



Request for Qualifications: Project Lead for Equity-Based Grocery Store

About Commún

Commún builds community resilience through relationships and programs that center community voice, cultivate a sense of belonging, and realize equity. Commún was founded on, and continues to reflect, the knowledge that programs and services must be driven and directed by people who are most impacted by the issue. Commún's programs—Food Sovereignty, Community Organizing, Mental Health, and Economic Vitality—are continuously developed and led by community members who are most impacted by the challenges we are seeking to meet.

About the Project Lead for Equity-Based Grocery Store Role

In October 2023, Commún purchased a 40,000 sq ft building on the historic Loretto Heights campus in Southwest Denver. We are working to move into our new community center on the campus in 2026, and are developing and adapting our programs for the new space. In the community center, Commún will operate an equity-based grocery store, as requested and informed by our community. We currently run a weekly food share, designed and operated by over 70 multilingual community volunteers, that has been in operation since March 2020. The project lead will lead Commún and our SW Denver community in transitioning our flourishing weekly food share into a sustainable, equitable, community-led grocery store. This role will work alongside longtime volunteers, community organizers, participants of the food share, and experts both locally and nationally in the field of community-run independent grocery stores to support making our dreams for the grocery store a reality.

Timeline and Details

- Deadline for responding to RFQ: June 28
- This entire project will take place between July 2024 and July 2026
- This is a 9 month contract spanning Phase 1 of the project (July 2024-March 2025), with the possibility of additional work if both parties are amicable.

Budget

The budget for this engagement is \$18,000-\$27,000, representing 10-20 hours/wk for 9 months

Scope of Work

Overall

- Gather and synthesize expertise from community members, food share volunteers, and Commún's community organizers to inform and launch equity-based grocery store
- Hold responsibility and drive the project forward by collaborating with Commún, the development team, and community members to bring the project to fruition, culminating in the grand opening at the community center in 2026.



- Assist in fundraising efforts by representing the project to potential funders and providing financial planning, data, and updates to the Executive Director and Development Manager.
- Complete Phase 1 of Project Timeline for this contract

Full Project Timeline

Phase 1: Information Gathering & Community Voice, Completed by Q1 2025

- Develop and implement a Research Plan to conduct meetings, informational interviews, and tours of other projects and businesses that hold precedence in this work
- Work with community organizing team, current food share volunteers, and food share and delivery box recipients to carry out a community-designed vision for equity-based grocery store
- Participate in meetings with Anderson Mason Dale (AMD) Architects to ensure the design of the final store space incorporates community needs and vision
- Collaborate with Commún staff to assemble and implement a community advisory board of 6-8 people who have been longtime volunteers or contractors with Commún to advise the process and participate in problem solving and decision making.
- Develop and present draft models for pay, cooperative ownership, economic success, leadership structure, and basic store function based on research

Phase 2: Developing the Model & Design, Completed by Q4 2025

- Together with the community and experts in equitable community grocery models, develop and implement the model for food equity for the store, e.g., equity-based, income-based, pay as you can, sliding scale, free, cooperative etc., including working with community members and the advisory board to formalize the details, policies, and procedures of the model, train volunteers, contractors and staff, and put it into action.
- Create a viable business model for equity-based grocery store at community center, including:
 - Develop a staffing/volunteer plan
 - Develop operational budget, assess output for how much and what kinds of food will be required, develop a plan for ordering and inventorying food
 - Collaborate with The Lab, East Denver Food Hub, and other local distributors and producers to create a plan to increase food production and establish agreements for procurement of locally grown food over the next 3 years

Phase 3: Transition and Launch, Completed by Q1 2026

- Work with community education managers to train community members for appropriate staff roles at grocery store
 - Help assess which jobs can be filled by current volunteers and which need to be filled by new applicants
- Work with Commún staff to coordinate the hiring of all essential staff



- Work closely with the current weekly food share to transition weekly food share into stable grocery store
- Work with Commún food program to set up infrastructure, order food, and stock store
- Carry out all necessary trainings, signage, community meetings, etc to establish and put into action the recommended equity-based payment plan

Required Qualifications:

- English fluency written and oral
- 3+ years experience in community-led programming
- Demonstrated experience in project management
- Understanding and experience with business principles, including finance, marketing, operations, and customer service
- Familiarity with retail operations, inventory management, supply chain logistics, merchandising, and pricing strategies
- Knowledgeable about the local and regional Denver, CO food system; understanding and knowledge around seasonality, local Colorado food products, and regenerative growing practices
- Commitment to sourcing locally and regeneratively
- Based in the greater Denver, CO region
- Ongoing commitment to power, privilege, and oppression analysis and a posture of humility and curiosity when working with diverse communities
- High level of competency in Excel and Google suite

Preferred Qualifications

- Bilingual in English and Spanish, or another language commonly spoken in our community (Arabic, Vietnamese)
- Experience developing and running a financially stable and community-informed equity-based grocery store
- Has successfully managed an annual budget of over \$700,000
- Community organizing experience and understanding of social movements in the US
- Demonstrated skills in utilizing restorative practices for conflict management
- Demonstrated experience and high degree of competency in supply chain and inventory management software
- Experience in financial analysis, budgeting, forecasting, and financial modeling
- Understanding of the food industry, including food safety regulations, product sourcing, and perishable goods management
- Some experience with real estate development, construction timelines and budgets, and capacity to identify and solve problems that arise during the development and construction process
- Experience working with foundation and governmental grants
- Commitment to sustainable and green building practices



To respond to this RFQ, please provide the following:

- A short description (one page or less) of why your experience is a good match with the scope of work
- Resume
- Two or three references

Send your materials by June 28th to:

Laura Engelman

laura@commundenver.org

Questions? Call or email Laura at 919-357-3449