

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Local Institutional Purchasing Support

PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

What is LIFT?

The Local Institutional Food Team (LIFT) is a collaboration of public and non-profit partners leveraging existing resources to support institutional buyers and local producers. We are focused on recruiting and engaging institutional buyers expressing interest in sourcing locally, providing technical assistance to purchasers looking to source local products for their institutions, and helping farmers reach success in these markets.

Our core partner organizations work collaboratively to enhance the sustainability of the regional food system by increasing the amount of local food served in King County schools, hospitals, colleges and other institutions. Our goal is to build leverage to meet the King County Executive's goal of increasing institutional purchasing from local sources by 10% by 2025. ([2015 Local Food Initiative](#), [2016 Local Food Initiative Annual Report](#))

Who is LIFT?

Partners from the following organizations comprise LIFT: Health Care Without Harm, Washington State Department of Agriculture Farm-to-School Program, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment, and King Conservation District.

The goals of LIFT are to: create a community of institutional purchasers who want to buy local farm products; provide technical assistance to institutional purchasers to achieve the County Executive's local sourcing goals through building and leveraging existing partnerships; develop an informed cadre of local producers that can meet demand by institutional purchasers; provide regional promotion and recognition that challenges buyers to increase their purchase of local foods and provides recognition for leadership in buying local; and establish and publicize indicators and metrics, including a dashboard, for measuring purchase of local food by institutional buyers.

Who benefits from LIFT?

- Farmers benefit from expanded markets for their products
- Institutions get to market their local food programs to potential customers and other stakeholders
- Buyers benefit by having all of the resources they need for local food sourcing in King County in one place
- Vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and hospital patients benefit from increased access to healthy fresh food

A. Purpose

King Conservation District (KCD) seeks a consultant or consultant team to lead the Local Institutional Food Team as it builds its leadership brand in the landscape of developing a robust and resilient local food economy. LIFT strives to develop into the 'go to' organization to provide technical assistance and support to institutional food purchasers looking for local farm products and those wanting to start or participate in existing projects and programs that support local food systems.

The goals of this RFQ are:

1. Identify three institutions ready and willing to commit to dedicating 10% of their food purchasing resources to local products by 2025. These institutions will include:
 - a. One (1) hospital
 - b. One (1) school district engaging at least one (1) school
 - c. One (1) corporate campus
2. Develop a strategy to meet and measure the 10% commitment
3. Identify and secure funding to meet these commitments.

The successful consultant will grow the capacity and visibility of the LIFT team through:

- Identifying and engaging additional institutional partners interested in starting or expanding their commitment to local producers; and
- Driving the build-out of the strategic plan and its implementation.

Proposals must be submitted to Deirdre Grace at Deirdre.Grace@kingcd.org by 5:00 pm on Friday, January 19, 2018.

B. Context

Previous analysis has quantified the market potential for local food purchasing. "King County hospitals, schools and childcare facilities are currently spending an estimated \$74 million on food purchases to serve their customers. These institutions are primarily purchasing outside of farm-to-institution (F2I) channels which represents a significant opportunity for regional farmers and food producers to capture market share."¹

¹ The Local Institutional Food Team has its roots in a 2012-2014 farm-to-institution project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This work was particularly important and timely, as it allowed project partners who had largely worked independently, to come together and share program efforts and accomplishments toward a larger goal of greater regional collaboration and impact. The project was able to leverage years of trust and relationship building, which allowed the team access to key stakeholders, regional supply chains, and deeper conversations with private businesses. The report, [Farm-to Institution Strategies: Impact investing in health and economic development through the value chain of healthy regional food in the Puget Sound Region](#).

“County hospitals represent a significant percentage of F2I purchases estimated at \$30 million annually. King County schools provide over 27 million meals per year of which 67.5% are provided to low-income children. With 47,000 children enrolled in 2012, King County childcare facilities provide an opportunity to reach children at an early age when their eating habits can be strongly influenced.” ^{ibid.}

C. Project Background

In late 2016 and early 2017, KCD staff actively engaged with regional planning efforts of the King County Kitchen Cabinet, and sought out and received input from over 50 food system practitioners on priority needs for a robust and comprehensive regional food economy.

Working with KCD’s Regional Food System Working Group, four target areas were identified, which, if funded, would address multiple stakeholder needs, and leverage stakeholder input for greater impact. One of these target areas was institutional purchasing of local farm products. The Local Institutional Food Team was identified as the lead to address this target area.

