



Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant
Program 2018

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GRANT APPLICANTS

This template is provided to assist you with developing a fiscal year (FY) 2018 application and is not intended to relieve you from your responsibility for reading the FY 2018 SDGG Notice of Solicitation of Applications.

Use of this application template is not required (optional). However, applicants must provide the required information.

Use of the template does not imply or ensure a favorable eligibility determination.

In addition to the information requested in the template, applicants must complete and submit all required Federal forms and registrations, and append specified documentation to support claims for applicant eligibility, experience, and local support; as specified by the program.

Applications received that do not include ALL required materials will be considered incomplete and ineligible.

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A 2018 SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GRANT APPLICATION

Submitted by:

Sprout MN

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July 11, 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 page max)

[Instructions] Provide a summary of the proposal, not to exceed one page, describing the Project, tasks to be completed, and other relevant information that provides a general overview of the Project.

Why: The grocery Co-op industry is a challenging field with tight profit margins, high overhead costs, quickly changing trends, and a need for deep technical expertise to thrive. In addition to financial support for healthy food retail projects, business Technical Assistance (TA) will significantly enhance the long-term sustainability and success of a food cooperative, and therefore, a significant market channel for small farms, many of which identify with socially disadvantaged groups of their own. A group of cooperatives in Central Minnesota has co-created a plan to address collective TA needs.



Who/Where: *The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition* (referred to as the “Coalition”) is a group of six food cooperatives and one food hub (SDGG applicant) located in a rural region of Central Minnesota commonly known of as “Region Five” who all represent and serve socially disadvantaged populations.

The Coalition members are food access points:

1. **Sprout MN** - Growers & Makers Marketplace, Food Hub, Shared Use Licensed Kitchen, and Mobile Market – serving 5+ county region in Central MN – 6 years old
2. **Crow Wing Food Co-op:** Brainerd, MN (Crow Wing County) 39 years old
3. **Down Home Foods:** Wadena, MN (Wadena County) transitioned to a cooperative model as of Sept. 2017
4. **Everybody’s Market:** Long Prairie, MN (Todd County) 40 years old
5. **Ideal Green Market:** Ideal Township/Pequot Lakes, MN (Cass County) 3 years old
6. **Minnesota Street Market:** St. Joseph, MN (Stearns County) 6 years old
7. **The Purple Carrot:** Little Falls, MN (Morrison County) established in 2016, anticipated opening in 2019

All Coalition members are engaged in the sale of locally grown, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods located in rural underserved communities and/or serve primarily underserved communities in low-income areas. The Coalition sources their inventory with priority given to very small family farms, many of which are owned and operated by members of socially disadvantaged groups. Funding of this proposal offers 52 Food Co-op Coalition Board Members and an additional 21 staff members with Technical Assistance that will improve their operations and offer a ripple benefit to the diverse and socially disadvantaged residents, farmers, and the larger communities and region they serve.

What/How/When: Sprout MN (applicant) will access expertise of Regional Development Commission partners, County Public Health providers, Workforce Investment Boards, Small Business Development Centers, our region’s Community Colleges and expert training consultant professionals in coordination of the project. Sprout MN has demonstrated stewardship of relationships and resources with full appreciation and respect for the many practitioner partners in the field and is a central location for all Coalition members to access training. The aforementioned partners will be engaged and coordinated in this *12-month initiative (detailed in Table 2)* which provides targeted, cooperative-specific technical assistance, with a focus on strategic planning, business planning, and leadership training:

- 11 monthly workshop trainings held at the Sprout MN facility in Little Falls, MN.
- 420 hours of customized one-on-one consultant time held at each of the Coalition member sites.
- Peer-to-peer structured operational assessments and learning held at each of the Coalition member sites.

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ELIGIBILITY DISCUSSION (4 page max)

Applicant Eligibility

The Food Co-op Coalition meets the USDA-SDGG definition of a “Group of Cooperatives” whereas each of the members are businesses or organizations owned by and operated for the benefit of those using its services. Each of the Coalition members distribute profits and earnings generated among their respective members (whom we refer to as “owners”) differently. Some offer discounts and consignment benefits while other distribute annual dividends, but all meet the USDA-SDGG definition of a “Cooperative”.

All seven of the Coalition members, including Sprout MN, are governed with a **majority of their respective board of directors** - comprised of individuals belonging to a socially-disadvantaged group. Of the **Total 52** Directors, 45 Board Members self-identify as a member of at least one federally designated protected class, 86.54%.

Sprout MN (Applicant) www.sproutmn.com - Sprout MN (Sprout) is a federally recognized 501c3 nonprofit organization representing the Group of Cooperatives as the SDGG applicant and lead coordinator of this project. Sprout was incorporated in 2012 on the heels of seven years of local foods economic development and has a board of directors and advisory committee made up of growers, food retail managers and owners, artists, economic developers, higher education and community outreach coordinators, the majority of which self-identify with a socially disadvantaged group. Sprout was established to promote the health, economy, and self-reliance of Central Minnesota by facilitating the availability of fresh, locally produced food in the region. Upon becoming a federally recognized 501c3 non-profit organization, our mission expanded to include providing educational opportunities and coordination of technical assistance to growers, makers, and artists, as entrepreneurial economic drivers of our rural region.

Sprout is headquartered at a central location in Little Falls, Minnesota and boasts regional assets including: a processing facility, cooking demonstration kitchen, indoor winter farmers market, a mobile food/grocery market operation, food rescue/gleaning program and delivery of 300 health care provider prescribed CSA program (RxCSA). Sprout seeks to address the inequitable food system that disproportionately burdens and denies access to communities of color and high poverty. Our work to advance a local food system builds new equitable market channels and just and impartial opportunities for economic development, which includes the region’s food co-ops. This work centers on creating creative, collaborative models that benefit growers, producers, and value-chain partners such as the food co-ops, technical assistance providers, and consumers. For example, the Sprout Mobile Market model **equally** distributes/re-invests all annual net profits of the mobile grocery market operation back into the other 6 Region Five Food Co-op Coalition members’ businesses. The Sprout Mobile Market dividends are then used by the Coalition members to offset owner memberships to low-income residents who receive public assistance and may not be financially able to be an owner otherwise. This investment into low-income community member Co-op ownership is Sprout’s commitment to local ownership and improved livelihoods.

Sprout also operates for the benefit of growers, makers, producers, consumers and shoppers at the Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace, which is the region’s only indoor winter farmers market. Sprout facilitates the acceptance of SNAP/EBT by all eligible Marketplace vendors as well as a 1 to 1 SNAP/EBT match through Hunger Solutions’ Market Bucks. The Sprout Marketplace highlights the diversity of our region’s residents through cooking demonstrations and public tastings, storytelling, music and other artistic demonstrations. Somali, Liberian, Latino, Anishinaabe, and Amish community members lift up their heritage through the planning, promoting, and implementation of these events. Multilingual signage that is both welcoming and functional is predominate as are physical art installations such as a tipi painted by young Anishinaabe women from Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

<https://vimeo.com/236479106>

<https://vimeo.com/230623646>



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See Table 1 for list of Board of Directors for each of Coalition members:

TABLE 1 - Region Five Food Co-op Coalition - for USDA SDGG

Name	Title	Occupation	Socially Disadvantaged Group - check all that apply					
			Race/Color	Sexual Orientation	Gender Female	Disability	Physical Mental	Age

Sprout (applicant)

Nick Miller	President	Owner, 3 Cheers Hospitality						
Barry Thoele	Secretary	Grower - Staples, MN						1
Doug LaBorde	Director	Artist - Pierz, MN						1
Becky McGuire	Vice President	Community Member						
Mary Kenna	Treasurer	St. Gabriel's, Live Better Live Longer						

Crow Wing Food Co-op

Jami Nelson	Acting President	Hospitality Industry						
Erik Heimark	Vice President	Owner, Maple Ridge Produce		1				
Theresa Woodward	Treasurer	Owner, CatTails Book Store						
Robin Soderlund	Director	Retired Educator						
Mike Soderlund	Secretary	Retired						1
Mike Garry	Director	Pastor						
Jennifer DeVries	Director	Administration						

Down Home Foods Co-op

Barbara L Uselman	President	Health Food Store Owner						
Alexander W Weego	Director	Retired Veteran						1
Heidi R Samuelson	Secretary	C-Store Owner, Farmer						
Deb Erickson	Director	Farmer						
Kyle Davis	Director	Appraiser						
Brittany H. Springer	Director	Farmer						

Everybody's Market

Nancy Uhlenkamp	President	Ditch/Ag Inspector						
Celeste Miller	Treasurer	Retired						
Jade Lauber	Director	Librarian						
Bernadette Dolezal	Secretary	Computer Programmer						
Teresa Sornenson	Director	Assistant Todd County Veteran Services Officer	1	1	1			

Ideal Green Market

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Bonnie Coffey	President, HR Com.	Retired business owner	1	
Pam Cunningham	Director, Volunteer Coordinator	Retired nurse	1	
Joan Ingebrigtsen	Director, Product Com.	Retired teacher	1	
Steve Roe	Treasurer, Product Com.	Retired VP & GM of manufacturing firm, Former Mayor		1
Taren Saccoman	Director, Marketing Com.	Small grower business owner	1	
Dan Yavner	Director, Facility Com.	Retired systems analyst		1
Denise Simpson	Director	Insurance Services Agent	1	

Minnesota Street Market

Pia Lopez	President	Teacher	1	1
Jim Degiovanni	Vice President	Retired farmer		
Patricia Weishaar	Secretary	School administrator	1	
Theresa Johnson	Treasurer	Department coordinator	1	
John Merkle	Director	Teacher		
Elissa Brown	Director	Department coordinator	1	
Grant Stromgren	Director	Information Technology		
Corrie Grosse	Director	Teacher	1	
Lisa Lindgren	Director	Teacher	1	
Kathy Doyle	Director	Bookkeeper	1	
Derik Weldon	Director	Physician		
Danee Voss	Director	Student	1	
Brigid Mark	Director	Student	1	

Purple Carrot Market

Susan Prosapio	President	Business Owner	1	
Cathy Hartle	Vice President	Consultant	1	1
Sheila Watercott	Director	Teacher	1	
Jim Weiss	Treasurer	Retired		1
Natalie Keane	Secretary	Facility Director	1	
Darlene Brand	Director	Educator	1	
LoreLee Beto	Director	HRA Director	1	
Sarah Okroi	Director	Manager	1	

52 2 2 37 2 7



In addition to each of the respective Coalition's satisfaction of the USDA-SDGG eligibility requirements, the Coalition appoints 1-2 staff members from each of the seven Coalition member Co-ops as a representative to meet quarterly. All staff representatives are individuals belonging to a socially-disadvantaged group. Bios and resumes of Co-op representatives are found in Appendix B.

