



PURCHASING DIVISION

TO: All Proposers

DATE: April 7, 2025

ADDENDUM NO. 1

Durham County Food System Assessment & Strategic Plan (RFP No. 25-041)

This ADDENDUM No. 1 forms part of Durham County's Request for Proposals (RFP No. 25-041 –Durham County Food System Assessment & Strategic Plan). All other requirements of the original Scope of Services remain in effect in their respective order.

Receipt of this Addendum must be acknowledged on the Addendum Acknowledgement Form included in the original Proposal document.

1. **The due date for receiving proposals** was April 15th, 2025 but **has been extended until April 29th, 2025 at 2:00 P. M., Eastern Time.**
2. The last day for receiving questions regarding this project was April 1st, 2025 at 3:00 P.M., Eastern Time.

Questions received along with the responses provided by the Project Manager and clarifications regarding the project are attached.

Should you have any questions regarding this Addendum, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Rishanda Fowler

Rishanda Fowler
Procurement Specialist
919-560-0041

Durham County Food System Assessment & Strategic Plan

RFP 25-041

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Question 1: Please see our question below for RFP No. 25-041, Section 7.0 (Work Requirements). In reference to the Assessment and Community Engagement components, is there a target or minimum number of stakeholders you hope to see engaged through interviews, focus groups, or other methods?

Response 1: There is no specific target or minimum number of stakeholders. However, it is crucial to include residents and stakeholders representing a range of backgrounds, geographic areas, and lived experiences throughout Durham. This ensures the assessment captures a broad array of voices and perspectives, reflecting the entire community.

Question 2: Is there a budget range or not-to-exceed cost that you can provide as a guide?

Response 2: Proposers are invited to give us “their best price” and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 3: When the plan is complete, what position, role or agency will be charged with overseeing implementation?

Response 3: While multiple County departments may have roles in the implementation, the County Food Security Coordinator (based at Durham Cooperative Extension) will lead the project management efforts for the strategic plan.

Question 4: Does the client have specific recommendations of who should participate in the Steering Committee and/or relationships to leverage to establish that committee? Do you have expectations about the size of the Steering Committee?

Response 4: The contractor and County will work together to determine a Steering Committee structure and size that includes a broad and diverse representation of Durham’s communities. The County will assist the contractor in identifying existing groups, stakeholders, and community leaders that can contribute to this process.

Question 5: Is there a recommended stipend range for Steering Committee members to cover costs of participation?

Response 5: There is not a recommended range, however it is important that community members are compensated appropriately and fairly for their efforts and time. If some Steering Committee members are being paid by their workplace for their time, they may not require additional compensation.

Question 6: In your view, what types of meetings and events are critical to hold in person, and what types may be successfully conducted remotely?

Response 6: It's important to offer a variety of engagement opportunities to be most accessible to the community and inclusive of many different voices. For example, a previous community engagement campaign in Durham was successful by incorporating a mix of online surveys, in-person listening sessions, and virtual/phone interviews. Because community engagement is not one size fits all, the contractor and steering committee will determine the most impactful methods to meet the needs and goals of this project.

Question 7: Although the RFP asks for both a food system assessment and a strategic plan, the RFP has much more focus on the strategic plan component. Can you provide more detail on your expectations around the assessment portion of this work?

Response 7: It's expected that the assessment will incorporate both existing and new research, including quantitative and qualitative data. As outlined in the RFP, community engagement efforts are a key component of the food system assessment. The research design must be developed collaboratively with the Steering Committee and structured in a way that does not overburden community members.

Question 8: The RFP suggests three pillars/goals for the final plan (bottom of p18: equitable access, equitable economic opportunities, and health of environment and animal welfare). Are these goals to be weighted equally, or is the food access goal primary?

