

HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS BRANCH

OCTOBER 4, 2024

ADDENDUM A
TO
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP D24-108

SEALED PROPOSALS

FRESH PRODUCE SOURCING FROM DISADVANTAGED FARMERS, PRODUCERS, AND
DISTRIBUTION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Requirements pertaining to written questions were stated in the original RFP. Written questions received by the STATE are listed below. The following responses are hereby provided and incorporated into the RFP:

1. Inclusion of Administrative Costs:

- a. Can the intermediary or sponsor include administrative costs in the budget?

Response: Yes, administrative costs can be included in the budget. The RFP specifies that up to 30 percent of the total food box cost may be allocated for operating expenses, which includes administrative costs, transportation, handling, and materials (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.2.2). This aligns with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Grant Guidelines, ensuring that funds are primarily used for food procurement while still allowing for necessary operational costs.

- b. Can these costs be allocated as a fixed amount per box (e.g., \$2.00 per box)?

Response: While the RFP does not explicitly mention a fixed amount per box, the allocation of administrative costs should be within the 30 percent of the total box cost as stipulated (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.2.2). Therefore, a fixed amount per box, such as \$2.00, may be appropriate if it fits within the overall budgetary constraints.

- c. Are there alternative methods to incorporate administrative expenses while ensuring the majority of funds are used for food hubs and direct food distribution?

Response: Alternative methods to manage administrative costs may be available for each Offeror to propose.

2. Cash Flow and Fund Distribution:

- a. Will the project funding be distributed through advance payments or on a reimbursement basis?

Response: USDA LFPA Grants often operate on a reimbursement basis. Offerors should be prepared for reimbursement and ensure financial flexibility. The distribution of funds may be negotiable depending on the final terms agreed upon in the contract with the STATE.

- b. If reimbursement-based, is it advisable for applicants to seek third-party cash flow support?

Response: The Offeror can determine how to approach the project and the cash flow support.

- c. What will be the invoicing and payment schedule once the project commences, and what documentation is required before the first payment can be processed?

Response: The RFP outlines that monthly reports are to be submitted within fifteen (15) days following the end of each month (RFP Section 3.1.12.2.1). It is likely that invoicing will follow a similar schedule. Documentation such as purchasing reports, participant information, and details of the transactions (e.g., vendor, farmer, and product information) will be required before payments are processed (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.12.1).

3. Application Requirements for Contracts and Partnerships:

- a. What specific details should be included in the application regarding the intermediary or sponsor's preparation of contracts or sub awards with food hubs or partners?

Response: The Offeror should include a clear outline of the contractual arrangements, roles, and responsibilities of each partner or subcontractor, as well as a description of their capabilities to meet the demands of the project (RFP Section 4.9 Subcontractors). This ensures transparency and allows the STATE to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.

- b. Should applicants submit Letters of Commitment from potential partners when submitting their applications?

Response: The Offeror can determine how to approach demonstrating partnerships.

4. Application and Budget Templates:

- a. Are there standardized templates provided for the application and budget, or should applicants create their own formats?

Response: The RFP does not specify the provision of standardized templates. Therefore, applicants should prepare their own formats that align with the requirements laid out in the RFP, ensuring all necessary details are covered as outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of the RFP.

5. Distribution Schedule Clarifications:

- a. Are the specific December 2024 distribution dates mentioned in the RFP mandatory, or can applicants propose alternative schedules for both 2024 and 2025?

Response: The December 2024 dates listed in the RFP are the preferred distribution dates, but they are not mandatory. Offerors can propose alternative schedules for 2024 and 2025, as long as these schedules are in alignment with the program's goals and ensure timely distribution (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.1.2). Any proposed changes should demonstrate how they would meet the program's objectives.

- b. Is the expectation that all food boxes will be distributed in December 2024, or can the distribution extend into 2025?

Response: While the target is to distribute all food boxes by December 2024, flexibility exists, the RFP allows for additional distribution dates depending on available funding, meaning the distribution could extend into 2025 if necessary (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.1.3).

- c. Would the STATE allow flexibility in distribution dates, such as spreading distribution over a Monday to Saturday schedule during the prescribed four-week period?

Response: The STATE encourages Offerors to optimize efficiency. Spreading distribution over a Monday to Saturday schedule may be acceptable as long as it aligns with the four-week period mentioned in the RFP (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.3). Proposals should demonstrate how this flexibility supports operational efficiency and minimizes disruptions to communities.

6. Distribution Locations and Requirements:

- a. Are distributions required to occur at each location listed in the RFP, or can applicants propose alternative locations based on logistical constraints?

Response: Distributions are expected to take place at the locations listed in the RFP to ensure geographical coverage of underserved communities (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.2). However, Offerors may propose alternative locations if there are significant logistical constraints. Proposals should include justifications for any changes.

