



Our Mission

To create a community-owned store that supports local growers and vendors and that contributes to the economic vitality of the Northeast Kingdom.

Our Vision

We are a member-owned store in the St. Johnsbury area that supports local growers and sells healthy food. We are a boost to the local economy and a contributor to a vibrant community.

October 11, 2024

Request for Proposal: CAPITAL RAISE SERVICES

The Town of St. Johnsbury, on behalf of Caledonia Food Cooperative ("the Co-op" or "CFC"), seeks to engage a person, persons, or organization **to provide capital raising and marketing technical assistance** for CFC's upcoming project development capital campaign. Services are needed beginning immediately; the public capital campaign is expected to take place from March – August, 2025.

Services needed include technical assistance as appropriate for executing a \$1 – 2MM capital campaign, inclusive of plan development to support a 3 to 6-month silent phase and a 2 to 3-month public campaign. The services proposed in response to this RFP should reflect a data-driven approach to shaping a person-to-person capital raising campaign that is inclusive of marketing and membership development in support of fundraising goals. More than one proposal may be considered under this RFP if proposed scopes and services are complementary.

BACKGROUND

Caledonia Food Co-op began as a group of local individuals who saw a need for a community-owned, full-service natural/conventional food store. They formed CFC's Board in 2018. CFC obtained grants to fund market studies, consultant preparation of a pro forma, and real estate and other consultants. The Board investigated several sites but none proved appropriate.

In February/March 2023, Walgreens closed their store at 502 Railroad St., St. Johnsbury, an ideal site for the new Co-op. That summer, the Town of St. Johnsbury announced funding availability for economic revitalization projects. The Board mobilized to apply for the funding and make an offer on the building.

CFC went to its membership, then around 675 members (now 1300+), and to the community for help to purchase the building. The response was overwhelming, including well over \$1 million in local contributions and investments. That, together with bridge loans from Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) and Vermont and New Hampshire Community Loan Funds, enabled CFC to complete purchase of the building on April 10, 2024.

CFC is now finalizing the scope of the development plans. Building the financial stack, inclusive of fundraising through a Phase 3 Capital Campaign, will take part in 2025, with the plan to commence renovation work in fall of 2025 and opening the store in early-to-mid 2026.

QUALIFICATIONS

- experience developing and running feasibility studies and support operations for capital campaigns for cooperative groceries and similar organizations;
- demonstrated success in executing capital campaigns;
- demonstrated ability to deliver results on-time and on-budget;
- knowledge of and experience with local and regional funders and charitable organizations;

CAPTIAL CAMPAIGN SERVICES DELIVERABLES

It is anticipated that the deliverables this service provides may include, but are not necessarily limited to, one or more of the following:

- feasibility study identifying potential for local fundraising and likeliest avenues for success;
- research into prospective donors likely to support the CFC;
- training board members and volunteers to execute capital campaign;
- identification and development of marketing tools, reflective of most compelling fundraising narratives;
- identification, procurement, and implementation of software for the purpose of organizing and executing capital campaign;
- other components of a fully developed capital campaign plan as proposed in response to this RFP.

ENGAGEMENT

The Town of St. Johnsbury has received a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to support the CFC. The Town of St. Johnsbury will hire the consultant to provide this technical assistance to the CFC.

SUBMISSION

Deadline for Questions regarding RFP: October 23, 2024. Questions and answers will be publicly posted at www.caledoniafood.coop by October 24, 2024.

Submission Deadline: ~~October 28, 2024.~~ **Updated Deadline:** October 31, 2024

Submit materials by email to: Adam Norwood, Fundraising Committee Chair, adam.norwood@caledoniafood.coop

Submission Requirements: Respondents will provide a summary of experience for themselves or their organization and personnel who will be working on this contract. Please list date available to start project, expected date of completion of services, total project costs, and a description of components of the final deliverable. Please provide three references.

Scoring Criteria: Contractors will be chosen based on the following criteria: history of success supporting capital campaigns; familiarity with fundraising in Vermont and the Northeast Kingdom; cost of proposal; utility of proposed services; experience working with cooperatives.

For more information about this position, contact Board Chair Pete Schweigert, 802-881-1483, peter.schweigert@caledoniafood.coop; or Fundraising Committee member Ann Helmus, 617-512-7952, ann.helmus@caledoniafood.coop.