

Request for Qualifications Plainfield Co-op Expansion and Renovation Project Feasibility Study

The Plainfield Co-op in Plainfield, VT is planning on conducting a feasibility study for its new expansion and renovation project. We will be contracting for services in these three areas:

- Project consultant
- Market analyst
- Fundraising consultant

This Request for Qualifications is to determine any interest you may have in any or all of these positions.

About The Plainfield Co-op

The Plainfield Co-op is a for-profit cooperative corporation in the village of Plainfield, VT. It was founded in 1976 and is now located in the historic “Grange” building off Main St. in Plainfield.

The Co-op is comprised of two parts, the retail grocery store on the first floor of the building and the Plainfield Community Center, a public gathering space, on the second floor. The store has an active business selling organic and other natural foods and produce. More than 40% of the store’s products are sourced from local producers. The Community Center is a large open space used for educational and other events by local residents.

The Co-op is a cooperative owned by its 550+ member-owners. The Board of Directors oversees the Co-op and provides general guidance and long-term direction. The day-to-day operations are managed by the Management Collective (MC), a non-hierarchical group of people, who are the decision makers. Each person in the MC also has specific responsibilities in the organization.

The Co-op has been steadily growing its business for years and has now reached the point where more room is needed. As a result, a 550 square foot expansion of the building is being planned along with some major repairs to the existing building.

Feasibility Study Overview

Prior to embarking on the expansion/renovation project, we will be conducting a feasibility study to determine if the Co-op can successfully fund and execute the project. This feasibility study will take place in the second half on 2017.

We are looking for consultant(s) to help us determine:

- What is the Co-op’s current position in the local retail grocery market
- Where should we be expending our fundraising efforts
- How to assess what funds we can expect from a member loan campaign
- Suggestions on how to run an effective member loan/giving campaign

- What marketing channels and methods will yield the best results
- How to assess what are target customer should be
- Is the Co-op in a financial position to incur long term debt
- How can we estimate the amount of new business we can reasonably expect from the expansion/renovation
- How best to use available personnel (Board, Management Collective, volunteers) to facilitate the expansion/renovation
- Obtain a set of working drawings in sufficient detail to enable contractor bids
- A communication plan to keep our Member-Owners informed

Consulting Services Needed

To answer the questions above, we plan to engage one to three consultants for the project:

Project consultant will oversee the feasibility study project including:

- Coordinating the efforts of the Market Consultant, Fundraising Consultant, architect and Co-op staff and volunteers.
- Assigning the project tasks, maintain the project Gantt chart and be responsible for schedule adherence
- Coordinating the completion of the Internal Readiness Assessment and Financial Feasibility Study
- Tracking project expenses and budget monitoring
- Communicating project status to the Co-op Board and Management Collective.

Market consultant will be responsible overall marketing analysis and forecasting and:

- Conducting a market study that will consider demographics, competition, and provide a sales forecast based on a set of assumptions and conditions
- Assessing the economic impact of expanding/improving the Co-op's retail space and an analysis of the practicality of expansion at the Co-op's current location.
- Reviewing the facility/site characteristics of the existing store
- Developing the sales forecast for the Co-op after the proposed relocation/expansion

Fundraising consultant will evaluate various possible sources of project funding including:

- Evaluating the potential for Member loans and Member gifts
- Identifying potential government and NGO sources of funding
- Determining the best mix of funding sources, including long term debt, to enable project success
- Assisting the Co-op in deciding whether to split off the Community Center as a 501c3 entity.

Consultant(s) Qualifications

We are looking experienced professional(s) with prior experience in projects of this type and size, especially in rural, retail grocery industry. Examples of previous engagements should be supplied.

Response requested

At this time, we are searching for consultants that are interested in bidding on this project. If you interested, please send a letter with a statement of your qualifications and experience by June 30, 2017 to:

Bob Fancher
133 Mill St.
Plainfield, VT 05667

or

bhfancher@gmail.com

If you have any questions, you can contact Bob Fancher at bhfancher@gmail.com

Not responding to this Request for Qualifications will not prohibit you from submitting a formal bid when requested.