- b. Are distributions required to take place on Hawaii State Department of Education properties, or can other venues be used?

Response: The RFP does not mandate that distributions occur specifically on Hawaii State Department of Education properties, allowing flexibility in choosing venues that can serve as effective distribution points provided they meet accessibility and safety requirements (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.6.1).

7. Geographical and Community Coverage:

- a. What criteria should be used to allocate the food boxes across the forty-five (45) listed communities? Should factors like student enrollment numbers or food insecurity rates be considered?

Response: The STATE has identified the listed communities as underserved, ensuring that the focus of the program aligns with the goal of providing equitable access to these areas (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.3.1). Offerors should present a strategy that balances community needs with logistical considerations to achieve optimal distribution.

- b. Is there a minimum distribution requirement per county?

Response: There is no explicit minimum distribution requirement per county, but the geographical coverage must ensure that underserved communities across all islands receive equitable access (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.2.1). The registration system will allow the intermediary organization to assess demand in real-time and adjust the number of food boxes prepared for each distribution point. By using registration data, the intermediary organization will ensure that the needs of these identified underserved communities are met, while also maintaining flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.2).

- c. Are there any geographic restrictions on where participants may pick up their boxes, or can participants choose any distribution site regardless of their residence?

Response: There are no stated geographic restrictions on where participants may pick up their boxes. Participants may be allowed to choose the most convenient distribution site, regardless of residence, as long as logistics and demand are managed appropriately (please refer to Scope of

Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.3).

- d. What documentation is required to verify that distributions have taken place at specified locations?

Response: Documentation of distribution should include registration records and tracking of box deliveries at each site (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.9.1).

8. Distribution of Boxes Among Communities:

- a. Is there a requirement for an equal distribution of boxes across all listed communities?

Response: The RFP does not require an equal distribution of boxes across all listed communities. Instead, allocations should be based on factors such as population size, community need, and logistical feasibility (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.3.1). The registration system will allow the intermediary organization to assess demand in real-time and adjust the number of food boxes prepared for each distribution point. By using registration data, the intermediary organization will ensure that the needs of these identified underserved communities are met, while also maintaining flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.2).

- b. Can certain communities receive more boxes than others?

Response: Certain communities may receive more boxes than others if justified by these factors (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.3.1). Offerors should ensure their allocation strategy reflects this flexibility while maintaining equitable access. The registration system will allow the intermediary organization to assess demand in real-time and adjust the number of food boxes prepared for each distribution point. By using registration data, the intermediary organization will ensure that the needs of these identified underserved communities are met, while also maintaining flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.2).

- c. What factors should be considered in determining the distribution allocation (e.g., population size, food insecurity levels, and logistical considerations)?

Response: Logistical considerations, such as access to transportation and storage capacity, should also play a key role in determining distribution allocations (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.3.1). The registration system will allow the intermediary organization to assess demand in real-time and adjust the number of food boxes prepared for each distribution point. By using registration data, the intermediary organization will ensure that the needs of these identified underserved communities are met, while also maintaining flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.2).

9. Household Distribution Guidelines:

- a. If a box is intended for two individuals, is it permissible for a single individual to receive a box, or for a household of four to receive two boxes?

Response: The distribution guidelines are flexible. If a box is intended for two individuals, the Offeror may distribute it to a single individual or allocate two boxes to a household of four, provided that the overall distribution goals are met (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.3.1.1).

- b. Are the same families required to receive boxes at each distribution, or can different families be served over time?

Response: Different families can be served over time, allowing for flexibility in the distribution process and ensuring broader community reach. Families do not have to receive boxes at every distribution (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.4).

- c. Are there any guidelines for managing leftover boxes to avoid waste, such as distributing more boxes to needy households?

Response: Guidelines for managing leftover boxes include either distributing more boxes to needy households or re-registering walk-up families for future distributions, thus minimizing waste (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.4). The registration system will allow the intermediary organization to assess demand in real-time and adjust the number of food boxes prepared for each distribution point. By using registration data, the intermediary organization will ensure that the needs of these identified underserved communities are met, while also maintaining flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.2).

10. Locally Sourced Food Definitions:

- a. How is "locally sourced food" defined? Does this include all components of the box (e.g., produce, protein, dairy), or does it refer to products sold by local vendors?

Response: "Locally sourced food" is defined in the RFP as fresh produce sourced from local farmers, ranchers, and food businesses, particularly those that are socially disadvantaged (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.1). This definition applies to all components of the food box, including produce, protein, and dairy.

- b. What flexibility exists if supply chain challenges arise with sourcing locally?

