

**Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**  
**Request for Proposals**  
**Greater Philadelphia Food System Implementation Grants**

Release Date: Friday, April 9, 2010

Proposals Due: Friday, May 21, 2010

Optional Pre-Proposal Meeting: Monday, April 19, 2010

## **I. Background**

Created in 1965, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is an interstate, intercounty and intercity agency that provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning to shape a vision for the future growth of the Delaware Valley region. The region includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties, as well as the City of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey.

Shaping the way we live, DVRPC builds consensus on a range of issues that include improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment and enhancing the economy. Intersecting all of these is our regional food system—its production, distribution, processing and consumption. Recognizing the opportunity presented by a rich agricultural community, a diverse distribution and transportation network, and nationally recognized nonprofit and for-profit food system stakeholders, DVRPC was asked by the William Penn Foundation to manage a multi-phase program designed to further strengthen the regional food system.

The Local Food Economy Financial and Technical Assistance Program has already made leadership, communications, and education grants. A goal of this program is to strengthen the regional food system by increasing collaboration among organizations, across public and private sectors and developing more market-place opportunities. Additionally, in early 2010, DVRPC published the *Greater Philadelphia Food System Study*, a comprehensive study that looks at the complicated regional food system that feeds Greater Philadelphia. The study addresses a number of challenges and opportunities facing the food system, including: increased consumer interest in local food, land constraints and development pressures, the prevalence of both malnutrition and obesity, food distribution, and economic development.

The food system study has been followed up by a stakeholder-driven planning process, which officially commenced in July 2009. Included in this process have been trucking experts, farmland preservation coordinators, healthy food advocates, entrepreneurs, government representatives and others. They have identified their core values, a collective vision for a more sustainable food system, and have developed over 100 recommendations to achieve the goals of a forthcoming Food System Plan. This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks to implement several key recommendations from this process. Please see [www.dvrpc.org/food](http://www.dvrpc.org/food) for more information regarding DVRPC's food system planning efforts.

## II. Request for Proposals

The Greater Philadelphia Food System Implementation Grant program, made possible with generous funding from the William Penn Foundation and administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, seeks to support innovative approaches that advance the overarching goals of the Food System Plan:

- Farming is a recognized, respected, and profitable occupation and both current and new farmers have access to affordable land and diverse markets.
- Food and farm workers everywhere have decent and fair working conditions and earn a living wage.
- Ecological resources are sustained, replenished and regenerated.
- People have access to, can afford to buy, and know how to cook healthy food that is culturally appropriate, socially nourishing and produced in ways that respect the environment and the producers.
- Diversity is recognized and valued as exhibited by the variety of crops grown, different farming practices, successful business models, and increased consumer choices.
- Farmland is treasured, preserved and available in a variety of sizes and places.
- Stakeholders maintain open communication and personal connections and forge collaborative partnerships.
- Food and farming are cornerstones of a healthy regional economy, with adequate resources and support for business development and entrepreneurship.
- All of these goals can be met while being adaptable over time to changes in land, energy and climate.

In consultation with its Stakeholder and Advisory committees, DVRPC has identified preferred strategies to create a more sustainable and resilient food system. These strategies are the focus of the Food System Implementation Grant opportunity. The major goal of this initiative is to provide the initial funding for sustainable efforts that create supportive government policies, expand transformational programs, and test new solutions or innovations.

## III. Eligible Activities

The Greater Philadelphia Food System Implementation Grant will support requests that:

1. Identify and address specific policy reforms required to reach at least one of the overarching goals of the food system plan.
2. Take advantage of recent policy reforms to bring to scale programs that have proven to be transformational.
3. Demonstrate new approaches that significantly advance one of the goals of the food system plan.

DVRPC's Food System Stakeholder Committee has identified the following strategies as high priorities and potentially game-changing. Only proposals that fit into these categories will be considered.

- **Business development:** Create or expand new or specialized programs, such as training programs or revolving loan and micro-loan funds, which reduce the barriers of entry for new food entrepreneurs or new, beginning, and minority farmers.

- **Farmland Preservation:** Explore different ways to maintain affordable land for farmers, such as addressing the retirement needs of farmers, and/or identify opportunities to transition preserved land into food production, such as creating investment vehicles for long-term agricultural production.
- **Public Awareness and Healthy Food:** Use new technology and/or unconventional community-based communication outlets to: a) increase funding for and usage of food assistance programs, or b) educate people about the connection between food and health, such as developing a marketing mechanism to educate people about preparing and eating healthy, delicious, and culturally-desirable food.
- **Natural Resource Protection:** Develop or expand technical assistance programs or market-based solutions that enable farmers to protect natural resources such as groundwater and surface water quality from agricultural impacts.
- **School System Solutions:** In school districts with committed leadership for implementation, a) build farm to school programs, b) create school-based educational programs that integrate curriculum on gardening, nutrition, and/or culinary careers, or c) introduce or expand more healthy food options to transform school lunches. Such programs could include training for staff or facility improvements.