Use of Funds

Technical Assistance by way of product and service improvement, business improvement planning, market development and other relevant training all

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of which meet the definition of Technical Assistance, will be delivered to a group of Cooperatives comprised of six food co-ops and one food hub (the applicant) where a majority of the board of directors at each Cooperative are comprised of ethnic and Caucasian women who have been subjected to gender prejudice and meet the definition of a Socially-Disadvantaged group.

Project Area

The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition – Group of Cooperatives – serve within 6 counties of Central Minnesota including: Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, Wadena & Stearns Counties. The total population of all 6 counties is under 169,000 with no city or town having a population of over 50,000. Only one city is over 10,000 and majority of the towns range between 500 and 2000 in population. The entire region is classified as rural by US Census data. We are home to the Leech Lake and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribes, the state's only Military base – Camp Ripley and we are one of the 2 Minnesota regions that does NOT house a land grant – University of Minnesota – campus or center. The Coalition-designed Technical Assistance activities will be delivered at the Food Co-op Coalition's regular meeting place; the Sprout MN facility in Little Falls, Minnesota with a rural population of 8,689 according to the 2016 US Census Bureau data. One-on-one TA will be delivered at each of the 7 Coalition member sites throughout the region.

Grant Period

The proposed project grant period is from October 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. All technical assistance, evaluation and timely reporting of all activities will be completed within this period. This is the first SDGG application submitted for Central Minnesota and our Group of Cooperatives comprehend that we may only partake in one open SDGG award at a time.

Satisfactory Performance

This is the first SDGG application submitted for Central Minnesota and our Group of Cooperatives have no existing open SDGG or RCDG awards.



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SCORING CRITERIA

Technical Assistance (3 page limit) (maximum score of 25 points).

(1) Needs of the Socially-Disadvantaged Groups to be assisted and explain how those needs were determined,

The members of the Food Co-op Coalition share a common need to learn from each other to better serve the needs of growing immigrant and transient/seasonal populations in addition to building the financial sustainability of each co-op. The shared vision and mission of the Coalition is to build and expand the regional local food economy and to offer healthy food options to all residents and visitors of Central Minnesota. Demonstrating the value of collective action and to yield greater impact as a group of cooperatives, the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) convened the first Food Co-op Coalition meeting in November 2016. All food cooperatives from the region were invited to participate.

In 2016 the Food Co-op Coalition of approximately 20 individuals from across the region established a shared purpose:

To develop a strong regional Food Co-op network that improves equity of availability, accessibility and affordability of locally sourced foods that impact our region's economic prosperity and health/wellness of residents and communities.

Starting in November of 2016 the Coalition began drafting a "needs list" of Technical Assistance that would serve the needs of their respective staff, boards, and volunteers. In October 2017 R5DC facilitated prioritization of The Food Co-op Coalition Technical Assistance needs and potential funding sources to form the "Food Co-op Coalition Technical Assistance Plan." This plan was approved by the Coalition on January 10, 2018 and is the basis of this application.

The Coalition's first action was to engage in "The Good Life in Region 5" branding initiative as a network of organizations whose work improves the region's Quality of Life and optimistically attracts a qualified and diverse workforce.

<http://www.thegoodlifenortherncentralmn.com/the-good-life/local-foods/why-co-ops>

The group established meeting norms and defined the following meeting objectives:

- Address needs and share ideas among food Co-ops.
- Discuss regional collaborations and shared service opportunities/resources.
- Receive professional development opportunities that enhance our business viability in ways that advance the shared purpose.

(2) Proposed Technical Assistance to be provided to the Socially-Disadvantaged Groups;

The Coalition recognizes the importance of technical assistance delivery as a key driver of successful Co-op operations and sustainability. Based on the Food Co-op Coalition Technical Assistance Plan, the Coalition proposes a delivery of multiple training methods including:

1. **TA Sessions.** Through trial and error, we have learned that it is difficult for business operators, board of directors or residents to take a full day off work for training due to lost wages, lack of PTO benefits, and other barriers that often accompany low-income and socially disadvantaged groups' employment opportunities. Thus, our approach is to deliver curriculum over 11 training sessions, one per month in 2-4-hour blocks of a small group workshop setting. See additional detail under "Work Plan" section of this proposal. Some potential recipients of technical assistance have voiced preference of or benefit from online delivery therefore we will seek opportunities to record and post sessions when possible.
2. **Peer-2-Peer.** The Coalition leadership colleagues (minimum of one from each Coalition member = 7) assess each of their colleague Cooperatives once during the 12-month period, to interview Board and Staff and provide an operational assessment. Meaning, peers offer positive feedback and constructive recommendations for improvement. These assessment visits commence on same day as the Coalition's regular business meetings and rotate locations. We know that by giving small business owners and entrepreneurs from similar industry sectors the opportunity to exchange experiences we enable technical assistance recipients to learn from one another, as well as offering valuable networking opportunities.
3. **One-on-One.** Each Cooperative/Coalition (Board/Staff) meet with one specialized consultant, with the type of TA selected by the Co-op based on self-identified need. Experience has helped prioritize our approach to develop 1:1 relationships

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between Technical Assistance providers and Cooperatives as a critical part of long-term success. Authentic personal attention creates the space for progress that only happens through trusted relationships.

TABLE 2 - TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IDENTIFIED IN THE FOOD CO-OP COALITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN

TYPE OF TA
Intercultural Diversity strategies; serving diverse & low-income shoppers/markets and expansion of culturally specific commodities/markets.
Market Expansion – local procurement, community engagement, incentives to SNAP/WIC shoppers,
Financing - access to unique capital; CDFI's, Micro, Gap & Social Crowdfunding
HR/Employee/workforce retention strategies
Technology – online tools; Social Media, POS systems, file/information management
Grant writing (value propositions, audiences) Storytelling
Business Planning- budgeting, cash flow, sales projections, inventory control, food waste planning
WealthWorks Evaluation; qualitative & quantitative
“Health” education & policy incorporation – expansion of Health Care partnerships
Collective Buying Power
Employee law 101
Peer-2-Peer store and operational assessments
Succession Planning; staff and board
Board Development: strategic planning

(3) How Socially-Disadvantaged Groups will benefit from participating in the Project.

Expected outcomes of the proposed Technical Assistance

- 7 Region Five Food Co-op Coalition members (6 Cooperatives, 1 Nonprofit) engaged;
 - 45 Board Members, over 80% identify with socially disadvantaged group
 - 100% of staff identify with socially disadvantaged group
- Number of socially disadvantaged groups assisted;
 - Five (5) different racial, ethnic or gender classes.

Additional outcomes expected via tracked measures:

Impact Measures collected ANNUALLY that align with the 8 forms of wealth (further described on [pages 26-27](#)):

Built –	Have there been improvements in infrastructure? Aligned Work Plan Task: Task 2 # Square footage of retail food space Target impact: minimum of 1000 sq. ft. of improved retail food space
Financial –	Has there been increased investment in the region? Aligned Work Plan Task: Task 1 \$\$ amt of WIC and SNAP sales increased - Target impact: 5% more \$\$ amt sales of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods - Target impact: 5% more
Individual –	Have people acquired or improved skills, or their health and well-being? Aligned Work Plan: Task 1, 2, 3 # locations of retail food businesses received TA - Target impact: 8 type of technical assistance that they received deemed of value – Target impact: evaluation scores all meet or exceed expectations 3 months AFTER TA # of people receive TA – names - Target impact: 40 # of referrals made to partner organizations - Target impact: at least 5
Intellectual –	Is there greater knowledge, creativity or innovation in the region? Aligned Work Plan Task: Task 1 # of new programs offered from access points (example: RX-CSA's or culturally diverse art integration) Target impact: 2
Natural –	Has the work benefitted natural resources or the environment in the region? Aligned Work Plan Task: Task 1
9	USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. 2018 SDGG

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	\$\$ of sales from local farmers/ranchers/producers allowing for farmland to stay in production Target impact: increase of 2% from current base
Political –	Has there been an increase in influence over decision-making and policies? Aligned Work Plan Task: 3 # of and type policies revised to support Food Access Target impact: 1
Social –	Have new relationships and networks been built? Aligned Work Plan Task: Task 1, 2, 3 # of new collaborations formed as result of TA and how they impacted leveraged resources Target impact: 3
Cultural –	Has the work supported/preserved valued assets-traditions or ways of doing things? Aligned Work Plan Task: 1 # Jobs created or retained for local and regional residents from low-income and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color. Target impact: increase of any kind 1% across all 8 Co-ops # Stories told that show impacts Target impact: min of 8

Examples of past projects that demonstrate successful outcomes in identifying specific needs and providing Technical Assistance to Socially-Disadvantaged Groups.

