

RFP # / DK
Madison Public Market “MARKETREADY”
Program Administrator

Request for Proposals (RFP) for a partner to manage the MARKETREADY Program, a new Training, Technical Assistance, and Micro-Enterprise Funding initiative focused on supporting the development of businesses that will become vendors at the Madison Public Market

Please submit all responses and direct all questions to:

City of Madison
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Overview

The City is seeking an administrator to manage the newly created “MARKETREADY Program.” As part of the City of Madison’s ongoing effort to plan and prepare to open the Madison Public Market, the City is launching the MARKETREADY Program to cultivate and prepare vendors to become ready to operate in the planned Madison Public Market. The MARKETREADY program will recruit prospective Public Market vendors and package a combination of training, technical assistance, and micro-enterprise grants to help small food-based businesses and agriculture producers get prepare to start or operate a business within the planned Madison Public Market and Market District. The City is seeking a MARKETREADY Administrator with the skill and experience to manage the MARKETREADY Program, including the micro-enterprise funding and the training/technical assistance components.

Project Background

Madison is a great food city. The food sector and related industries are key drivers of the Madison regional economy and food is an important part Madison’s identity and sense of place. This is reflected in the City’s numerous farmers markets, food processing businesses, farm-to-table restaurants, community gardens, community kitchens, CSA networks, etc. Food is deeply ingrained in Madison’s culture and economy. However, the missing piece of Madison’s food system is a permanent, year-round public market that weaves together these assets, provides the focal point of our food economy, and enhances opportunities for entrepreneurs to start food businesses.

The City of Madison recently completed a detailed Business Plan for the Madison Public Market. The vision is to create a regional food epicenter with space for small-scale food vending, larger-scale food retail, food processing facilities, a demonstration kitchen, and other uses. The Public Market will be the anchor of a larger “Market District”

encompassing surrounding properties and including a mix complementary businesses and activities.

The process of creating the business plan included extensive interviews with prospective public market vendors, several vendor and community surveys, numerous public meetings to gather input from stakeholders and the community, and detailed research and analysis by the City and its consulting team from Project for Public Spaces, Inc. The complete business plan includes a preliminary program and floor plan, management and governance plan, budget, and financial plan. Though the details will evolve, the City has adopted the business plan as the guiding document for the public market project.

The complete business plan is available at www.cityofmadison.com/publicmarket

The Business Plan for the Public Market was approved by the Madison Common Council in November 2015. The City and the Local Food Committee are currently moving forward with implementation. In March of 2016, the Madison Common Council approved the Madison Public Market Implementation Strategy which identifies five work elements that need to be completed over the next two years for the project to be ready to move forward with construction and opening.

The Purpose of the Market-Ready Program

The first phase of the Public Market business planning process included an extensive effort to reach out to and cultivate prospective Public Market vendors. This process uncovered numerous food-based businesses that are interested in the project. Some of these are well established businesses but many are startups who are looking to the public market as an opportunity to launch a new idea or take a small business to the next level. Based on the City's surveys and focus groups, about 70% of the enterprises interested in the Madison Public Market have fewer than four employees and many of them are start-ups.

The Madison Public Market will be a multi-use facility with a variety of activities. The core function of the market, however, is to be a place of business. It will be a place that agglomerates customers with small food-based businesses and farmers engage in selling products. For the public market to succeed, it needs more than a physical facility. It needs a mix of farmers, food entrepreneurs, and other vendors who are ready to move forward with starting or growing their enterprises within the public market. More than anything else, the project's success will hinge on whether these businesses themselves are successful.

That's where the MARKETREADY program comes in. The MARKETREADY Program will focus on developing vendors who are prepared to succeed as independent businesses operating within the Madison Public Market starting on opening day. It will emphasize recruiting participation from small, startup, and early-stage businesses that have an interest in being part of the Public Market but need additional support and work to be at a point where they are ready to operate and poised to succeed once the public market opens.

How the MARKETREADY Program Will Work

The MARKETREADY Program will be a training, technical assistance, and micro-enterprise grant program designed to help prospective Public Market vendors become ready to start their business and operate within the Madison Public Market when it opens. The program will focus on helping vendors prepare business plans, establish any required permits or licenses, develop marketing plans, purchase equipment, participate in training programs, design their stalls, or engage in other activities to help them become ready to be vendors at the Public Market. The MARKETREADY Program will precede the construction of the public market. The goal will be for the first Cohort of MARKETREADY participants to complete the program and be ready to start operating their business in the public market on opening day.

Market Ready Administrator

Through this Request for Proposals process, the City intends to engage a community partner to administer the MARKETREADY Program. This Administrator will coordinate all of the MARKETREADY programming, manage the MARKETREADY Fund, package the individual micro-enterprise grants and loans to vendors, and oversee the process. The ideal organization or team to serve in this role as MARKETREADY Administrator will have expertise and experience in managing micro-enterprise funding programs, experience with food-based entrepreneurship, and experience providing training and technical assistance to diverse small businesses. Further, in accordance with the equity goals of the Public Market, the MARKETREADY Program will emphasize supporting low income populations, communities of color, and other populations that face historic barriers to starting businesses.

