

# Seeking: Consultant to Support National Funder Engagement Project on Institutional Food Procurement

[Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders](https://safsf.org) (SAFSF) is seeking an experienced consultant to lead a two-year national project at the intersection of philanthropic strategy and institutional food procurement. The goals of the project are to: (1) increase adoption of institutional procurement as a food systems strategy among funders, and (2) deepen strategy alignment and coordination among funders and field leaders around institutional procurement as a lever for food systems transformation.

The ideal candidate brings deep fluency in both the philanthropic funding landscape and the institutional procurement field — including familiarity with key funders, food system stakeholders, and the policy, infrastructure, and capital dynamics that shape procurement-led regional food system change. This person is equally comfortable conducting landscape research and stakeholder interviews as they are facilitating funder convenings and producing polished, publication-ready materials. They are a skilled project manager who can hold multiple workstreams simultaneously, a trusted presence who can represent SAFSF and this initiative with credibility across diverse funder audiences, and a strategic thinker who can synthesize complex information into clear, actionable guidance for philanthropy.

**Contract Period:** September 2026 - May 2028

**Applications Requested By:** July 31, 2026 (submission details below)

**Anticipated Start Date:** September 15, 2026

## Background

SAFSF mobilizes diverse capital partners in support of just and sustainable food systems. We envision a future where food and agriculture are climate resilient, just, and democratic. We connect, guide, and mobilize funders in support of community-led solutions and systems change. SAFSF members are individual investors, regranting organizations,

community foundations, corporate and private foundations, over 100 organizations in all, operating throughout the U.S. and abroad. Funders in the SAFSF network support work within all parts of the food and farming system and at the intersections of issues, including climate change and resilience, community health, equity, justice, and rural development.

**SAFSF's Procurement Project** is designed to shift how philanthropy shows up in one of the most promising — and underleveraged — drivers of regional food system transformation: institutional procurement. At the individual and organizational level, this project aims to generate meaningful shifts in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among funders who are not yet investing in institutional procurement — as well as those who are investing but doing so in relative isolation. At the field and system level, this project aims to shift the landscape from fragmented, siloed philanthropic investment toward a more coordinated national funder strategy.

**Project year 1 (2026-2027)** will build shared understanding, relationships, and early alignment among funders around institutional food procurement. **Project year 2 (2027-2028)** will activate aligned philanthropic and blended capital strategies that catalyze scalable institutional procurement efforts across key regions.

## Scope of Work

For all projects, the consultant is expected to collaborate with input and direction from SAFSF's Executive Director and Policy Program Manager, and meet regularly with these staff members.

## Strategic Research and Coordination

**Landscape Assessment: Collaborate with the SAFSF Policy Program Manager to Conduct 10–20 In-Depth Interviews and/or Focus Groups with Regional and National Funders**

**Timeline:** October 2026 - March 2027

**Purpose:** The purpose of the interviews and working group space is to understand how different funders' strategies overlap, complement, or diverge from each other, and also understand gaps or opportunities for better convergence. The interviews and one-on-one engagement will be essential for determining (and fostering) interest among funders for a cohesive approach to procurement.

- Assess regional readiness and identify 3–4 priority geographies (e.g., Midwest, Southeast, Southwest, California) for deeper engagement
- Assess whether to and when to launch a funder working group (or other coordinating format) to organize funders around a cohesive national procurement strategy

### **Responsibilities**

- Collaborate with the SAFSF Policy Program Manager to identify funder interviewees
- Lead the design of interview questions
- Lead interview or focus group facilitation
- Lead interview synthesis and analysis to refine and strengthen the Funder Roadmap
- Collaborate with SAFSF Policy Program Manager on development and facilitation of a working group or other ongoing coordination format to align funder strategy

## **Funder Outreach Strategy and Convenings**

### **Collaborate with SAFSF to organize a national funder briefing (virtual)**

**Timeline:** March 2027

**Purpose:** The purpose of the briefing is to introduce institutional procurement as a vehicle for positive economic, environmental, workforce, and health impacts. The briefing will also build the case for food procurement as a “multi-solver” for diverse funder audiences.

- Increase adoption of procurement strategy among funders from adjacent issue areas, including place-based or regional funders, climate, health, labor, and democracy

### **Responsibilities**

- Support with speaker identification and preparation
- Support with run of show development and content framing
- Identify messaging and clear calls to action for “non-food” funders

### **Collaborate with SAFSF to host two regional in-person funder learning convenings**

**Timeline:** Summer 2027 - Spring 2028

**Purpose:** Highlight place-based procurement success stories and investment-ready opportunities, with a focus on generating new and increased funding for institutional food procurement.