We submit numerous examples of past projects including business planning, grant writing, marketing, and evaluation, and more, as seen in the “Local Support” section on [pages 23-24](#). Sprout and long-term partner Region Five Development Commission also recently published a 2017 local food value chain evaluation report, which explains technical assistance offerings on page 15 of the report. On pages 19 and 20 of the report, the support of socially-disadvantaged groups is demonstrated through the breaking down of language barriers both locally, in the translation of application materials to participate in the Sprout Marketplace, and state-wide in the successful advocating of Spanish translation of the MDA Good Food Access Program application. This was the first time that a State agency accepted grant applications in any language other than English. The report can be found here: http://www.regionfive.org/cms/files/SproutWealthWorks18_Web.pdf

In 2018, Sprout and Technical Assistance partners have continued technical assistance offerings to growers, makers, and food entrepreneurs at free/low rates including: Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) FSMA Training Course, Greenhouse 101, Digital Marketing & Social Media for Busy Small Farms, Growing and Marketing Minnesota Garlic, and a One Day MBA Workshop. Over 170 attendees participated in these workshops, the majority of which belonged to at least one socially disadvantaged group.

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Experience (3 page limit) (maximum score of 25 points).

All project consultants have been selected at the time of application submittal. Resumes for each individual staff member or consultant are included as an attachment in Appendix B. Consultant resumes demonstrate strong credentials, education, capabilities and experience relevant to the type of TA they will provide. Written confirmation from Directors/Presidents of Consultant organizations committed to deliver of Technical Assistance to the Socially Disadvantaged Group - The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition:

Consultant Organization Name	Date confirmation signed	Name/title of letter signor	Address	Email, Phone & website
Region Five Development Commission & the North Central Economic Development Corporation	June 15, 2018	Cheryl Lee Hills, Executive Director	200 1 st Street NE, Suite 2, Staples MN, 56401	chills@regionfive.org 218-894-3233 www.regionfive.org www.northcentraleda.org
Central Lakes College (CLC) – Customized Training Dept.	June 12, 2018	Hara Charlier, President	501 West College Drive, Brainerd MN, 56479	hcharlier@clcmn.edu 218-855-8053 www.clcmn.edu
North Central MN Small Business Development Ctr.	June 7, 2018	Greg Bergman, Regional Director	is housed at CLC, address above.	GBergman@clcmn.edu 218-855-8145 www.clcmn.edu/smallbusiness
Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program	June 12, 2018	Daniel Wenner, Executive Director	803 Roosevelt Ave, PO Box 1108 Detroit Lakes, MN 56502	DanW@rmcep.com 218-846-7400 www.rmcep.com/rmcep
Region Nine Development Commission	June 9, 2018	Nicole Griensewic Mickelson, Executive Director	3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310 Mankato, MN 56001	nicole@rndc.org 507-387-5643 www.rndc.org
SourceWell – formerly National Joint Powers Alliance	June 12, 2018	Paul Drange, Director of Regional Programs	202 12th Street NE, Staples, MN 56479	Paul.Drange@njpacoop.org 218-895-4134 www.sourcewell-mn.gov
MN Dept. of Health	June 11, 2018	Kris Igo, Director of MDH Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives	625 Robert St N, St Paul, MN 55164	Kris.igo@state.mn.us 651-402-6100 www.health.state.mn.us
IMPACT Minnesota	June 1, 2018	Linda Holiday, President	822 River Street, Pillager, MN 56473	linda@impactminnesota.com 218-330-1313 www.impactminnesota.com

The following articulates the experience of each applicant/consultant member including years of experience in providing that assistance. Sprout has received written confirmation of commitment from each of the consultants as to their availability of personnel to deliver TA per the timeline schedule provided in Task 1 – Table 3 - of the Work Plan on **page 17**. Signed confirmations indicate the commitment and availability of identified staff or consultant, and that none of the project staff or consultants are consulting on multiple SDGG/RCDG projects.

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Applicant Experience

Arlene Jones, Executive Director, Sprout MN

Arlene is the co-founder and Executive Director of Sprout MN, a 501c3 Food Hub, Licensed Kitchen, and Growers & Makers Marketplace. She brings with her over 10 years of small family farming experience. Prior to her local food work, she worked for 23 years in healthcare, in charge of performance management and compliance. Arlene's duties include oversight of daily operations, financial management, project and performance management, and grant writing, reporting and evaluation. She frequently presents on economic opportunities within the scope of local foods regionally and nationally. She currently serves on numerous boards, leadership teams and advisory committees. She is a BUSH Foundation Fellow.

Relevant experience of Consultants identified in Task 1 of the Work Plan.

Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director, Region Five Development Commission (R5DC)

Affiliate 501c3 North Central Economic Development Association (NCEDA)

Cheryal joined R5DC in 2006 with over 25 years of experience in community and economic development, Cheryal currently provides oversight of over \$3 million in project, levy and grant annual income. Cheryal delivers program development/implementation, organizational planning and financial oversight. Cheryal's credentials included Licensed Practical Nurse, Executive Director of the Mid-Minnesota Builders Association, a MN Realtor and builders license, and an approved MN Dept. of Commerce and MN Dept of Labor continuing education coordinator. Cheryal is a certified Core4 instructor for entrepreneurial training and her experience includes co-ownership of a telecommunications company for over 26 years. In 2018 Cheryal became a certified Intercultural Development Inventory trainer. Specific experience related proposed SDGG TA workshops: 6 years as a national workshop and keynote presenter, worked in 9 states in 2017. Hired by the Delta Regional Authority, RUPRI, the National Association of Counties, National Association of Development Organizations and by USDA via a RDCA. Cheryal has served as the Region Five Food Co-op Coalition facilitator of quarterly meetings since the groups inception. R5DC is a nationally recognized one of 6 Hub experts on delivery of the WealthWorks evaluation model. <https://www.wealthworks.org/connect/hubs>

Sandy Voigt, Regional Business Specialist, R5DC & NCEDA

Sandy joined R5DC in 2014, bringing 45 years of experience in economic development throughout Minnesota, nationally and internationally. Sandy has worked in a variety of economic development organizations and been involved in all aspects of economic development including business planning, loan packaging and preparation, grant writing and technical assistance. Voigt's educational background is in healthcare and former business/restaurant owner. She is certified by the National Development Council as an Economic Development Finance Professional and alumnus of the Blandin Foundation Community Leadership Program. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: Daily TA delivered to micro & gap borrowers. Over 54 business visits in 2017. Sandy has delivered group workshops and individual business TA to grocery stores throughout her work life.

Ashley Aukes, Communications Specialist – Region Nine Development Commission (R9DC)

Ashley is a Certified Public Communicator and has served as the communications specialist for R9DC since 2013. Within those five years, she has used her expertise in marketing, social media and design to enhance Region Nine's brand presence. Through her communications work, Region Nine received the National Association of Development Organizations 2015 Innovation Award for *Telling the Regional Government Story Differently*. Aukes has co-founded two Social Media Breakfast chapters in southern Minnesota and has also presented at numerous state and national conferences. Aukes serves on the board for the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: over a dozen well received social media and branding workshops over last 3 years for business leaders and elected officials.

Craig Nathan, Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (RMCEP)

Craig Nathan serves as the Director of Regional Initiatives Administration covering our 19 county service area. Mr. Nathan provides management and delivery of client focused services, develops regional partnerships, and coordinates quality operational services and special projects. Mr. Nathan has been with RMCEP for over 15 years. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: Craig has facilitated hundreds of groups and planning initiatives and has recently been engaged in regional workforce training on how to attract and retain employees.

Julie Anderholm, North Central Minnesota Small Business Development Center

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Julie Anderholm completed her Bachelors of Science and Masters of Business Administration from the University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management with an emphasis in Accounting and Finance. She worked as a healthcare finance professional in the areas of auditing and financial forecasting for both Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and Aetna Insurance. She began independent financial consulting through the Small Business Development Center in Rochester, Minnesota and for the past 23 years with the SBDC in Brainerd, MN. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: Consults with over a dozen small businesses annually concentrating on financial analysis and forecasting as well as general business information. In the past few years, she has delivered several workshops throughout Central MN and taken on independent financial consulting roles with various entities, both for-profit and nonprofit.

Rebekah Kent, Central Lakes College – Customized Training

Rebekah Kent is the Dean of Brainerd Career and Technical Programs and Customized Training at Central Lakes College, a two year comprehensive community and technical college. Rebekah is a lawyer and Master of Public Health Services Policy and Administration. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: She has worked in the education and nonprofit industries for 15 years specializing in new program development. Her career has taken her across the globe, where she was responsible for strategic relationships with Japan, Canada, and Sweden.

Kris Haugen, Minnesota Department of Health - MN Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Kris has a passion for wellness, and has worked in a variety of worksite wellness settings as a program manager of large multi-site organizations, within a hospital system, and in two manufacturing environments. She has worked in both the public and private sector, served as a health coach, and has also worked on the vendor side of the industry. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: She is currently a worksite specialist for the Minnesota Department of Health, and has enjoyed bringing worksite wellness across the state of Minnesota through the Statewide Health Improvement Program and the Community Wellness Grant through the Centers for Disease Control.

Paul Drange, SourceWell (formerly: National Joint Powers Alliance)

Paul Drange has been the Director of Regional Programs at Sourcewell since 2014. His primary responsibilities include development of programs and service opportunities, continuous improvement plans, strategic planning with local units of government and managing departmental budgets. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA workshops: Prior to his executive position at Sourcewell, Paul led the Center for College Readiness at MState and was the Support Center Supervisor. Paul holds a Doctorate of Education and Higher Education Administration from Capella University.

Relevant experience of Coalition member staff representative identified in Task 2 of the Work Plan. Resumes and bios for Coalition member staff who will participate in the Peer-2-Peer learning exchanges are provided in [Appendix B](#) of this application.

Relevant Consultants identified in Task 3 of the Work Plan.