KCD Regional Food System Grants

As one of the four identified Strategic Initiatives, the Local Institutional Food Team was supported through KCD Regional Food System Grants in 2015 and 2016. Key objectives for the “phase 1” period were:

- Regional engagement and participation of LIFT team members
- Researching and compiling best practices, publications, and resources for institutional buyers and the development of a web-based resource (<http://kingcd.org/programs-LIFT-home.htm>)
- Strengthening key organizational relationships and collaboration to build on local knowledge and capacity
- Developing next steps for technical support team/network including application for additional funding to track buying capacity and establish metrics to measure local institutional purchasing in King County

To date this work has achieved these early goals by coalescing regional expertise and reaching out to public and private institutional purchasers to identify barriers. This RFQ is designed to support “phase 2” of this strategic effort, building on and advancing this important work.

PART 2 – SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Program Deliverables

Strategic Management Consultant for 2018 – 2019

Deliverables include:

1. Identify and secure commitments from institutions from three sectors to dedicate 10% of their food purchasing resources to local products by 2025. These institutions will include:
 - a. One (1) hospital
 - b. One (1) school district engaging at least one (1) school
 - c. One (1) corporate campus
2. Develop a strategy to meet and measure these commitments that includes:
 - a. Develop and implement a two-season, public information campaign set for launch by 3rd quarter 2018 with the intention of engaging institutional purchasers, public policymakers, and local producers.
 - b. Strategically engage King County Executive, City of Seattle Mayor and other municipal partners in Proclamation and other public support in order to highlight and create energy around the LIFT initiative and the 10% goal.
 - c. And other elements bidder deems important.
3. Drive build-out of the LIFT strategic plan and its implementation
4. Develop consistent and coordinated messaging for communication between LIFT members and institutional purchasers to support the campaign and the realization of the 10% goal
5. Build dashboard to track ongoing communications, activities, and technical assistance with LIFT members and institutional purchasers
6. Identify and secure funding to meet and sustain the deliverables in collaboration with KCD staff

The consultant will use the 10% by 2025 campaign to grow the capacity and visibility of the LIFT team through:

- Identifying and engaging additional institutional partners interested in starting or expanding their commitment to local producers and
- Build environment of and coordinate strategic engagement with LIFT members and institutional purchasers

- Manage regular, productive engagement with LIFT team, including ongoing communication between monthly meetings
- Manage correspondence

B. Minimum Qualifications

1. Experience:

The successful applicant will have:

- A demonstrated track record of securing institutional commitments to local food purchasing and deploying strategies to bring those commitments to fruition.
- Experience in local food supply chain development, especially supply chains including institutional buyers.
- Strong knowledge of key supply, demand, and infrastructure drivers affecting the development of a regional food system in King County and more broadly across Puget Sound.
- Experience leading implementation of a strategic plan in collaboration with an advisory board.
- Ability to provide team leadership.
- Ability to collect data, track opportunities, barriers, and metrics.
- Ability to develop strategic communication plans.
- Demonstrated experience managing public information campaigns.
- Fundraising experience.

2. Equipment: The successful candidate will need to provide their own transportation and data management systems (e.g., computer).

Format for Responses

Proposers shall submit:

1. Qualification summary – Describe how the minimum qualifications for experience are met or exceeded. Include examples of work related to subject matter. Please limit your response to 10 pages, (5 double sided) 12-point font. Appendices and References additional and as needed.
2. Provide a general budget for each task, (including the allocation of \$15,000 in seed funds). Please include an average hourly rate for all anticipated staff. Total proposal cost may not exceed \$85,000.

Evaluation Process

An evaluation committee, appointed by KCD, will review all timely received proposals and score them according to the numerical criteria listed below.

Evaluation Criteria	Percentage
A demonstrated track record of securing institutional commitments to local food purchasing and deploying strategies to bring those commitments to fruition.	25%
Strong knowledge of key supply, demand, and infrastructure drivers affecting the development of regional food system in King County and more broadly across Puget Sound.	25%
Demonstrated experience managing public information campaigns	15%
Ability to provide team leadership.	10%
Ability to develop strategic communications.	10%
Fund development experience	10%
Ability to collect data, track opportunities, barriers, metrics.	5%

Tentative Schedule (The dates listed here are subject to change)	
RFP Issued	January 5, 2018
Proposals due to King Conservation District	January 19, 2018
Evaluations completed and Contractor notified	January 29, 2018
Work to begin	February 1, 2018
Work complete	December 31, 2019

Dollar Range for Services

Overall cost will not exceed \$85,000 for work January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

For specific questions, prospective contractors may contact Deirdre Grace at Deirdre.Grace@kingcd.org.