### **Responsibilities**

- Attend in person and provide facilitation, moderation, or event leadership as needed
- Support identifying geography based on insights from interviews
- Lead run of show development and content framing
- Support with speaker identification and speaker preparation
- Synthesize written insights to refine and strengthen the Funder Roadmap

## National Funder Roadmap

**Development Timeline:** October 2026 - May 2028

**Publication Date:** May 2028

**Purpose:** The purpose of the roadmap is to identify specific opportunities for philanthropy to spur cross-sector investment in institutional food procurement, including the role of diverse capital asset allocators and stakeholders in developing blended capital stacks.

- Explore convergent strategies and capital pathways across phases of a procurement-led regional food system transformation
- Provide recommendations for funders on (1) policy and advocacy funding needs; (2) infrastructure and supply chain investment gaps, such as food hubs and processing facilities; and (3) leverage points for catalytic public-private financing
- The roadmap will anchor continued funder engagement, convening, and skill-building into 2028 and beyond

### Responsibilities

- Develop, write, and edit the report
- Identify specific case studies for inclusion
- Identify phases of capital need across procurement-driven regional food system transformation
- Map infrastructure and investment gaps necessary to meet institutional demand
- Outline aligned philanthropic strategies across policy, implementation, and supply chain investment
- Collaborate with SAFSF staff on visualization and graphic design of the final report

### Deliverables

All deliverables must be completed during the course of the performance period.

Throughout the project, the consultant and SAFSF staff will determine the best dates to

organize up to two in-person regional convenings. All written reports will become property of SAFSF.

- Synthesized Notes and Key Takeaways from Funder Interviews, focus groups, or working group meetings
- Content Outline for Virtual Funder Briefing
- Content Outlines for In-Person Regional Convenings
- Synthesized Notes and Key Takeaways from In-Person Convenings
- Final Funder Roadmap. At a minimum, the final roadmap should include:
  - Summary of the project scope and goals
  - Insights from funder interviews, focus groups, and working group meetings
  - Insights from in-person regional briefings and specific case studies
  - Identified policy and advocacy funding needs; infrastructure and supply chain investment gaps such as food hubs and processing facilities; and leverage points for catalytic public-private financing

## Project Timeline At A Glance

- **Contract Period:** September 2026 - May 2028
- **Conduct Landscape Assessment:** October 2026 - March 2027
- **Host Virtual Briefing:** March 2027
- **Host Two In-Person Convenings:** Summer 2027 - Spring 2028
- **National Funder Roadmap Production:** October 2026 - May 2028

## Qualifications

Qualified candidates will possess the following:

- Deep knowledge of the philanthropic and national funding ecosystem, key funders already supporting food procurement, and development of philanthropic strategies
- Deep familiarity with institutional food procurement pathways
- Familiarity with stakeholders in the field, including institutional food buyers, producers, food hubs, educational or verification programs, and coalitions
- Enthusiastic about collaboration with SAFSF staff, members, and diverse capital partners relevant to this project
- Experience conducting landscape research, leading strategy development, and facilitating collaborative meetings
- Familiarity with planning virtual and in-person events
- Demonstrated experience producing high-quality materials and reports on deadline

- Ability to effectively represent SAFSF and the project in a way that conveys respect for the field and the intention of the project to identify useful and impactful recommendations for funders

## Submission Details

SAFSF welcomes applications until **July 31 at 5:00 PM PT**. [Please use this link](#) to upload your resume or LinkedIn profile, 2 professional references, and provide answers to the following three questions:

1. **Subject Matter Expertise.** Please describe your familiarity with institutional food procurement pathways. What sectors or institutions are you most familiar with (e.g., hospitals, universities, school districts, correctional facilities), and what do you see as the key barriers and opportunities for shifting food procurement toward regional, sustainable, or equity-centered supply chains? Please share any direct experience working with funders, advocates, institutions, or supply chain partners in this context. *(2,000 characters max)*
2. **Philanthropic Ecosystem & Strategy Development.** Please describe your experience working with philanthropy and developing philanthropic (or other investment) strategies. What is your familiarity with funders supporting food systems and food procurement initiatives? Please share a specific example. *(2,000 characters max)*
3. **Research, Facilitation & Deliverables.** Please give us insight into a project(s) in which you conducted landscape research, facilitated collaborative convenings (virtual or in-person), and/or produced written materials or reports under deadline. What was your process for managing these workstreams simultaneously, and how did you ensure the final products met a high standard of quality? *(2,000 characters max)*

SAFSF staff will contact a small number of applicants for a brief conversation and follow-up questions. All applicants will be notified of selection by August 31, 2026. The contract will commence on September 15, 2026.

## Compensation

The total project budget available for the consultant is \$80,000 over the 2-year performance period—payment schedule to be discussed with the final candidate.