Linda Holiday, IMPACT Minnesota - Impact Minnesota's mission is to *provide the highest quality consulting services in order to help nonprofits, for profits and public organizations make a meaningful impact on the people and communities around us.* Linda Holliday, principal consultant, has over 20 years of experience in nonprofit management, philanthropy, funder research, proposal development, strategic planning, program development and evaluation. She is privileged to have served as vice president for organizational development at the Initiative Foundation for 15 years, was selected as a 2010 Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow, and holds a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

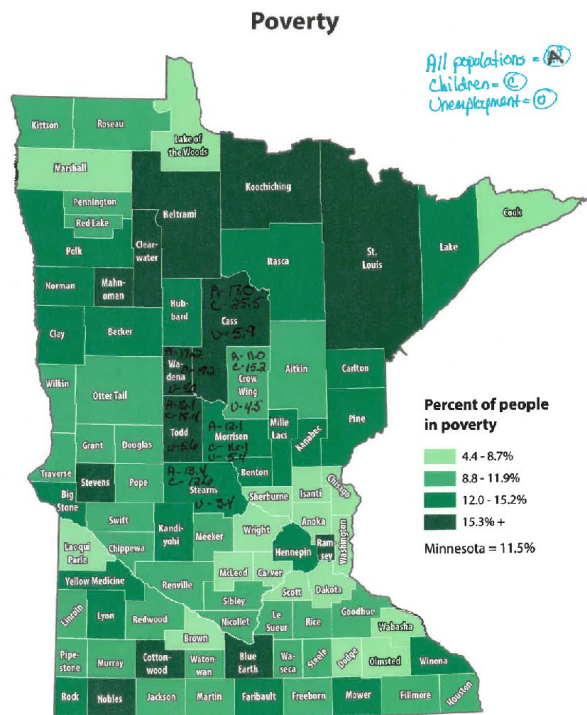
Linda believes that a quality strategic plan is the foundation of an effective, resilient organization. It is an essential roadmap for setting and maintaining mission; creating purposeful programs and services; and building the right staffing, financial and operational structures to advance measurable impact. Creating a strategic plan that works is a process - not an event. Impact Minnesota works alongside organizational leaders to guide them through a comprehensive, yet efficient and rewarding strategic planning process. Linda tailors planning activities to meet each organization's needs- and is committed to creating a superior plan for each organization. Specific experience related to proposed SDGG TA: Among others, Linda has led strategic planning efforts for the Initiative Foundation, the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), Bemidji State University's (BSU) Office of Sustainability and BSU Information Technology Services.

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Commitment (3 page limit) Commitment (maximum of 10 points)

Number of Socially-Disadvantaged Groups directly benefiting from Technical Assistance	Underserved and economically distressed areas – current/relevant statistics		
	% All Poverty by county	% Children in poverty	Unemployment
Minnesota Statewide Average	9.9%	13.8%	3.1%
Crow Wing Food Co-op 720 Washington St, Brainerd, MN 56401	Crow Wing County 11.0	15.2	4.5
Down Home Foods 636 Jefferson St N, Wadena, MN 56482	Wadena County 17.2	19.2	4.0
Everybody's Market 11 1 st St N, Long Prairie, MN 56347	Todd County 16.1	18.4	5.6
Ideal Green Market 34988 Co Rd 39, Pequot Lakes, MN 56472	Crow Wing County 11.0	15.2	4.5
Minnesota Main Street Market 123 Main St S, Buffalo Lake, MN 55314	Stearns County 13.4	12.6	3.4
Purple Carrot Cooperative 53 Broadway E, Little Falls, MN 56345	Morrison County 12.1	16.1	5.4
Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace 609 13 th Ave NE #8, Little Falls, MN 56345	Serving Cass County 17.0	25.5	5.9
Sources: MN DEED, MN Compass, MN Department of Demography			



Sprout, the Region Five Food Co-op Coalition, and all TA partner providers introduced in this proposal have a strong commitment to receiving and providing a relevant and beneficial Technical Assistance plan. The economically distressed counties that are part of this initiative have experienced poverty and inequities that create challenges that obstruct success. Each of the Cooperative members of the Food Co-op Coalition face unique factors.

In part due to the location of the Food processing meat packing plants, Long Prairie MN in **Todd County** has experienced an influx of Latino residents over the last 10 years, where over 50% of the kindergarten classes are limited-English speaking children. The economic prosperity of the meat packing plants has called for the businesses to bus in Somali residents from the neighboring St. Cloud region of 60 miles away to fill open positions.

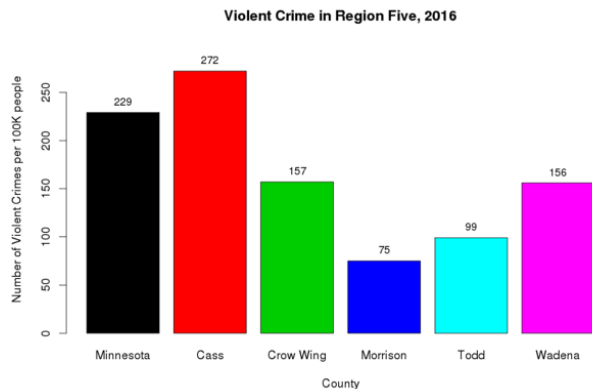
Below 100% poverty threshold. Data source: 2014 American Community Survey estimates (2010-2014 combined).

Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Environmental Public Health Tracking Program
Minnesota Public Health Data Access
<https://app.health.state.mn.us/mn-data>

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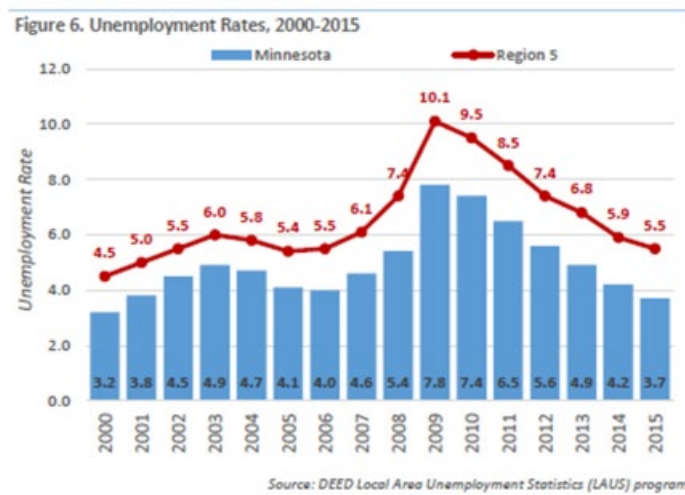
Crow Wing, Cass, Crow Wing and Wadena Counties are unhealthy according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Care rankings – of the MN 87 counties our region did not score well: Morrison – 29, Stearns – 32, Todd – 28, Crow Wing 61, Wadena – 83 and Cass – 85.



Northern **Cass county**, home to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe unfortunately faces high levels of poverty, unemployment and crime.

Stearns County has higher rates of the diversity than the rest of the region but is limited by the number of grocery co-ops that sell culturally specific commodities.

Unemployment Rates, MN and R5

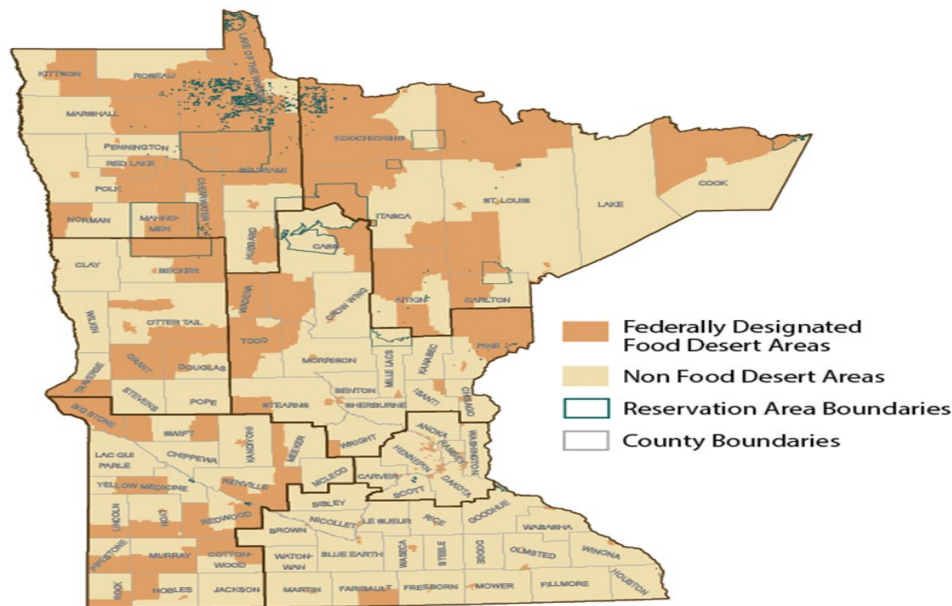


While the Food Co-op Coalition Members Board of Directors are made up of individuals from socially-disadvantaged groups, they are in need of significant and intentional training/TA to meet the needs of their socially-disadvantaged customer base. Additionally, TA designed to inform and provide techniques to address the lack of a diverse pool for board recruitment is seen as a high priority for the cooperative coalition.

