DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

# Request For Qualifications
# Downtown Neighborhood Seeks Community Garden Facilitators

## Deadline to respond: March 1, 2023

**Deliver to:**
**Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.**
**Attention: Kendsie Channing,**
**Manager of Neighbor Experience**
**29 Pearl St. NW, Suite 1**
**Grand Rapids, MI 49503**
**or**
**kchanning@downtowngr.org**

# Downtown Neighborhood Seeks Community Garden Facilitators

Inquiries and submittals should be sent to Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. attn.: Kendsie Channing, Manager of Neighbor Experience, kchanning@downtowngr.org.

**Request for Qualifications**

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI) seeks a community partner or partners who can program a 40-50 plot community garden on the West side of Downtown Grand Rapids. DGRI has allocated 10 parking spaces available at 250 Seward Ave. NW as the location for the community garden.

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications is to identify a partner who can create, expand and cultivate a diverse community of garden users to grow their own food, pollinator plants and community-centric place.

**Background**

In 2016 DGRI and the City of Grand Rapids adopted GR Forward, a 10-year master plan for Downtown that was the culmination of significant community input about the future of Downtown. Goal 2 of this plan focuses on improving the quality of life for Downtown neighbors. Chief among the priorities is expanding access to fresh food and promoting green building and sustainable site design principles.

Through the work of the Downtown Neighbor Network, neighbor interest in creating a community garden came to light in 2023. Fresh food access remains a top goal that would greatly improve the quality of living experience in Downtown Grand Rapids. Priority will be given to qualifications that best meet the following community-informed recommendations:

- Sustain regular in-person programming at the garden location.
    - Varied hours to provide greater access to neighbors at different times of day/evening is a bonus.
- Provide a variety of fresh, local fruit, vegetable and pollinator plant or seed options.
    - Ethnically diverse plants to meet a variety of audiences.
    - Organic materials only.
- Partner with diverse array of local farms and/or food providers.

**Requirements**

To be considered, please provide detailed qualifications of how your organization can fulfill the following aspirations for community garden programming in the growing season and post-season. We are open to partnerships and encourage innovative ideas to meet the priorities set by the Downtown Neighbor Network community.

**Qualifications must include detailed information about the following categories.**

Please be clear, concise and thorough in your response.

1. **Concept**
    - Describe your idea for robust community garden programming to build community, create a worthwhile experience, and help neighbors produce food within a community garden.
    - Describe education efforts you can provide related to use of produce grown in the garden. What opportunities can you provide for ideas such as canning, fermenting, preserving, etc.?
    - Describe the implementation plan and timeline for your concept.

2. **Operational Details**
    - **Qualifications**: A detailed description of your or your organization's experience with programming community gardens or growing food in a diverse urban setting.
    - **Approach**: An overview of your proposed programming model for this location to meet the priorities of neighbors. Please indicate your planned operation hours and required staffing.
    - **Product Sourcing**: Share the products - specifically seeds, starter plants or supplies - that you can source and intend to provide in this location.
    - **Estimated Rates or Fees**: Explain the costs that will need to be covered for your idea to come to life. If you have other parties who can share costs, please include.

3. **Additional Questions**
    - What barriers do you foresee in programming a community garden in the Downtown area? How do you plan to address them?
    - What additional resources might you require to program a community garden in Downtown Grand Rapids?
    - Would you consider the possibility of partnership with other community entities that address food accessibility and/or justice?

**Evaluation Factors**

Qualifications will be evaluated by a committee of neighbors and DGRI staff. A rubric will be used to evaluate qualifications based on the following criteria:

- Clarity, conciseness and thoroughness.
- Project understanding & approach for achieving objectives.
- Alignment with Community goals.
- Diversity of project team, producers and partners.
- Rates & fees to deliver programming.
- Proposed timeline that prioritizes urgency of building neighborhood capacity.

**Timeline**

- January 30, 2024: RFQ issued.
- February 13, 2024: RFQ questions and clarifications due no later than 5 PM ET.
- February 20, 2024: Responses to RFQs questions issued.
- **March 1, 2024: Deadline to submit RFQ is 5 PM ET.**
    - Please email a digital copy to kchanning@downtowngr.org or drop off a hard copy at Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. at 29 Pearl St. NW, Suite #1.
- March 15, 2024: Notification of RFQ selection.
- May 1, 2024: Garden bed plot building day.

| Name of Evaluator: | | | | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of Applicant:** | | | | |
| **DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAMMING** | | | | |
| **EVALUATION CRITERIA** | **FINAL SCORE** | | | |
| Thoroughness, Clarity and Conciseness of Proposal | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Project Understanding & Approach for Achieving Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Similar Project Experience & Tangible Results | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Proven Understanding of Community Garden Programming | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Rates & Fees Explained | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Diversity: Project Team, Producers, Partners | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Proposed Timeline Aligns with Expected Deadlines | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| **TOTAL Points (out of 21)** | | | | |
| Potential Additional Services Proposed: | | | | |
| Estimated Cost **(Total amount)**: | | | | |
| Proposed Project Start Date: | | | | |