



Request for Qualifications

Evaluations for ARC Growing Capacity Grant Project

August 3, 2020

Sprouting Farms Corp. (SF) is soliciting proposals and related documentation for selection of a contractor who can serve as evaluations lead for an agribusiness development project across West Virginia.

Summary: In October 2019, Sprouting Farms Corp was awarded an ARC POWER Grant to lead a team of 8 partners in West Virginia and Virginia to establish an integrated regional food system workforce development ecosystem. This project will create and retain jobs and businesses in the agricultural sector while capitalizing on a recognized need for increased production on existing small farms, all while providing support to vulnerable populations within West Virginia. Over the course of the last decade, small agriculture has been the focus of numerous successful development projects within the state and region. Through this work, it has become apparent that efforts to increase agricultural production on small farms has massive potential to yield positive economic results: the unmet demand for locally produced products is immense and growing. Project goals center around workforce development across the food system (farm labor, food processing, food hub operations, and culinary), entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector support through beginning farmer training programs, integrating new hubs for aggregation and distribution for producers across the state, and piloting a grant/loan combo project to help producers scale their operations to meet the growing demand for fresh and local products.

Goals: The three primary goals of this project are to (1) expand a wholesale production incubator program for new and beginning farmers across our network; (2) integrate existing post-production and culinary workforce training programs for individuals who are unemployed, in recovery, and previously incarcerated; and (3) expand and develop replicable food enterprise and workforce development programs that can be implemented across Central Appalachia

Programs: The Agri-Business Development Program will involve: (1) supporting and training farmers, (2) providing access to production resources, (3) providing land access for farmers, (4) working with the ASD Corridor Project and coordinating production, aggregation, food access, and sales, (5) providing value-added processing services and markets, (6) coordinating the developing wholesale market channels, and (7) providing entrepreneurship support to quickly scale the system to meet demand. The Workforce Development Program will support and expand a variety of programs housed and developed within the network of social enterprises and job training and placement programs, with support from partners specializing in target populations, and similarly engaged in social enterprise. The primary focus is on the recovery and prevention ecosystem for vulnerable populations, including youth, underemployed, formerly incarcerated African Americans, and drug court or drug recovery program participants.

SF requires the services of a university institution in the state of West Virginia to perform a grant program evaluation. The university partner will evaluate the effectiveness of the Growing Capacity



project in meeting its grant objectives. The research team will utilize surveys and key informant qualitative interviews to collect data for the evaluation.

The chosen entity will work directly with Sprouting Farms and Growing Capacity partners' staff.

Anticipated schedule

Listed below is the proposed timeline, with a final competition date of October 30, 2023.

Project Component	Completion Date
Year-one review	March 15, 2021
Year two review	January 1, 2022
Year-three review	October 1, 2023
Project evaluation summary	October 30, 2023

Evaluation criteria

Award will be made to the responsible offeror whose response conforms to all solicitation requirements, such as terms and conditions, representations and certifications, technical requirements, and also provides the best value to SF based on the results of the evaluation.

The evaluation process will be accomplished as follows:

1. **Technical Acceptability.** Each offeror's technical qualifications will be evaluated to determine if the offeror provides a sound, compliant approach that meets the requirements and demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of those requirements.
2. **Ability to meet timeline:** this project will require agility and quick project ramp-up to meet the deadlines listed in the table above. The offeror should discuss the strategy to meet the aggressive schedule and provide assurance that the schedule can be met, outlining any assumptions or caveats that may have to be addressed in meeting the timeline
3. **Project team:** Each offeror's project team will be evaluated based on experience, charge rates, and availability.
4. **Cost range:** This project is a two year contract not to exceed \$35,000 total to provide evaluations for a three year project. No travel or benefits are included in this contract. The contractor will be compensated no more frequently than monthly after providing an invoice for time spent on the project.

Contractor requirements

Any selected contractor must conform with the following requirements:

1. Covered under the West Virginia Workers Compensation Insurance.



2. Unemployment Insurance
3. Required to submit a US Department of Interiors certification regarding debarment, suspension, and other responsibility matters, Drug-free workplace requirements.
4. Public Liability Insurance and Comprehensive Vehicle Liability Insurance coverage throughout the life of the project in an amount not less than one million (\$1,000,00) for bodily injury and property damage of each occurrence and not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in aggregate. Insurance companies must be licensed to do business in the State of West Virginia.

Submittal instructions

Please send one electronic copy of the RFQ response to the Project Manager, April Koenig via email at april@sproutingfarms.org. RFQ packages are due by August 30, 2020 with an expected decision by September 15, 2020.

University institutions interested in submitting an RFQ for this work should follow the outline proposed below:

1. Cover Letter (one page)
2. Section 1: Identify University including name, address, phone number and contact person regarding this RFQ (one page)
3. Section 2: Describe your project approach for this project (one page)
4. Section 3: List 2 (2) similar projects including size, location, and contact person