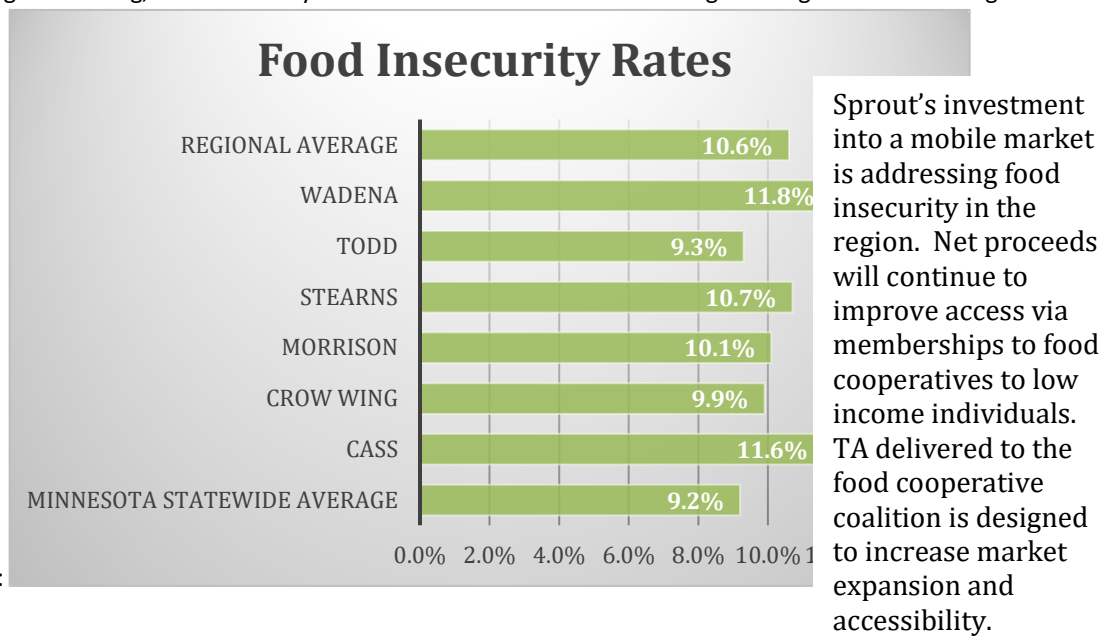
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A study by The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and Wilder Research revealed the region's food deserts, and the increasing gap in access to healthy foods. Building the asset banks of our food cooperatives is a strategy to address these issues - (Healthy Food Access A View of the Landscape in Minnesota and Lessons Learned from Healthy Food Financing Initiatives, published April 2016). Technical assistance to the Food Cooperative Coalition via workshops on intercultural diversity strategies, culturally specific foods, and market expansion will benefit the region's low-income residents, farmers and food entrepreneurs in Central Minnesota's food desert areas.



According to feedingamerica.org, food insecurity rates in Central Minnesota remain high among statewide averages as demonstrated in



the following chart:

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Work Plan / Budget (6 page limit) (maximum of 25 points)

Task Budget

Task Description	Key Personnel	Time-frame	Total
Task 1 - <i>TA Sessions</i> 11 TA Sessions delivered to the Socially-disadvantaged Group of 7 Cooperatives – 52 individuals of The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition.	*Sprout/applicant will be responsible for Supplies, and under personnel will deliver: coordination, evaluation, and fiscal administration. *See TABLE 3 for list of contractual work *See additional narrative below	See TABLE 3 below	Personnel: \$14,775.00 Fringe Benefits: \$0 Travel: \$0 Supplies: \$3,300.00 Contractual: \$19,850.00 Other: \$ 0 Task 1 Total: \$37,925.00

Task 1 – Narrative budget justification (more narrative below Task Budget Table)

Meeting Supplies - (space, materials, copies) – \$300. Ea x 11 TA Sessions = **\$3,300.00/supplies**

Evaluation - - 11 sessions, 2 hrs ea x \$75.00 an hr = \$150.00 each session = **\$1,650.00/personnel**

Fiscal Administration – 11 sessions/11 contracts with consultant trainers. Contract creation, and payments to consultants – 5 hrs. each, x \$75.00 an hr = \$375. Per contract, x 11 contracts = **\$4,125.00/personnel**

Coordination – 10 hrs a month x \$75.00 an hr - \$750.00 a month x 12 months = **\$9,000.00/personnel**

Contractual – The trainers contracted at a flat reasonable rate for each session as follows:

TABLE 3

TYPE	Trainer Fees	TRAINER	Timeline October 2018 - September
Intercultural Diversity strategies; serving diverse & low-income shoppers/markets and expansion of culturally specific commodities/markets.	\$ 1,850.00	R5DC	Monday, October 1, 2018
Market Expansion – local procurement, community engagement, incentives to SNAP/WIC shoppers,	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Thursday, November 1, 2018
Financing - access to unique capital; CDFI's, Micro, Gap & Social Crowdfunding	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Friday, January 4, 2019
HR/Employee/workforce retention strategies	\$ 1,800.00	Rural MN CEP/LAHRA	Friday, February 1, 2019
Technology – online tools; Social Media, POS systems, file/information management	\$ 1,800.00	R9DC	Friday, March 1, 2019
Grant writing (value propositions, audiences) Storytelling	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Monday, April 1, 2019
Business Planning- budgeting, cash flow, sales projections, inventory control, food waste planning	\$ 1,800.00	SBDC/Leslie Watson	Wednesday, May 1, 2019
WealthWorks Evaluation; qualitative & quantitative	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Monday, June 3, 2019
"Health" education & policy incorporation – expansion of Health Care partnerships	\$ 1,800.00	Public Health Care Providers/SHIP	Monday, July 15, 2019
Collective Buying Power	\$ 1,800.00	NJPA	Thursday, August 1, 2019
Employee law 101	\$ 1,800.00	CLC	Monday, September 2, 2019

Task 1 total of \$37,925.00 / 11 sessions - Per session rate = \$3,447.73

Task 2 - <i>Peer-2-Peer</i> 7 Peer-2-Peer assessments delivered by the Socially-disadvantaged Group of 7 Cooperatives – 52 individuals of the Region Five Food Co-op Coalition	*Sprout/applicant will be responsible for Supplies, and under personnel will deliver: coordination, evaluation, and fiscal administration. *See TABLE 4 for list of contractual work *See additional narrative below	See TABLE 4 below	Personnel: \$11,950.00 Fringe Benefits: \$0 Travel: \$0 Supplies: \$600.00 Contractual: \$35,000.00 Other: \$0 Task 2 Total: \$47,550.00
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Task 2 – Narrative budget justification (more narrative below Task Budget Table)

Meeting Supplies - (materials, copies) **\$600.00/supplies**

Evaluation - - Seven P-2-P assessments, 7.3 hrs ea x \$75.00 an hr = \$550. Per assessment = **\$3,850.00/personnel**

The 7.3 hrs breakout: 1 hr. prep, 2 hr. site visit, 2.3 hr. compiling the six colleague site visit assessments. 2 hr. report writing.

Coordination - 5 hrs a month x \$75.00 an hr - \$375.00 a month x 12 months = **\$4,500.00/personnel**

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Fiscal Administration – six contracts with Coalition members. Contract creation, and payments to coalition member – 8 hrs. each contract, x \$75.00 an hr = \$600. Per contract, x 11 contracts = **\$3,600.00/personnel**

Contractual – Each of the 7 Coalition members will be contracted with the applicant for \$5,000.00 each, to deliver 6 operational and physical assessments of their Coalition colleagues. The high level of specialized expertise from industry peers and the sheer number of people engaged in this task is realistic and comparable to the level of expected benefit. \$833. x 6 assessments rounds up to \$5,000.00 x 7 Coalition members = **\$35,000.00/contractual**

The contracts will additionally highlight the commitment of Coalition members to attend the TA Sessions described in Task #1, and to receive Board TA described in Task #3. The stipend is the only form of reimbursement for mileage and time for all activities outlined in this proposal.

TABLE 4

TYPE	Trainer Fees	TRAINER	Timeline
			October 2018 - September
Peer-2-Peer store and operational audits	\$ 35,000.00	Coalition members	October 2018 - April 2019, One a month

Task 2 total of \$47,550.00 = \$6,792.85 per session rate – factoring in the 52 Coalition members this is a \$130.00 per person/per assessment rate

Task 3 - <i>One-on-One</i> Each of the 7 Cooperatives classified as a Socially-disadvantaged Group; called The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition will receive 60 hours of expert consultation with board and staff.	*Sprout/applicant will be responsible for Supplies, and under personnel will deliver: coordination, evaluation, and fiscal administration. *See TABLE 3 for list of contractual work *See additional narrative below		Personnel: \$4,875.00 Fringe Benefits: \$0 Travel: \$0 Supplies: \$600.00 Contractual: \$31,500.00 Other: \$0 Task 3 Total: \$36,975.00
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Task 3 – Narrative budget justification (more narrative below Task Budget Table)

Meeting Supplies - (materials, copies) **\$600.00/supplies**

Fiscal Administration – Contract creation, and payments to consultant – 5 hrs. x \$75.00 an hr = **\$375.00/personnel**

Coordination - 5 hrs a month x \$75.00 an hr - \$375.00 a month x 12 months = **\$4,500.00/personnel**

Contractual – **TABLE 5**

TYPE	Trainer Fees	TRAINER	Timeline
			October 2018 - September 2019
Succession Planning; staff and board	\$ 15,750.00	Impact MN	Oct 2018 - August 2019. 60 hours per ea of 7 Coalition members = 420 consultant hours. \$75.00 an hr billable rate. (average of 10.5 months @40 hrs a month of consultant time)
Board Development: strategic planning	\$ 15,750.00	Impact MN	

Task 4 - <i>SDGG Grant reporting</i>	*Sprout/applicant is responsible for all grant reporting.		Personnel: \$900.00 Fringe Benefits: \$0 Travel: \$0 Supplies: \$ Contractual: \$ Other: \$ Task 4 Total: \$900.00
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Task 4 – Narrative budget justification

Fiscal Administration - SDGG Grant reporting: Two SF-425 Semiannual and Project performance narratives.