Response 8:

The three pillars referred to in the RFP are –

- 1) Ensure equitable access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food
- 2) Provide equitable economic opportunities for communities and people in the food value chain to flourish and live with dignity
- 3) Regenerate and sustain the health of the environment and animal welfare

All three pillars are considered essential components of an equitable and sustainable food system and must be integrated into the strategic plan's final recommendations. However, the County has not established a predetermined weight for these goals. It will be the contractor's responsibility to analyze the findings from the assessment research, including community engagement efforts, to determine how these pillars can be most effectively represented in the recommendations.

Question 9: The project timeline allows a quite extended period of time before the draft project plan (4 months), final project plan (6 months), and steering committee development (6 months) are due. Can you explain why this timing is so extensive?

Response 9: The timeline was designed to allow sufficient time for developing a Steering Committee and research plan that align with the project goals, ensuring adequate representation from Durham's various communities. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders can be time intensive. Once the project has begun, adjustments to the timeline may be considered as needed to support the project's success.

Question 10: Do you imagine that all elements of the strategic plan will come from stakeholder engagement, or would you expect the consultant to research and incorporate known strategies of innovation/best practices from other geographies or communities?

Response 10: As noted in the RFP, it is important to include previous research and recommendations from the local, regional and state level. Additionally, research insights on innovation and best practices from other communities are welcome as they support Durham's food system

Question 11: What is the anticipated size of the contract for this opportunity?

- We recognize that our firm submits a total proposed cost based on the entire project in the proposal form "Attachment A," but it does not discuss the anticipated size or amount.
- Under the "Award of Contract" section, the first paragraph discusses the County's right to award a single contractor or multiple contractors best suited to perform the proposed services and that price will be considered but not the sole determining factor. We recognize that after proposals are ranked and the most qualified firms are determined, further negotiations or presentations to further assist in the clarity of the project may occur.

Response 11: Proposers are invited to give us "their best price" and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 12: We understand that we will need to set aside meeting space for project activities and meetings. Does this County have available space that we can leverage for small and large groups? And, if we use County space, are we restricted on catering options to County-sourced vendors?

Response 12: The County can support the contractor in identifying potential meeting space in County owned buildings. There are a variety of meeting spaces, however availability cannot be guaranteed. This project team is unaware of any County policies that require using County approved vendors for catering.

Question 13: We understand that part of this opportunity is to identify pathways for Durham County government and affiliated partners to support new and existing initiatives, according to the section titled "Purpose" under the "Scope of Services" section. Do affiliated partners include county-sourced vendors?

Response 13: Partners may include, but are not limited to, County-sourced vendors.

Question 14: If the proposing firm is 100% minority and women owned, is it acceptable to enter a value of 100% on Affidavit D on page 30 where it asks "I will expend a minimum of _____% of the total dollar amount of the contract with minority businesses enterprises."

Response 14: Affidavit D is unnecessary during this time unless you have been deemed the apparent, lowest responsible, responsive bidder. The County will contact the bidder, and they will have 72 hours to complete this form.

Question 15: We recognized under the "MWBE Requirements" section of the RFP that proposals are required to make a good faith effort to include Minority and Women Business Enterprises. We also understand that MWBE is a business that is 51% owned and controlled by minority group members or women. As 100% minority and women owned business, does this satisfy the percentage needed in the sentence above?

Response 15: To qualify as a MWBE in Durham County, a company must be certified by the State of North Carolina HUB Office.

Question 16: Referencing Section 7.0, Co-creation and Collaboration heading, paragraph 2 in RFP No. 25-041. Our approach to research aligns well with the requirement of having a Steering Committee. Does the County already have in mind how this committee would differ from the County/City Food Security Team? Organizations such as Tall Grass Food Box, Farmer Foodshare, Happy Dirt, Carolina Farm Stewardship, Root Causes at Duke, Candor, Durham Fridges, and local food banks among others listed are plausible stakeholders. However, if the County already has an action-oriented group in mind, we would not want to reinvent the wheel and create our own.