Funding

The MARKETREADY program will be resourced utilizing \$200,000 in City of Madison funds allocated for Public Market pre-construction activities. This funding for the MARKETREADY program was identified in the Public Market Implementation Strategy and accompanying Madison Common Council Resolution that was approved in March of 2016. The City anticipates that the selected MARKETREADY Administrator would use a portion of these funds to create and manage the programming, training and technical assistance aspect of the project and would use a portion of the funds to package individual micro enterprise grants to selected prospective public market vendors. Through the selection process, the City will also prioritize selection of an administrator who can leverage additional non-city resources for the project. The City and the selected MARKETREADY Administrator will coordinate to potentially match the City's investment in the program with grants and other outside resources with the hope of growing the program over time.

Participating Vendors

Prospective vendors will apply to participate in the MARKETREADY Program. The program will select a cohort of participating vendors through an application process. These participants will apply for and be eligible to receive funds of up to \$10,000 to be used for activities that help them prepare their business. In addition to the funding component, the cohort will participate and have access to programs and services provided or coordinated by the MARKETREADY Administrator. Some participants may choose to forgo applying for the grant component of the program but participate in the programming and training aspects. The program will likely engage several highly-active participants who pursue the funding

element and participate heavily in the training and technical assistance elements. Other vendors may be more passively involved in the program by taking a few classes but forgoing the grant component. The City will work with the selected Administrator to ensure that the program is accessible to a wide share of prospective vendors. The MARKETREADY Program will emphasize the Public Market's equity goals and the projects' focus on creating entrepreneurship among low income populations, communities of color, displaced workers, women, and immigrants.

One goal of the MARKETREADY Program is that the prospective vendors who participate will collaborate and learn from each other. With a process facilitated by the Administrator, the Cohort will meet regularly, share ideas, and learn from each other's experiences. The Cohort will build relationships, camaraderie, and collaboration that will carry over to when the Public Market is open and they are doing business alongside each other within the permanent Public Market. Although there is a goal to create a core Cohort of prospective vendors, the City also intends for the MARKETREADY program to be open and accessible to vendors who may selectively participate in elements of the program.

Micro-Enterprise Grant Eligible Costs

The City will work with the selected MARKETREADY Administrator on the details of the program and eligible uses of grant funding. The following is a preliminary list of the types of activities the City envisions participants using the funding for:

- **Training** – Grantees could use MARKETREADY funds for fees associated with workshops, classes and other training programs that will support the growth and success of a public market business. Examples could include workshops or classes on business planning, financing, marketing, food safety, licensing, value-added processing, or any topic related to starting or growing a successful public market-based business. Grantees would be eligible to use funds to take such classes from a variety of community providers. The MARKETREADY Administrator will likely develop custom training and technical assistance classes as part of the Program, and the Administrator can also help participant identify and enroll in other programs as well.
- **Marketing/Branding/Website** – Grantees could use MARKETREADY funds for costs associated with marketing and branding. This could include engaging professional services to develop a marketing plan, logo, product labels and supporting graphics. This could also include costs associated with creating a website and social media presence.
- **Licensing/Permits** – MARKETREADY funds can be used for fees associated with any required local state or federal licensing or permits. This includes food handling licenses, Madison and Dane County Public Health requirements, City of Madison Street Vending permits, or other such fees for licensing or permitting.
- **Incorporation Costs** – MARKETREADY funds can be used for costs associated for establishing a new business enterprise, such as filing to establish an LLC.

- **Trademark Filing** – MARKETREADY funds can be used for legal fees associated with filing for a Trademark.
- **Product Testing** – MARKETREADY funds can be used for nutritional testing or other product testing needed for small scale food processors
- **Supplies/Equipment** – Funds can be used to purchase supplies and equipment, such as product ingredients, packaging materials, or processing equipment.
- **Kitchen Rental** – Funds can be used for prospective vendors to rent time at the FEED Kitchens or other commercial kitchen space.
- **Farmers Market and Pop-up Market Stall Rental** – MARKETREADY funds can be used for fees associated with stalls at Farmers Markets, pop-up markets, art fairs, festivals, or other events that charge fees for vendors

Potential Growth of the Program in Future Years

Based on the success of the program and the potential to attract grant funding or other resources, the City hopes to continue and expand the program in future years once the Public Market is up and running. The MARKETREADY Program may evolve into an ongoing low or zero interest revolving loan fund that finances businesses to get started in the Public Market on an ongoing basis. Again, the City anticipates working with the selected MARKETREADY Administrator to build a program that is successful in its first iteration as well as sustainable over the long term.

Scope of Work

The City is interested in retaining an administrator to oversee the MARKETREADY program, including coordinating and providing the training/technical assistance and managing the micro-enterprise funding program. Agencies and organizations that are focused on providing capital and technical assistance to small businesses with a focus on food-based businesses that can deliver in the following areas are encouraged to submit a proposal. The anticipated tasks for the MARKETREADY Administrator include:

- **Task 1: Create the details of the MARKETREADY Program** - The first step would be to create the structure of the Market Ready Program. This would include working with the City to organize the training and technical assistance programming, eligibility requirements for prospective participants, the application process for participants, the selection process, working with partners on programming, and setting up the fund.
- **Task 2: Recruiting Participation** – Task 2 will focus on outreach to identify and recruit potential Public Market vendors to participate in the MARKETREADY Program.