Experience indicates USDA reports consume 6 hours ea x 2 reports = 12 hrs. x \$75.00 an hr. = **\$900.00/personnel**

TOTAL	\$123,350.00		
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Breakdown per budget line item:

ITEM	USDA- SDGG
Training Delivery	\$ 86,350.00
Meeting Space, supplies	\$ 4,500.00
Evaluation	\$ 5,500.00
Coordination: project management	\$ 18,000.00
Fiscal Administration	\$ 9,000.00
	\$ 123,350.00

Coordination

Task 1-	\$9,000.00
Task 2 -	\$4,500.00
Task 3 -	\$4,500.00

Total \$18,000.00/personnel

Fiscal Administration

Task 1-	\$4,125.00
Task 2 -	\$3,600.00
Task 3	\$375.00
Task 4 -	\$900.00

Total \$9,000.00/personnel

Evaluation

Task 1-	\$1,650.00
Task 2 -	\$3,850.00
Task 3 -	\$0

Total \$5,500.00/personnel

Meeting Supplies (space, materials, copies)

Task 1- 11 joint mtgs. at \$300 ea	\$3,300.00
Task 2 - flat rate.	\$600.00
Task 3 - flat rate	\$600.00

Total \$4,500.00/supplies

Consultant breakdown by task included in TASK BUDGET above, this table offers a single-view of all tasks:

TYPE	Trainer Fees	TRAINER	Timeline 2019
Intercultural Diversity strategies; serving diverse & low-income shoppers/markets and expansion of culturally specific commodities/markets.	\$ 1,850.00	R5DC	Monday, October 1, 2018
Market Expansion – local procurement, community engagement, incentives to SNAP/WIC shoppers,	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Thursday, November 1, 2018
Financing - access to unique capital; CDFI's, Micro, Gap & Social Crowdfunding	\$ 1,800.00	R5DC	Friday, January 4, 2019
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Employee law 101	\$ 1,800.00	CLC	Monday, September 2, 2019
Peer-2-Peer store and operational audits	\$ 35,000.00	Coalition members	October 2018 - April 2019, One a month
Succession Planning; staff and board	\$ 15,750.00	Impact MN	Oct 2018 - August 2019: 60 hours per ea of 7 Coalition members = 420 consultant hours. \$75.00 an hr billable rate. (average of 10.5 months @40 hrs a month of consultant time)
Board Development: strategic planning	\$ 15,750.00	Impact MN	

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Food Co-op Coalition Technical Assistance Plan

TA Sessions – Learn strategies, methods and models:

1. Intercultural Diversity strategies

- Staff/Board take intercultural diversity assessment
- Develop strategies of how to serve and build trust with diverse & low-income shoppers/markets expansion via stocking of culturally specific commodities and getting involved with and giving back to the community.

Trainer – Region Five Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Intercultural diversity assessment, recorded observations from a 3 day shopping sample to obtain baseline of shopper demographic, product inventory and sales reports

2. Market Expansion

- Connections to increase local procurement of locally grown/raised products
- Engaging community members before and after the store opening, hiring locally, and stocking foods requested by residents. How to work closely with resident groups and city council members.
- Execute new incentives for SNAP/WIC shoppers
- Offering in-store marketing directing people to healthy items (could be specific to dietary needs), store tours, taste tests, cooking demonstrations, meal kits (trending right now)
- Expansion of Health Care partnerships. Working with healthcare systems to provide pharmacies, clinics, health screenings, and/or nutritionists at the point of retail, implementing Produce Prescription programs, using hospital's Community Benefit Dollars food access-related projects

Trainer - Region Five Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Product inventory and sales reports, focus group sessions with shoppers and unengaged diverse and low-income community groups, recording of meeting notes for themes and community needs.

3. Financing

- Access to unique capital; CDFI's, Micro, Gap & Social Crowdfunding
- How to decide what programs are best for your business

Trainer – Region Five Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Balance and P&L statements, data collection of # of opportunities pursued and \$ secured.

4. Human Resources

- Employee retention strategies. Developing qualified employees and helping them rise in their careers, partnering with re-entry programs to train employees, supporting community engagement by building trust and a network of local employees and consumers

Trainer – Rural MN Concentrated Employment Program, Evaluation Methodology – Pre and post employee surveys including former employees, if possible. Employee focus groups, recorded feedback from 1 on 1 conversations between employee and Board member.

5. Technology

- Instruction on online tools; Social Media
- Branding and storytelling
- File/information management
- Point of Sale systems.

Trainer –Region Nine Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Product inventory and sales reports, Google Analytics, Social Media analytics

6. Grant writing

- How to assess if a funder is a good fit for your work.
- Learn the “must do’s” in grant writing and administration – budgets and value propositions.
- How to make reporting stress-free by storytelling throughout grant awards/projects/initiatives.

Trainer – Region Five Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Recorded observations, # of opportunities pursued and \$ secured, # new funders engaged

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7. Business Planning

- Inventory control, food waste planning – learning how to maintain and optimize fresh produce, stock shelves, price appropriately, minimize waste, and manage inventory
- 101 business essentials: budgeting, cash flow, sales projections

Trainer – Central Lakes College Small Business Development Center, Evaluation Methodology – Product inventory and sales reports, # of new systems developed to track waste/spoilage

8. WealthWorks Evaluation; qualitative & quantitative

- Learn why evaluation is so important, how to create success measures that retains rural wealth.
- The Community Capitals/WealthWorks framework.

Trainer – Region Five Development Commission, Evaluation Methodology – Establish baseline and methods for collection, recorded quarterly check-ins on collection progress and impact.

9. “Health” education & policy incorporation

- How to partner with local policy makers to improve cooperative business climate.

Trainer – Statewide Health Improvement Program educators, Evaluation Methodology – # of meetings with local policy makers, recorded changes in strength of relationship with policy makers and confidence, feeling of empowerment to effect policy change.

10. Collective Buying Power

- How to maximize buying power of each cooperative via contract purchasing.

Trainer – SourceWell, previously the National Joint Powers Alliance, Evaluation Methodology – Product inventory and sales reports, achieved margin, Balance and P&L statements

11. Employee & Business Law 101

- Ways to avoid the pitfalls of law suites and employee conflicts.

Trainer – Central Lakes College Customized Training, Evaluation Methodology – Recorded changes in strength of relationship with attorneys and confidence, feeling of empowerment to address legal concerns/issues.

Peer-2-Peer

12. Peer-2-Peer store and operational audits

Organizational and operational assessments provide an objective view of your current position and provide you with information and recommendations to prepare for potential changes or to fine tune current operations. Members from each of the 7 Co-ops will gather at one of the Coalition member stores to conduct a Peer-2-Peer interview. For consistency, a questionnaire will be co-created by Sprout and Coalition members in advance to utilize in all seven interviews.

Organizational assessments

- Review organizational structure
- Assess workflow and reporting structure
- Analyze organizational documentation
 - Personnel policies
 - Standard operating procedure
 - Board-management relations and reporting

Operational assessments

- Assess factors relating to operational success
- Labor
 - Efficiency
 - Margin management
 - Inventory effectiveness
 - Sales growth
 - Management reporting
 - Management meeting structure and effectiveness

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- Merchandising assessments
 - Assess current merchandising practices
 - Make recommendations to improve your store's merchandising approach
 - Train your staff in merchandising techniques
 - Provide tools for monitoring and maintaining your store's appearance

Trainer – Co-op Coalition Members, Evaluation Methodology – Collective product inventory and sales reports, achieved margin, Balance and P&L statements, # of referrals made, interview questionnaire

One-on-One

13. Succession Planning; staff and board

In order to attract and retain new talent upon succession or staff turnover, a Co-op Board requires healthy infrastructure. Succession planning starts here:

Healthy and Effective Boards

Training for all cooperatives together. Combination of Discussion, large and small group activities.

Training Objectives: Learn

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Stages of Development
3. Nonprofit/Cooperative Essentials: Rules, Regulations and Guidelines
4. Sound Decision-Making
5. Recruiting and Engaging New Board Members
6. Creating a Shared Vision, Priorities and Goals (Introduction)
7. Templates to create an action plan of staff & board succession – consultant assessment of plans and recommended revisions.

Evaluation Methodology – # of governance systems developed/improved, Board member surveys, # of new/potential Board members identified (recruited if allowable by bylaws term limits) that identify with Socially Disadvantaged Groups,

14. Board Development: strategic planning

Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance

Individual board (and key stakeholder) retreats and follow-up assistance.

Retreat Objectives:

1. Strategic Planning: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly
2. Creating a Shared Vision
3. Identifying 3-5 Key Priorities
4. Establishing Measurable Goals.

Following retreat, each cooperative would be provided with a plan template and direct technical assistance in order to create and finalize plans over a 3-6 month time period.

Additional Individual Group Workshops per customized need:

Cooperatives elect to take a deeper dive into working more effectively together, could consider taking Meyers Briggs assessment and follow-up activities (ex: Working in Teams, Effective Communication, Resolving Conflict...).

Trainer – for both #13 & #14 – IMPACT Minnesota, Evaluation Methodology – # of strategic plans completed, recording of new/improved methods of measurement, assessment of skills learned/improved, recorded methods of how socially disadvantaged groups will benefit in Strategic Plan.

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Local Support (3 page limit) Local support (maximum of 10 points).

Sprout has an established history of partnering with Technical Assistance providers for the benefit of local growers, makers, producers, and entrepreneurs. Through Sprout's facilitation, these groups set forth a schedule of learning opportunities, provided free/low cost, such as Succession Planning, GAPs Farm Food Safety, Greenhouse 101, Evaluation, Grantwriting, Digital Marketing, Social Media for Small Farms, Career Planning and Marketing for Artists and Makers. Workshops have been conducted by partners such as the Small Business Development Center, EnSearch, INC., Springboard for the Arts, Impact Minnesota, University of Minnesota, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Minnesota Food Charter, and more. Education extends to consumers to promote sustainability and resiliency (food, energy, personal and community health, food safety, licensing and regulation, and transportation). Sprout and its Technical Assistance providers share a vision of creating equitable access to TA which builds and sustains vibrant, creative and resilient communities.

To implement food system related actions in the Resilient Region Plan, Sprout partnered with many organizations to open a regional food distribution and processing facility, called the **Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace**, in Little Falls, MN in April 2015. The Marketplace was intentionally built with a classroom to host workshops and community meetings.