Response 16: The purpose of the Steering Committee is to help guide the assessment and planning process. The Steering Committee would be comprised of stakeholders who have the appropriate time and opportunity to participate for the duration of the project. The Steering Committee can be a new group that the contractor develops or a group that is already formed around food system issues, if the existing group meets the unique goals and objectives of this project.

Question 17: Referencing Section 6.0, Agriculture and Food Security heading, Paragraph 2 in RFP No. 25-041. How far along is the Farm Campus feasibility study and will the selected consultant have access to that data, regardless if it is in draft form? Understanding the findings related to education, land, and other resources would be critical to the assessment and strategic plan.

Response 17: The selected consultant will have access to the report(s) and data from the Farm Campus Feasibility Study.

Question 18: Referencing Section 7.0, Assessment and Community Engagement heading, paragraph 1 in RFP No. 25-041. We work primarily with disenfranchised and minority groups and continue to face discrepancies between US Census data and lived-realities. Does the County and other representatives feel comfortable with the accuracy of the latest Ag Census?

Response 18: The latest Ag Census likely undercounts producers in our County based on a variety of factors.

Question 19: Referencing Section 7.0, Co-creation and Collaboration heading, paragraph 2 in RFP No. 25-041. In the context where strategic plans often encompass good and inclusive visioning and planning processes that set out a great forward direction, but implementation follow-up is often challenging, how does the County/City Food Security Team see this engagement process and document increasing the ability to implement, in the best-case scenario? That perspective will be helpful in considering the crafting of the strategic plan.

Response 19: The strategic plan will be used to inform and guide food system priorities, actions and investments for the County. Throughout the visioning process, transparency with community members about the purpose and limitations will be essential. While this plan provides a strategic roadmap, it does not ensure that the County will have the necessary resources for implementation within a specific timeframe. Achieving these goals may require additional funding and support through partnerships or other external sources.

Question 20: Referencing Section 7.0, Develop a Durham County Food System Strategic Plan heading, paragraph 1 in RFP No. 25-041. Relatedly, how does the County see this plan as improving on the existing guideposts set out in other plans listed in the solicitation, such that it unlocks new power and successful actions in the community?

Response 20: The County sees this plan as an important tool to inform and guide food system priorities, actions and investments for the County. Existing local and state research will provide valuable insights into how Durham can strengthen and contribute to both the local and regional food system. The strategic plan's newly developed recommendations will serve to identify and secure additional resources to advance this work. It will also function as both a guidepost for future efforts and an accountability mechanism to track and report progress to the community.

Question 21: Referencing Section 6.0, Agriculture and Food Security heading, paragraph 1 in RFP No. 25-041. Durham County is an urban county that continues to grow, with fast appreciating land values as measured in the latest 2025 tax assessment, and continuing development pressures. The Herald-Sun/ News & Observer of which this applicant is a subscriber, reported that values increased 68% in the five year period. How does the County and County/City Food Security Team see the balance of interests in land uses given this residential and commercial demand? The Solicitation notes a loss of farmland, so for example, how is the need for affordable and attainable housing viewed as a competing interest?

Response 21: This can be explored during the assessment process. We do not view affordable housing and farmland preservation as competing interests. These are both viewed as important to our community.

Question 22: Can the County share an anticipated or target budget range for this scope of work to ensure our proposed approach and community engagement plan are appropriately scaled and aligned with available resources?

Response 22: Proposers are invited to give us "their best price" and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 23: Pg17 - Does the County have any expectations or guidelines regarding the scale of community engagement—for example, a minimum number of engagement events, total participants, or specific sample sizes that would be considered representative of Durham’s diverse population? Additionally, are there particular geographic areas, demographic groups, or community partners the County expects us to prioritize in outreach efforts?

