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Memo: Healthy Retail Access Work Group Funding Recommendation – *Northside Planning Council - FEED Kitchens*

Date: Monday, February 4, 2019

To: Madison Food Policy Council Members

From: George Reistad, Food Policy Director and Members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group

Members of the Madison Food Policy Council,

The Healthy Retail Access Work Group met with Abha Thakkar and Chris Brockel, representatives of Northside Planning Council's FEED Kitchens (NPC FEED Kitchens) as well as Salli Martyniak of Forward Community Investments (FEED's lender) on Monday, February 4th. They provided an overview of NPC FEED Kitchen's Healthy Retail Access Program proposal, which seeks funding assistance for equipment repairs, printing, and equipment and technology expenses. They also discussed the mission and business model of NPC FEED Kitchens.

NPC FEED Kitchens offers opportunities for small-scale and low-income food entrepreneurs from across the City and the County to launch their food businesses in a certified commercial kitchen by renting prep and storage space at low cost. Many of these businesses are owned by people of color (45%) and women (45%) and over 25 area non-profits receive a discounted rate to use the kitchen space for product development, catering events, and training opportunities. NPC FEED Kitchens also houses a significant number of businesses (at least 18) that provide healthy, local, culturally appropriate products with low sugar and sodium content to area food retailers like the Willy Street Co-op, Madison Oriental Market, and Luna's Groceries. By launching and graduating businesses that feed into the larger food system, NPC FEED Kitchens and their tenants are helping to diversify the demographics of food business ownership and food retail inventory in the Madison-area.

The NPC FEED Kitchen's HRAP application is unique. Because the focus is supporting an incubator Kitchen facility and not a retail establishment, the application is somewhat outside the parameters of the HRAP Program. However, the application aligns with several goals of the HRAP program. After reviewing the application and meeting with the applicants, members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group determined that the applicant is providing a significant community benefit to the City of Madison and beyond and that the application justifies the request for HRAP support. These benefits include supporting area organizations who provide training services to underserved populations through discounted rental rates, creating economic mobility opportunities for a diverse cohort of food entrepreneurs, and creating a feeder system of culturally appropriate and distinctive healthy products for area food retailers. This directly lines up with two out of the five stated goals of the Healthy Retail Access Program, which were approved and adopted by the Madison Food Policy Council on November 7, 2018:

1. Supporting food enterprise development and entrepreneurship
2. Increasing culturally appropriate foods in identified Areas of Focus

Again, it is important to acknowledge that this application is not directly aligned with all of the stated goals of the HRAP program. However, in light of the unique and outsized role that NPC FEED Kitchens plays in Madison's food system, work group members recommend that the requested \$99,352 in HRAP funding be awarded to Northside Planning Council's FEED Kitchens to assist with expenses related to equipment repairs, printing, and equipment and technology acquisition.

Sincerely,



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