- **Task 3: Manage Application and Selection Process** – Task 3 would be soliciting applications from MARKETREADY program participants, creating a system to evaluate applications, and administering the selection process (with oversight and involvement by the City Staff and the City’s Local Food Committee).
- **Task 4: Administer the Training and Technical Assistance Programming** – Task 4 would be managing, coordinating, and directing the technical assistance and training elements of the MARKETREADY Program. This would include designing classes and seminars, coordination of events, lining-up instructors, coordinating site visits, etc.
- **Task 5: Administering the MARKETREADY Fund** – Task 4 is managing the MARKETREADY Fund. This would include setting up the fund, awarding/underwriting grants/loans to vendors, processing payments, managing all reporting requirements, etc.
- **Task 6: One-on-One Assistance to Participants** – Task 6 is focused on providing individual assistance and support to MARKETREADY participants. The Administrator will have periodic meetings with each participant to help them plan their next steps, find resources, and make progress.
- **Task 7: Creating a Sustainable Funding Mechanism** – Task 7 will focus on attracting outside resources to make the MARKETREADY Program sustainable over the long term.
- **Task 8: Communication & Reporting** - All of this work would be done in coordination with city staff and with oversight by the Local Food Committee. The selected fund administrator would be asked to provide a monthly report to the Local Food Committee at their meetings. The Administrator may also be asked to provide periodic updates to the Madison Common Council and other stakeholders and collaborators involved in the Public Market Project. The Administrator will be asked to provide a report at the completion of the program that summarizes the results.

Budget

The City’s Budget for the Market Ready Program is \$200,000. This funding includes costs needed to manage and administer the training and technical assistance work, as well as funds that would be packaged into the micro-enterprise grants/loans. The City is very interested in partners who can leverage the City’s funding commitment with additional outside resources.

Fund Administrator Requirements

Organizations with experience providing capital and technical assistance to small businesses, preferably with experience working with food-based businesses, are encouraged to submit a proposal. The City is particularly interested in organizations that have proven track record of successful working with and empowering entrepreneurship among women, people of color, low income populations, and immigrant communities.

Specific preferred experience and expertise:

- Experience with fund management, particularly micro-enterprise funding for small businesses
- Experience providing technical assistance to small businesses including business planning
- Experience providing technical assistance to food-based businesses including issues impacting food businesses
- Experience empowering women and/or people of color in entrepreneurship
- Experience training and supporting entrepreneurs
- Knowledge of the south central Wisconsin food system and food economy

Recognizing that this is a wide range of expertise, the City would welcome applications from teams.

Proposal Contents:

Qualifications (please limit to 8 pages)

- **Team** - Describe your team. State organization(s) that will be part of providing the services, and experience with similar or related programs. If proposers are a team of several organizations, describe how each involved organization will contribute.
- **Team Members** - Describe individual team members. Include names, titles, roles, and responsibilities for each team member. Identify the project manager and primary contact. Describe who will manage the training/technical assistance work and who will manage the fund.
- **Project examples** – Provide descriptions of related work
- **References** – Provide contact information for clients from four recent projects or initiatives, which can be used as references

Approach and Budget (please limit to 5 pages)

- **Work Plan** – The scope of work described above identifies eight tasks. Describe how your team would undertake and complete each task. Based on your expertise, feel free to vary, re-arrange, or alter the scope of work to better meet the overall goals of the program. The City is open to alternative approaches and different ideas.
- **Budget** - As stated above, the budget for the program is \$200,000. Describe how you would propose using these resources to create and administer the program. In

particular, how much would be used for administration, programming, and direct micro-enterprise funding to participants. To maximize effectiveness, describe if you would propose structuring the micro-enterprise funding as grants or loans or a blend. Though not required, the City is very interested in leveraging city funding with additional outside resources. If applicable, describe how your team would do this. Include a detailed table describing the budget for the project, delineated by task, and clearly identifying leveraged resources.

Proposal Timeline, Deadline and Submission Information

RFP Release	May 9, 2016
Interested applicant Q&A meeting/teleconference	Week of May 23, 2016
Submission of any questions	Week of May 30
Answers to questions posted	Week of June 6
Due Date	June 20th, 2016 4pm CT
Panel Review and Scoring	June 21 – July 1, 2016
Interviews	Week of July 11
Section and Contracting	Week of July 18
Execute Program (approximate timeline)	
<i>Work with city to develop program details (4 to 6 months)</i>	August 2016 to December 2016
<i>Manage recruitment, application process, and selection process for MARKETREADY participants (4 to 6 Months)</i>	January 2017 to May 2017
<i>Step 3: Administer Program (18 to 24 months)</i>	June 2017 to March 2019

Submission Information:

Please submit 8 hard copies of your proposal and one electronic file. Electronic file can be emailed or included on a flash drive with your submittal).

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