Response 23: There is no specific target sample size or minimum number of events or participants. However, it is crucial to include residents and stakeholders representing a range of backgrounds, geographic areas, and lived experiences throughout Durham. Also, there are not specific priority areas/groups for outreach efforts, though it is important to be inclusive of communities that may be underrepresented in other community engagement efforts. The Steering Committee will help the Contractor design the community engagement process to ensure that it meets project goals.

Question 24: Pg 18 - In developing the strategic plan, how does the County define the most critical stakeholder group(s) to engage—particularly across the spectrum of food system actors like producers, processors, distributors, and retailers? Should we prioritize engagement with agricultural practitioners and farmers, or is the County more focused on addressing gaps in wholesale, distribution, and food business infrastructure?

Response 24: Every part of the food system should be addressed in the strategic plan. This will require engagement with stakeholders that work in all parts of the food system.

Question 25: Given our team’s understanding of the importance of real estate, site control opportunities and geographic linkages, are there any particular real estate districts or areas in Durham that we should understand as priorities (other than Farm Campus) that we should include as part of our proposal investigation?

Response 25: There are no specific priority areas at this time.

Question 26: What is the available budget for this project?

Response 26: Proposers are invited to give us “their best price” and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 27: Is there a cost range associated with this proposal? (Durham County Food System Assessment & Strategic Plan RFP No. 25-041)

Response 27: Proposers are invited to give us “their best price” and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 28: Does the bidder need to be based in North Carolina?

Response 28: No. Although, Preference will be given to organizations that have experience working in Durham County and/or the North Carolina Piedmont Region.

Question 29: Section 7.0 – Co-creation and Collaboration

Will the County help with recruiting members for the Steering Committee, or is that expected to be fully handled by the contractor?

Response 29: The County will assist in identifying members of the Steering Committee and may be able to help with recruitment as needed.

Question 30: Section 7.0 – Community Engagement

Are there any preferred platforms or tools for virtual engagement, translation, or survey distribution that the County recommends or has used before?

Response 30: The County is happy to share recommended platforms as the selected contractor begins this project. We are also open to using new tools that would be most effective for this work.

Question 31: Section 7.0 – Assessment and Community Engagement

Will Durham County provide access to any existing food system, GIS, or food insecurity data? Or should we plan to gather secondary data independently?

Response 31: Durham County will provide any data that we have available and it also may be necessary for the vendor to seek additional data as needed.

Question 32: Section 8.0 – Timeline

Is there a preferred format for the project timeline in the proposal (e.g., chart, table, narrative)? And is there a page limit for that section?

Response 32: There is not a preferred format for the project timeline. There is not a page limit for a particular section. Please reference the required number of pages overall stated in the RFP.

Question 33: Section 9.0 – Proposal Submission Requirements

Is there any guidance on how hard copy proposals should be bound? (e.g., spiral bound vs. binder clip)

Response 33: No. The binding is based on the preference of the bidder. It is helpful if the binding makes it easy to review.

Question 34: MWBE Forms – Tab 1

If we plan to complete all work using our own workforce, can you confirm that submitting Affidavits A and B is sufficient, and that Affidavit D would only be needed later if selected?

Response 34: Affidavits A, B, and C must be submitted as part of a completed proposal. If the bidder intends to use their own workforce, they should fill out the form with 0%.

Question 35: Budget

Is there a target or anticipated budget range the County is working with for this contract?

Response 35: Proposers are invited to give us “their best price” and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

Question 36: Page 12, Section 1, point f of the RFP states that proposals will be evaluated based on "References from at least two (2) similar clients." Is this a request for contact information for two references or full letters of reference? Also, in which proposal tab should we include these references?

Response 36: The contact information for reference is acceptable. We might require additional information at a later date. This information can be added to Tab 6 (Qualification and Experience)

Question 37: Is there a suggested or preferred budget or budget range for the proposal?

Response 37: Proposers are invited to give us “their best price” and if negotiations are needed, then we can visit that at that time.

END OF ADDENDUM NO. 1