***Applicants should demonstrate an existing commitment to and proficiency in any program area for which funds are being requested.*** Clear outcomes should be identified for this work. Those proposals for which the “tipping point” can be reached will be most successful. The maximum grant request is \$150,000. All project tasks must be completed no later than 12/31/2011, with no extensions.

#### **IV. Geographic Areas of Eligibility**

Eligible projects must benefit Greater Philadelphia’s population, as defined by DVRPC’s 9-county service area. However, proposals may originate from an organization located just outside of the 9-county region, but within a 100-mile radius from Center City Philadelphia.

#### **V. Who May Apply?**

Food System grants are intended to support the efforts of many different types of organizations, including community-based organizations, statewide or national advocacy groups, academic institutions, and private foundations. If two or more organizations are submitting a joint proposal, a lead organization must be indicated in the proposal. Organizations that have officially participated in DVRPC’s Food System Stakeholder Committee are strongly encouraged to apply. Lead applicants may submit only one proposal.

#### **VI. Available Funds**

A total of \$500,000 is available for Greater Philadelphia Food System Implementation Grants. Grant requests may not exceed \$150,000. The most competitive grant proposals will fall below the maximum and leverage other sources of funding.

## VII. Selection Committee

A selection committee composed of regional stakeholders, food system experts, and philanthropic professionals will review the submissions pursuant to this request for proposals (RFP), and may invite selected respondents for follow-up interviews. The final selection of grants will be approved by the DVRPC Board.

## VIII. Schedule

1. All submissions pursuant to this RFP must be submitted electronically to DVRPC no later than **5:00 PM on May 21, 2010**. All responses must be submitted via email to Alison Hastings at [ahastings@dvrpc.org](mailto:ahastings@dvrpc.org). Responses should be in standard PC-compatible text file formats (DOC, TXT, RTF, WPD) or as a PDF (preferred). Proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered.
2. An optional pre-proposal meeting will be hosted at DVRPC's offices on **Monday, April 19, 2010** at 2:00 PM. Please contact Alison Hastings, [ahastings@dvrpc.org](mailto:ahastings@dvrpc.org) or 215-238-2929, if you or a representative of your organization plans to attend. Directions to DVRPC's offices can be viewed here: <http://www.dvrpc.org/directions/>.
3. All respondents will be notified by Friday, July 23, 2010, as to the disposition of their requests for funding.
4. Applicants selected to receive a grant will enter into a contract with DVRPC. Quarterly progress and financial reports must be submitted to DVRPC during the term of the contract.

## IX. Selection Criteria

The Selection committee will award grants based on the quality of the proposal, the fit of the proposed project with the food system plan's goals, and the likelihood that the proposed work can be carried out effectively. DVRPC reserves the right to reject all proposals. Specific criteria to be used in judging proposals include:

- Degree to which proposed activity relates to DVRPC's nine food system plan goals.
- Degree to which proposed activity fits within selected strategies (see Section III).
- Degree to which proposed activity has regional or national impact.
- Ability to leverage other funding.
- Demonstrated relationship of proposed project to applicant's mission.
- Experience and organizational capacity of applicant.
- Ability to forge lasting partnerships with collaborators and non-traditional stakeholders.
- Degree of creativity and innovation in proposal.
- Demonstrated ability to continue the project after the grant term is completed.
- Special consideration will be given to proposed projects that can reach a tipping point in a particular food system sector or specific issue.

## **X. Response Requirements**

Responses to this RFP should include a narrative proposal limited to six (6) pages that includes the following information:

1. A brief history of the organization that includes its mission, current programs, impact or effectiveness, and information on key personnel
2. The purpose and description of the proposed request:
  - The proposed project service area and/or the extent of the geographic area served.
  - How the proposed activity meets one or more of DVRPC's stated food system goals.
  - How the proposed activity fits within DVRPC's eligible activities. (See Section III.)
  - How you will define success and how you will measure the impact of this effort.
  - Partners or colleagues that will be key to your success and note if they are new partnerships.
  - Organizational capacity.
3. Description of how work will be sustained beyond grant term.
4. Description of how you will share the findings from this proposed activity.
5. A current organizational budget and a projected grant budget and timeline, including all revenue sources (committed, pending or proposed).

**Note:** Responses should not include any additional pages. If a proposal involves several organizations collaborating, a lead organization must be identified and supporting organizations must supply letters of commitment. Letters of commitment are not counted against the six (6) page limit. Any projects that rely on partners for success must demonstrate that those partners have been contacted; however, no other letters of support will be accepted.

## **XI. Grant Restrictions**

Greater Philadelphia Food System Implementation Grants may not be used for general operating costs, acquisition of land or buildings, litigation, lobbying, or scholarships.

## **XII. Contract Requirements**

If selected, grant funds will be disbursed based on a project work plan and the receipt of interim reports and invoices. If selected, the applicant will be subject to the terms of a grant contract with DVRPC. The applicant and any consultant utilized will be required to provide detailed budget information during the contracting process. Receipt of funding is contingent upon selection and the negotiation of an acceptable final scope and budget.

## **XIII. Contact**

Please direct questions or concerns to Alison Hastings, at [ahastings@dvrpc.org](mailto:ahastings@dvrpc.org) or 215-238-2929.