Response: Flexibility is allowed if supply chain challenges arise. In alignment with the USDA LFPA guidelines, the STATE seeks to source food locally whenever possible, but allowances can be made to adapt based on availability to ensure consistency in food distribution (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.1.1.1).

11. Sourcing Flexibility for Dairy, Proteins, and Plant-Based Options:

- a. Is there a requirement for dairy products to be included in the boxes? If locally sourced dairy is not available, are substitutions like eggs allowed?

Response: There is no strict requirement that dairy must be included, but the food boxes should strive to meet the intended balance of approximately 0.5 pounds of dairy (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.1). Substitutions like eggs are acceptable if local dairy is unavailable, provided the overall nutritional goal is met.

- b. Can plant-based proteins be included as a substitute for other types of protein?

Response: Plant-based proteins can be included as a substitute for traditional protein sources to accommodate dietary preferences or shortages (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.1).

- c. What are the requirements regarding the type of protein provided, and whether it should be fresh or frozen, considering temperature control challenges?

Response: Flexibility is permitted in sourcing proteins, whether fresh or frozen, as long as temperature control is managed according to Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) Title 11 Chapter 50 (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.8.1).

12. Flexibility in Box Contents and Budget Allocation:

- a. Is there flexibility to adjust the protein content in the boxes to better align with the suggested budget and local product availability?

Response: Yes, there is flexibility to adjust protein content in response to budget constraints or local product availability, as long as the nutritional value of the boxes is maintained (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.1). Substitutions or adjustments should align with the overall food cost

allocation requirements (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.2.3).

- b. Can the amount of fruits and vegetables be increased to compensate for changes in protein content?

Response: Increasing the proportion of fruits and vegetables to compensate for changes in protein content is permissible, provided that the overall weight of the box and nutritional balance are maintained (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.1).

- c. Is there any flexibility in the budget allocation between food costs and operational costs to address logistical or other challenges?

Response: Flexibility in budget allocation is limited to the 70 percent food cost and 30 percent operational cost rule. While operational costs should not exceed 30 percent, adjusting food types within the box is allowed as long as this ratio is respected (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.2.2).

13. Shelf-Stable Dairy Options:

- a. Can shelf-stable milk from local vendors be included as a viable alternative to fresh milk to avoid temperature control issues?

Response: Yes, shelf-stable milk from local vendors is a viable alternative to fresh milk, especially when it helps resolve temperature control challenges (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.1).

14. Vendor and Purchase Documentation Requirements:

- a. Is a bidding process required for the intermediary organization to select vendors, and are vendor invoices required for submission to the STATE?

Response: A bidding process is not explicitly required for the intermediary organization selecting vendors, but documentation to demonstrate that products are sourced from disadvantaged local farmers or producers is necessary (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.12.1).

- b. Is there an official Purchasing Report format prescribed by the STATE, and what documentation is required to prove that a product is locally sourced?

Response: The STATE does not prescribe a specific Purchasing Report format, but monthly reports should include details such as vendor name, location, product description, and value of purchases (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.12.1.6).

- c. What level of detail is required for reporting produce purchases by the food hubs to the intermediary? Is itemized transaction recording necessary, or are aggregate totals sufficient?

Response: Both itemized transactions and aggregate totals can be reported, but itemized details may be needed for compliance monitoring (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.12.1.5).

15. Beneficiary and/or Participant Eligibility:

- a. What are the specific eligibility criteria for participants in this program? Will they be similar to the criteria used for Kaukau 4 Keiki and/or Non-Congregate Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), or will there be new guidelines?

Response: The eligibility criteria for participants in underserved communities and those most in need (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.3).

- b. Are there additional eligibility requirements beyond serving "underserved communities" and "those most in need"?

Response: Beyond serving underserved communities, eligibility is guided by the USDA LFPA's focus on those facing food insecurity or with limited access to nutritious food (please refer to RFP Section 2.1, Purpose and Introduction).

16. Verification and Registration Requirements:

- a. What are the requirements for the verification process focusing on underserved communities and those most in need?

Response: The verification process will emphasize reaching underserved communities. Participants must provide essential information during registration, and attendance at distributions will be logged for reporting purposes (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.3).

- b. What reporting is required to document participant registration and distribution attendance?

Response: Registration and distribution reports should include detailed information on participant demographics and attendance to ensure compliance and transparency (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.4.4).

17. Maximum Funding Amount:

- a. What is the maximum funding amount available for this opportunity?

Response: The maximum funding available will be determined based on the allocation provided by the USDA LFPA Cooperative Agreement, with budget allocation per food box being a key consideration (please refer to Scope of Work, RFP Section 3.1.11.2.3). Specific funding amounts are not detailed in the RFP and will depend on the STATE's available funds for the project, which is about 58,500 food boxes at an estimated cost of fifty-five dollars (\$55.00) per box.