northeast Ohio Food Industries Input-Output Model in December 2007 that captured the interdependencies and linkages among food and agricultural sectors and industries and provided economic importance of these sectors along with manufacturing and service sectors. It also provided several types of economic multipliers for detailed food and agriculture sectors of the economy.

- Are there representatives of “conventional” agriculture within the stakeholder group?

There are three local farmers that serve on the steering committee but they represent small-scale producers (fruit, vegetable, and dairy) that direct market to the Greater Cleveland community as well as food service providers, restaurant owners, and local food entrepreneurs. We would not characterize these stakeholders as representatives of conventional agriculture but as early adopters and champions of local food in the region.

Project Scope

- What is meant by the phrase “external demands” in point 3.1?

There is interest among the steering committee to explore the potential of developing signature products and agricultural crops specific to this region that could be marketed nationally.

- Point 3.6 asks for a recommended organizational structure for any public-private partnerships. How is this different than point 5.0?

They are the same. The hired consultants should recommend organizational structures and identify public-private partnership that would be responsible for implementing this plan.

- The terms “strategic business plan” and “economic development strategy” seem to be used synonymously in the RFP but are in fact very different deliverables. Please clarify which is required.

We are looking for a business plan that offers key economic development strategies in order to deliver the business plan.

General Questions

- Are environmental assessments available for public lands that could potentially be used for food production?

There are a limited number of Phase I or Phase II assessments for public lands that could be used for food production. The US EPA may be conducting environmental assessments for several land bank parcels in the city of Cleveland in spring of 2010 that will be used for food production and urban agriculture. OSU Extension also has the results of over 200 soil tests for several public and private parcels throughout the city that are used for food production.

- Is there a census of vacant/open land by ownership type for the (16) county area?

While no database of this nature exists, the Trust for Public Land has information on vacant and open land on their website for the 9-county area. Assembling this information is something that the steering committee is interested in, either through the Food Assessment and Plan process or a different process.

- Are assessed values available for vacant/open land by ownership type for the (16) county area? If so, in what year(s) were the assessments taken?

Each county will have assessed values for vacant and open land available through the auditor's office. I know Cleveland does not have assessed values for parcels in the city land bank.

- Are estimates available for the current food spending by institutions in Cuyahoga County? If so, are these broken down by food category; i.e. meat, produce, dairy?

This data is not readily available, but may be accessed upon further research.

- Has any regulatory information on food waste handling available? If so please define its scope.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) regulates all composting facilities in the state of Ohio including Class II facilities that process food waste. In the last two years a few Class II facilities have been developed by independent businesses and now accept food waste. The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District and OEPA will both have information on permitting and regulatory information for food waste composting in Ohio.

- Contracts of this size often require a mandatory bidding process. Do you therefore have a strong preference for an Ohio-based firm, or would an out of state firm have a chance to win this contract?

We do not have a bidding process for this project, and we are looking to consider Ohio and out-of-state firms equally.

Data Sets

Are any of the following data sets available:

- Time series on number of farmers markets and CSA's in Cuyahoga County?
We have 2009 data on number of farmers markets and CSA's. Data from previous years may be available.
- Time series on sales revenues for farmers markets and CSA's in Cuyahoga County?
This data is not readily available, but may be accessed upon further research.
- Farm acres by type of production in the (16) county region?
This data is not readily available, but may be accessed upon further research.
- Food distribution/warehousing capacity by type in the (16) county region?
This data is not readily available, but may be accessed upon further research.
- Please define the scope of CAUV, market value and consumption status maps.
CAUV information is available at the parcel level from the auditor's office from 2007.