With support from ArtPlace America, Sprout co-organized 13 workshops since December 2016 assisting local food producers/manufacturers and local art related businesses.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Grant Writing | 8. GAP Training |
| 2. Evaluation | 9. Career Planning for Artists |
| 3. Storytelling | 10. Marketing for Artists |
| 4. Digital Marketing | 11. Art of Entrepreneurship |
| 5. Greenhouse Basics | 12. How To Do Community Art Projects |
| 6. Growing and Marketing Garlic | 13. Wellness from the Ground Up |
| 7. AURI- Mini MBA | |

The attendance to above list ranged from 17-44 attendees per workshop. Delivery of the proposed SDGG TA Work Plan to Socially Disadvantaged Cooperatives aligns well with our mission driven purpose and historical regional role and serves a group that has not participated or benefited from the previous workshop activity. One Food Co-op Coalition member shared,

"It is difficult to take generalized information that is typically delivered to a variety of business structures in ways that truly inform our uniquely managed rural co-ops...this plan allows us to absorb the learning from a first position." – Pia Lopez, Minnesota Street Market

Sprout's Food Hub operation aggregates and distributes locally grown produce, coordinating farm to school programs for six school districts in Central Minnesota, Head Start programs in Little Falls, Brainerd, and Baxter, as well as three hospital systems in a Prescriptive CSA (RxCSA) program. Positive physical and mental health and behavior change outcomes from RxCSA programs have garnered attention and support to advance new, innovative models for health intervention that further supports rural economic viability and vice versa. The Region Five Food Co-op Coalition is an integral partner in this work as market channels for Sprout's local producers to sell their products as well as community members to access fresh, healthy food. Sprout's community support has been garnered due to demonstrated delivered impacts on economic opportunities for growers and artists and cultural/social cohesion in our communities.

Sprout Wealth Works Report

http://www.regionfive.org/cms/files/SproutWealthWorks18_Web.pdf

University of MN Extension Economic Contributions of Sprout Food Hub

[www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Economic%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Sprout%20Food%20Hub%20\(002\).pdf](http://www.resilientregion.org/cms/files/Economic%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Sprout%20Food%20Hub%20(002).pdf)

Sprout's history of coordinating with other local developmental organizations, state/federal agencies and with colleague partner consultants is articulated in this proposal's letters of support.

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Letters of support secured from:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Signor</u>	<u>Role</u>
1. Everybody's Market	Nancy Uhlenkamp	beneficiary
2. Down Home Foods	Barb Uselman	beneficiary
3. Ideal Green Market	Barb Mann	beneficiary
4. Purple Carrot Market	Susy Prosapio	beneficiary
5. Minnesota Street Market	Pia Lopez	beneficiary
6. Crow Wing Food Co-op	Jessy Goble (McShane)	beneficiary
7. Morrison Co. EDA	Carol Anderson	local development organization
8. Initiative Foundation	Don Hickman	local community foundation
9. Crow Wing Energize	Cassie Carey	county public/private dev. coalition
10. Wadena Co. EDA	Katie Bobich	local development organization

As a member of the Food Cooperative Coalition, Sprout has worked with all of the cooperatives listed in this SDGG application from formation to advancing regional branding and collaborative work. Sprout participates on an equal level in peer-2-peer consulting, advancing technical assistance opportunities and providing overall support through the regional branding “Why Co-ops” Campaign.



The organizational partners listed above play an integral role in the work of providing technical assistance to socially disadvantaged groups. Continued partnership development, technical assistance training for all local food value-chain members, lifting up socially disadvantaged growers, food entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and the Boards, staff, and volunteers that support them, and a commitment to rural-to-rural initiatives will bring success to this proposed project. Sprout is committed to the role of coordinating the above listed organizations and Technical Assistance providers to fulfill the Work Plan outlined on [pages 17-22](#), in alignment with the time period of this grant.

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Administrator Discretionary Points (3 page limit)

Eligible applicants who want to be considered for discretionary points must discuss how their work plan and budget supports one or more of the five following key strategies:

- (i) Achieving e-Connectivity for Rural America;
- (ii) Improving Quality of Life;
- (iii) Supporting a Rural Workforce;
- (iv) Harnessing Technological Innovation; and
- (v) Economic Development

Sprout MN has not, nor any of the Region Five Food Co-op Coalition members, previously been awarded an SDGG grant. The Work Plan in this application seeks to assist rural communities across 6 counties, on a regional scale, in Central Minnesota, by furthering the economic development along the local food value chain. Investments into socially disadvantaged food Cooperatives has a ripple effect which impacts multiple areas, described in Secretary Sonny Perdue's "Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity", especially:

The "Call to Action #2: Improving Quality of Life". Specifically under the Objectives and Recommended Actions #6 – Improve Community Resilience Planning.

As early as 2007, our rural region has recognized the local food system as one of our strongest regional assets. Since that time, we have made intentional efforts toward creating a regional food system that provides equitable access to markets for producers, generates local wealth, and provides access to healthy affordable foods. This work is specifically focused on offering opportunities to those with barriers to participation in the Agricultural economy. Currently, of the 80 small family farms Sprout works with, the top five (in terms of pounds of aggregated and distributed product) include Latino, Amish, and farms primarily operated by women. In central Minnesota, the "Resilient Region" consortium – of which Sprout MN had a major role, addressed agricultural viability and food insecurity in a rural context. The Region Five Development Commission (R5DC), a long-term partner of Sprout MN, received \$800,000.00 HUD/DOT/EPA Sustainable Communities Planning grant in 2010 to develop a 5-county, regional strategic plan called the Resilient Region Plan. The Resilient Region Plan focused on integrating key sustainability and resilience topics of housing, transportation, energy, natural resources, connectivity/broadband, health care, education/workforce development, changing populations, efficiencies and effectiveness, and economic engines.

The Resilient Region Plan was created by over 600 diverse regional residents (not just business and organization leaders, but residents) from 2010- 2012 and was driven by a desire to balance and improve our economic prosperity and be a place that has quality of life for all people in ways that could be self-fulfilling and sustainable. The Resilient Region Plan explicitly identified arts/culture and agriculture as key "economic engines" for the region and emphasized the need to promote and assist the agricultural sector, specifically local foods.

Resilient Region Plan found here: <http://www.resilientregion.org/region-plan/index.html>

Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) is the region's Economic Development District and benefits from a 40+ year partnership with the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration – EDA. R5DC is responsible for the public engagement that crafts the regions Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). The Resilient Region plan took an inclusive and strategic approach to regional planning that informed the process of the CEDS since 2010. The 2016 to 2021 EDA approved (and highly touted by the National Association of Development Organizations) R5DC CEDS is woven with SMART goals and strategies that build and enhance rural regional prosperity, environmental stewardship and quality of life for all people.

<http://www.regionfive.org/cms/files/2016-2021%20CREDS.pdf>.

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CORNER
STONE
2

Economic Competitiveness

TRENDS

- Renewable energy use (RE)
- Local foods/sustainable agriculture (SBG)
- TA/Support for small businesses (SBG)
- Strong work ethic/high workforce participation (E & I)
- Multiple forms of access to capital (co-ops, crowdfunding, etc.) (SBG)

"Lack of internet options limits the ability of small businesses to grow" - survey response

REGIONAL SMART GOALS and STRATEGIES

Entrepreneurship & Innovation

REGIONAL SMART GOAL
Working with other MN regions, improve Greater MN ranking on Stats America Innovation Index from 91.8% (Greater MN) to the National Average 100 by 2025.

STRATEGIES

- Broaden access to capital to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Establish and expand entrepreneurship education programs in K-12 school. Support programs, like CEO and Bridges Academics, across the state.
- Invest in value added opportunities from agriculture and forest products.

Small Business Growth

REGIONAL SMART GOAL
Develop 2-3 new capital investment programs over next 10 years available to small/medium enterprises (SME's - small = 20 or fewer employees, medium = 21-50 employees) to allow growth and job creation for all of Region Five businesses.

STRATEGIES


- Utilize public-private partnerships to facilitate increased SME business lending.
- Establish new business programs to fill gaps in the capital market.
- Expand and improve technical assistance for beginning businesses.

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy:

REGIONAL SMART GOAL
Increase deployment of renewable energy by 10% by 2025.

STRATEGIES

- Add programs/policies that reduce the carbon footprint through renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives.
- Infrastructure: Pursue solutions to building local renewable energy infrastructure (i.e. electric car stations).
- Solar access: Ensure access to solar energy for all housing.



11

Page 11 of the R5DC CEDS (we renamed the CREDs in 2016 adding "regional"/R) articulates how this SDGG application aligns with local strategies expressly the strategy to "Expand and improve Technical Assistance"

Our region concurs with Secretary Perdue's report to the President in that "coordination between various agencies and programs of the Dept. of Ag can enhance the effectiveness of all federal agencies...." And our R5DC CEDS, aka "locally-created prosperity plan" points directly to how this SDGG applications funds strategies that not only align federal resources, but state and local as well.

Improvement of community resilience can be enhanced through funding of our SDGG proposal.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION MEASURES

This entire innovative TA Work Plan will reach underserved socially disadvantaged cooperatives and strengthen our food access points as community leaders who are invested in more than just economic prosperity and physical health and wellness.

Our holistic approach addresses **8 Forms of Wealth** we are building within our rural/regional local food value chain with specific focus on creating wealth within **the 8 Community Capitals** (Financial,

Intellectual, Individual, Built, Environmental, Political, Social and Cultural assets), also known as the WealthWorks model of delivering "Value Chains".

The WealthWorks model of building value chains aligned with the regions guiding principles and built upon the foundational concept of when ALL 8 forms of wealth are further executed through the "Ownership and Livelihoods" lens of local wealth, that is wealth that sticks into the communities they are created within, they positively impact the financial, environmental and social outcomes. Sprout's technical assistance delivery model is centered around feedback loops to incorporate participant responses and critiques with performance tracking and monitoring. We practice the PLAN-DO -LEARN- ADJUST model and seek continued improvement of evaluation. Sprout will also collect qualitative and quantitative data from consultant partners that share impacts in all 8 forms of wealth.

