

METCALF FOUNDATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – DECEMBER 2008

Purpose of the RFP

The Metcalf Foundation has decided to commission a short series of solutions papers that will describe how Ontario can move toward a truly local, sustainable food system by identifying key leverage points for food system change. The Foundation is therefore soliciting proposals for solutions papers – which the Foundation will fund with grants of up to \$15,000 – from individuals and organizations.

Background

The goal of the Metcalf Foundation is to assist Canadians in building a just, healthy and creative society by supporting dynamic leaders who are contributing to positive change, nurturing innovative approaches to persistent problems, and encouraging dialogue and learning to inform action.

For the past six years, the Metcalf Foundation has been seeding food- and agriculture-related initiatives across the province from agricultural land trusts to sustainable food certification to low-income neighbourhood farmers' stalls. In the spring of 2007, the Foundation brought together all of its funding partners working on the supply and equitable distribution of local sustainable food in Ontario to explore the appetite for cooperative, integrated work with the goal of transforming food and agriculture at a system-wide level.

Food Connects Us All: Sustainable Local Food in Southern Ontario, published by the Foundation in February 2008, emerged from those talks (www.metcalffoundation.com under Resources, Publications and Articles of Interest). The paper articulates some of the barriers to a local, sustainable food system and identifies possible directions for collective work.

One of the key findings of the paper was that there are many roads to change. With a food system as large and complex as Ontario's, change will likely come about by pushing simultaneously and incrementally in a number of directions. Innovative ideas for, and creative responses to, food system reform abound in the field.

The requested solutions papers will capture these ideas and responses by building on *Food Connects Us All* and presenting credible, pragmatic, innovative and forward-thinking solutions to the problems that prohibit us from moving closer to a food system that is healthy, local and sustainable.

Purpose of the Solutions Papers

There is likely no one answer to food system reform. The Foundation seeks to elicit through the papers a multiplicity of views and opinions on the possibilities to cultivate a local, sustainable food system. Each paper will:

- articulate tangible, achievable, results-oriented solutions to food system reform in order to focus our efforts in the province on activities that will meaningfully advance a local, sustainable food system agenda over the next 5 – 10 years;

- explore those solutions in the context of intersecting objectives, for example healthy environment, robust agriculture, equitable production and distribution, effective education, better health, etc.;
- stimulate multi-sectoral cooperation in the generation and advancement of those solutions;
- provide a platform for broad-based dialogue on the myriad possibilities for food system reform in the province.

Project Parameters

This is an open call intended to capture a diversity of ideas on food system reform. The Foundation is particularly interested in proposals that address solutions related to:

- *Remaking the middle, or supportive infrastructure* – there are many hopeful signs that suggest that local sustainable food is more readily available. Awareness and access are certainly improving but much more needs to be done to ensure that we have the necessary hard and soft infrastructure that will make it easy for people to buy local and sustainable – from alternative distribution channels to processing to supply chain transformation – and to ensure that access is access for all.
- *Engaging publics* – Good, effective public education and engagement strongly impacts whether individuals possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices. This is an issue that spans our entire population. We need to better engage publics to ensure that all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a local, sustainable food system. Translating awareness of local sustainable food into routine actions and habitual behaviour is a long-term process that needs easy access to local sustainable food and positive reinforcement.
- *Ensuring a dependable, adequate, diverse food supply and the viability of local sustainable farming* – Ontario agriculture faces many challenges – farmland loss, farm succession, land tenure, environmental stewardship, government cut-backs, new generation of farmers etc. Too many farmers in Ontario are struggling to stay in business, and the barriers to establishing new farmers on the soil are high. Stimulating demand must go hand-in-hand with assuring the supply of sustainably grown local food.
- *Addressing critical societal issues* – Food is connected to many of the major problem we face as a society – rising medical costs, poverty and hunger, declining farm incomes, the paving-over of farmland, wildlife protection, urban sprawl, youth unemployment, and communities at risk. The way we grow, market, process, manufacture, and distribute our food here in Ontario needs to respond to these negative trends in new, creative and connected ways.

Whatever the primary focus of the paper, all papers will address, where appropriate, each of the following categories:

- legislative and regulatory changes
- policy directives
- supporting voluntary mechanisms
- financial supports
- research needs
- roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

The Foundation encourages collaborative submissions that marry experience and expertise from a variety of perspectives, for example, NGO, academic, and practitioner partners.

The Foundation anticipates awarding up to \$15,000 for each solutions paper, depending on proposed scope and process, with no stipulations for matching funds. It is anticipated that the successful applicant(s) will begin work in March 2009 and submit final papers by September 2009. The papers may be released as a set or phased series subject to the discretion of the Foundation. The papers are not to exceed 30 pages. The Foundation will facilitate plain language editing of the reports and report layout and design. Intellectual property of each paper will reside with the Foundation; authors will retain intellectual capital.

Evaluation Process & Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Foundation and its advisors. Proposals will be assessed based on:

- the constitution of the project team and each member's qualifications;
- the articulation of approach to food system reform;
- the proposed methodology;
- the potential to learn about approaches and practices that are tangible, achievable, and potentially transformative;
- the likelihood that the idea(s) will gain traction in the current public policy context;
- quality, rigour and originality.

Application Process

Those interested in submitting an RFP should send a proposal, not to exceed six pages, to the Foundation that contains:

- an overview of the solutions or approach to solutions you would envision including in your paper;
- an elaboration on the proposed methodology;
- a description of your skills, qualifications and experience to undertake this work including comprehensive resumes;
- a detailed budget and timelines.

Applicants associated with an organization should also submit an organizational description, annual report and most recent audited statements.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **Monday 9 February 2009**. Proposals should be addressed to:

Ruth Richardson
Environment Program Director
Metcalf Foundation
174 Avenue Road
Toronto, ON, M5R 2J1

Please provide 2 paper copies of the letter of interest printed double-sided and submit an electronic version in word to ruthr@metcalffoundation.com.

If you have additional questions about this RFP please contact Ruth at ruthr@metcalffoundation.com or 416 926 0366 x30.