TO ASSESS BUILDING CAPACITY OF THE CONSULTANT TA PROVIDER AGENCY (CONSULTANTS ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS):

1. Has this TA delivery project improved your agencies overall TA delivery?
2. Before your agency began delivery TA through this project, did your agency engage with diverse populations (Latino, Native American, etc.) or people with low incomes? If so, how?
3. Has the TA emphasis on building inclusive economies that work for diverse populations and people with low incomes influenced the way that you work? How?
4. Did delivery of TA have any other impact on the way you consider programing that supports the region's economy? If so, how?
5. Has your organization transferred the knowledge of how to deliver TA to Co-op sites to colleagues in the field?

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6. As a TA provider, what challenges and opportunities do you see in the next 12 months? Next 5 years?

THIS IS A SAMPLE QUALITATIVE/NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY OFFERED TO COOPERATIVES:

Focus on the impact that the TA has had on your business and in your region. This is storytelling narrative

1. Do you think that the delivered TA efforts to strengthen food access has improved your business? If so, how?
2. Do you think the TA has benefitted other businesses or the sector as a whole? How? *(Through stronger business linkages, greater access to resources, better access to demand, improved support services.)*
3. Does your business create products or job opportunities for low-income individuals or diverse populations (Latino, Native American, etc.) in the community? What kind? How many?

Funding of this SDGG proposal can **build advancement of the Technical Assistance practitioner field** through grant reports and stories shared through practitioner networks such as the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations whose membership is comprised of the states 8 other Regional Development Commissions and the West Central Initiative Foundation all of which are Economic Development Districts. Stories and learnings will surely be shared with regional state legislators as is mandated by the RDO State Statue.

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APPENDIX A

[Instructions] If applying as a Cooperative or a Group of Cooperatives, you must verify your incorporation and status in the State that you have applied by providing the State's Certificate of Good Standing and your Articles of Incorporation. You may also submit your By-laws if they provide additional information not included in your Articles of Incorporation that will verify your status as a Cooperative or a Group of Cooperatives. If applying as a nonprofit corporation, you must provide evidence of your status as a nonprofit corporation in good standing and your Articles of Incorporation. If applying as an institution of higher education, you must qualify as an Institution of Higher Education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001. You must apply as only one type of applicant. If the requested verification documents are not included, your application will not be considered for funding.

Included in this Application:

- Sprout 501c3 letter of determination, Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Membership list, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Certificate of Good Standing
- Crow Wing Food Cooperative Board of Directors Membership list, Certificate of Good Standing, Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- Minnesota Street Market Board of Directors Membership list, Certificate of Good Standing and Articles of Incorporation
- Everybody's Market Board of Directors Membership list, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Certificate of Good Standing
- Down Home Foods Board of Directors Membership list, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Certificate of Good Standing
- Ideal Green Market Board of Directors Membership list, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Certificate of Good Standing
- Purple Carrot Board of Directors Membership list, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Certificate of Good Standing

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APPENDIX B

Enclosed Resumes for:

Applicant

Arlene Jones, Executive Director, Sprout MN

Natalie Keane, Facility Director, Sprout MN

Consultants identified in Task 1 of the Work Plan.

Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director, Region Five Development Commission (R5DC)

Affiliate 501c3 North Central Economic Development Association (NCEDA)

Sandy Voigt, Regional Business Specialist, R5DC & NCEDA

Ashley Aukes, Communications Specialist – Region Nine Development Commission (R9DC)

Craig Nathan, Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (RMCEP)

Julie Anderholm, North Central Minnesota Small Business Development Center

Rebekah Kent, Central Lakes College – Customized Training

Kris Haugen,, Minnesota Department of Health - MN Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Paul Drange, SourceWell (formerly: National Joint Powers Alliance)

Coalition member staff representative identified in Task 2 of the Work Plan.

Because Co-op Coalition members are offering Peer-2-Peer learning we have included Co-op Staff bios and resumes.

Jessy Goble, Crow Wing Food Co-op - cwfoodco-op@brainerd.net

Barbara L. Uselman, Down Home Foods - downhome@arvig.net

Nancy Uhlenkamp, Everybody's Market - nancyuhlenkamp@gmail.com

Barbara L. Mann, Ideal Green Market - barnmanb@gmail.com

Pia Lopez, Minnesota Street Market - pialopez1958@gmail.com

Catherine M. Hartle, The Purple Carrot - cathyhartle46@gmail.com

Consultants identified in Task 3 of the Work Plan.

Linda Holiday, IMPACT Minnesota

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BIOS OF REGION FIVE FOOD CO-OP COALITION STAFF MEMBERS:

Barb Mann, Manager Ideal Green Market Co-op

Barb has been with the Ideal Green Market Co-op in Pequot Lakes since January 2015 in its developmental stages. She was contracted to serve as coordinator to aid community residents to take it to the next level with her coordination and community organizing skills of 35 years. The Co-op opened its doors November 13, 2015 and Barb has continued to work in varying capacities shifting to manager in January 2018 and continues to present. She brings her organizing and networking skills, along with her ability to build a strong sense of community. Her experience working with developing farmers markets over the past 10 years and connecting with local growers and value-added goods vendors in the area continue to serve the co-op well. She's also well connected beyond the local co-op with the Food Co-op Coalition and served as the Coordinator for the "Why Co-ops?" Educational Campaign as the first project of the Coalition in the region.

Jessy Goble – Mcshane, Crow Wing Food Co-op

Jessy began her tenure at CWFC in 2009 and has owned, operated, and managed small businesses for nearly 20 years. Jessy's role at the co-op has evolved over the years, hired as the assistant manager, assumed General Manager position in 2012. Jessy manages all operations of the Co-op including budgeting, monthly financial prep, staff supervision, community outreach, strategic planning and board development. Jessy is dedicated to continuing our relationship with our community, becoming a voice for the farmers, assisting other co-op's find their own path, and to professional growth of herself, staff and Board to meet shared goals.

Cathy Hartle, Purple Carrot Market

Cathy's independent consulting work is based on an accumulation of many of her past professional experiences:

- 9 years full-time work at the Initiative Foundation overseeing and training in the foundation's organizational effectiveness programs to help strengthen not-for-profit organizations and serving as lead staff for organizational and program evaluation. (Cathy remains at the foundation currently on a half-time basis, focusing her time as lead staff on special organizational development projects)
- 10 years in nonprofit management, training and program development,
- Extensive experience serving with and consulting with a variety of nonprofit boards.
- 15 years in tax and general accounting, as company owner.

Cathy holds a Master's Degree Counseling Psychology, St. Mary's University, Minnesota, has continued her education in many ways, including participating in multiple training events through nationally recognized organizations such as BoardSource, the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, and the Nonprofits Assistance Fund.

Barbara Uselman, Down Home Foods

Barbara has owned Down Home Foods since April 1, 2011. After almost twenty years, she left a job in banking to become an entrepreneur in the health food industry. She is a supplemental consultant. Barb manages employees, maintain inventory, all financial aspects of the business. Under Barb's leadership Down Home Foods has increased inventory in the store by 50%. Is currently engaged in a study on improved product lines. In 2017, Barbara joined the Food Co-op Coalition along with five other co-ops in an effort to help each other grow! Barbara also co-owns with her husband, Building Maintenance Systems, LLC. And has managed the books for that company.

Nancy Uhlenkamp, Everybody's Market

Nancy is employed by Todd County. has been interested in eating organic food for many years and joined Everybody's Market as a member in 2008. In 2015 Nancy joined the Board and was elected Vice-president in November 2015. Nancy was elected President in 2016. In 2017 Everybody's Market joined the Coop Coalition and became a part of the Why Coops? Campaign. Nancy became a member of the Why Coops? Committee and helped with the planning of the grant funds use. Nancy attends the quarterly Coop Coalition meetings.

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Pia Lopez, Minnesota Street Market

Pia Lopez came on the board of the Minnesota Street Market in May 2015. She writes: Just as I spent 20 years devoted to “local” news as a journalist, I bring a big belief in local to my role at the co-op. We Americans have gotten so far away from real connections to our food — and to the land, places and people that sustain food and artisan craft production. I want to be part, working with others who are equally passionate, of bringing those connections back in our own small way. I jumped in. Still here.” Currently, Pia is the Acting General Manager of the co-op, overseeing the transition from 2011 founding/start-up phase of the St. Joseph food & art cooperative to the next stage. Responsible for co-op operations while meeting business and organizational goals. Reports to the Board of Directors. Still wanting to do more: Grow sales and numbers of shoppers. Encourage a different kind of shopping (fresh convenient, often -- not just the once-a-week mega shopping trip to the supermarket).

Encourage a different kind of food pipeline — small- and medium-scale, minus harmful synthetic herbicides, pesticides and soil amendments. Continue to improve our physical space and inventory. Grow community around local food. Fired up, ready to go!

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APPENDIX C

[Instructions] You may submit a maximum of 10 letters of support. Support letters should come from potential beneficiaries and other local organizations. Letters received from Technical Assistance providers and Congressional members will not be included in the count of support letters received. Additionally, identical form letters signed by multiple potential beneficiaries and/or local organizations will not be included in the count of support letters received.

11. Everybody's Market	Nancy Uhlenkamp	beneficiary
12. Down Home Foods	Barb Uselman	beneficiary
13. Ideal Green Market	Barb Mann	beneficiary
14. Purple Carrot Market	Susy Prosapio	beneficiary
15. Minnesota Street Market	Pia Lopez	beneficiary
16. Crow Wing Food Co-op	Jessy Goble (McShane)	beneficiary
17. Morrison Co. EDA	Carol Anderson	local development organization
18. Initiative Foundation	Don Hickman	local community foundation
19. Crow Wing Energize	Cassie Carey	county public/private dev. coalition
20. Wadena Co. EDA	Katie Bobich	local development organization