

# **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION(RFI)- Food Distribution Services**

**January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**RESPONSES DUE:**

**January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



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## SECTION I INTRODUCTION

This RFI seeks information from qualified food distributors to support initiatives aligned with our mission: Increasing access to fresh and healthy food options, promoting local sourcing, creating jobs, and enhancing food security. Responses will help Invest Atlanta evaluate potential partners for sourcing activities across priority areas within the Atlanta city limits. Invest Atlanta will use the information generated by this RFI in conjunction with other information available to Invest Atlanta to determine the solution that it is in the best interests of Invest Atlanta to fulfill this need. Specifically, Invest Atlanta encourages responses from entities that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizations that provide general consultation and implementation services pertaining to food access opportunities.
- Master developers which engage with subcontractors to meet food retail project milestones and deliverables.
- Cooperatives and partnerships which engage with subcontractors, partner entities, and/or other stakeholders to meet food retail project milestones and deliverables.

This is not a solicitation for bids or proposals. No contract will be awarded from this RFI. Information received will inform the upcoming Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. Nothing in this RFI shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of Invest Atlanta or any respondents. Invest Atlanta reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue this RFI in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall Invest Atlanta be liable to respondents for any cost or damage incurred in connection with the RFI process, including but not limited to, all costs of preparing a response to this RFI or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFI. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from Invest Atlanta for any costs, expenses or fees related to this RFI. All supporting documentation submitted in response to this RFI will become the property of Invest Atlanta. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in RFI, in writing, at any point in time as more information becomes known.

## BACKGROUND

Invest Atlanta is committed to advancing economic development and expanding access to healthy, affordable food in underserved communities across the City of Atlanta. As part of this commitment, the organization is working to increase the number of businesses interested in establishing or expanding grocery operations within the city—particularly in areas designated as “USDA Low Income, Low Access Communities” or neighborhoods experiencing long-term disinvestment and food accessibility challenges. Communities adjacent to these areas are also considered priority locations under the City’s Grocery and Healthy Foods Strategy (the “Strategy”).

Citywide research underscores the importance of this work. In 2015, only 52% of Atlanta residents lived within a half mile of fresh food; by 2020, that figure had improved to 75%, yet significant gaps remain. In response, Invest Atlanta developed a comprehensive Strategy to improve access to fresh, affordable food for all residents. The Strategy is built around four core approaches:

1. Attract Major Supermarket & Grocery Stores
2. Expand, Retain & Improve Corner and Neighborhood Markets
3. Support Innovative Food Access Models
4. Drive Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

The overarching goal is to increase the percentage of residents living within a half mile of fresh, affordable food to **85% by 2025**.

Following a previous Request for Information (RFI) issued to grocery operators, Invest Atlanta identified several key objectives to guide implementation of the Strategy:

- Establish sustainable, community-focused grocery stores that meet the diverse needs of Atlanta residents.
- Increase access to fresh and healthy food options, particularly in underserved neighborhoods and food deserts.

- Promote economic development and job creation by sourcing products locally and hiring from within the community.
- Foster partnerships with wholesalers, local farmers, growers, and food producers to support regional agriculture.
- Enhance food security and accessibility for residents of all income levels.

#### **DESIGNATED PRIORITY AREAS FOR GROCERY OPERATORS WITHIN ATLANTA CITY LIMITS:**

To support these goals, Invest Atlanta has identified several priority commercial corridors and neighborhoods for grocery development. These include both publicly and privately owned undeveloped sites. While the locations listed below are priority areas, Invest Atlanta remains open to alternative sites within designated zones based on project scope, community needs, and anticipated public benefits.

##### **Commercial Corridors**

- Campbellton Road Southwest
- Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway
- Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

##### **Neighborhoods**

- Bowen Homes
- Downtown
- Grove Park
- Thomasville Heights

These priorities informed the issuance and successful selection of a Request for Qualified Contractors (RFQC) for the development and/or operation of municipal markets. As the initiative progresses, Invest Atlanta's Economic Development Department is now seeking information from qualified food distributors to support the development and operation of full-sized municipal grocery markets. These markets are envisioned as vibrant, community-centered destinations offering healthy food, retail services, and a mix of food shops and restaurants.

#### **MAIN OBJECTIVES FOR THIS RFI**

1. Identify distributors with the capacity to deliver fresh, frozen, dry, and specialty grocery items to multiple municipal market sites.
2. Understand available service models, delivery schedules, and geographic coverage.
3. Assess food safety, compliance, and technology capabilities.
4. Explore opportunities for local and small business participation.
5. Gather insights on potential challenges and best practices for municipal grocery distribution.

## **SECTION II TIMELINE OF EVENTS AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **INQUIRIES AND PROCESS TIMELINE**

Only inquiries received electronically will receive a response. Do not contact any Invest Atlanta staff with any questions or comments pertaining to this RFQC. All such inquiries must be delivered by **5:00 p.m., January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026** to the issuing officer at [Atlfooddistribution@investatlanta.com](mailto:Atlfooddistribution@investatlanta.com). Inquiries received after such date and time will not receive a response. Invest Atlanta will publish all timely received written inquiries and Invest Atlanta's responses to those inquiries as an Addendum to this RFI on Invest Atlanta's website ([www.investatlanta.com](http://www.investatlanta.com)) on or before the close of business on **January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**.

Due Date	Action Required
<b>January 12, 2025</b>	RFI Release
<b>January 19, 2026</b>	Written questions due to Invest Atlanta
<b>January 22, 2026</b>	Responses to written questions
<b>January 27, 2026</b>	Responses due to Invest Atlanta

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

A. Responses to this Request for Information should be submitted in electronic Portable Document Format (PDF) no later than **5:00 p.m., January 27 , 2026, to the issuing officer at [Atlfooddistribution@investatlanta.com](mailto:Atlfooddistribution@investatlanta.com).**

By submitting a response to the RFI, the Respondent is acknowledging that the Respondent:

1. Has read the information and instructions,
2. Agrees to comply with the information and instructions contained herein.

The RFI method is not a competitive solicitation method and, as a result, does not satisfy the requirement for competitive bidding. The RFI method is no more than an information gathering tool and such information gathered may or may not be used by Invest Atlanta to develop a competitive solicitation. Respondents are not required to respond to an RFI and a Respondent's failure to respond to an RFI will not prohibit the Respondent's participation in any competitive solicitation that may result from the RFI. However, Respondents are strongly encouraged to respond to RFIs as this is a great way to ensure Invest Atlanta is aware of the Respondents' available goods and services.

The laws of the State of Georgia, including the **Georgia Open Records Act**, as provided in O.C.G.A §50-18-70, et seq., require certain public records be made available for public inspection. Even though information (financial or other information) submitted by a Respondent may be marked as "confidential", "proprietary", etc., Invest Atlanta will make its own determination regarding what information may or may not be withheld from disclosure.

## **SECTION III REQUESTED INFORMATION**

- A. COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**
- B. DISTRIBUTION & RETAIL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**
- C. OPERATIONAL ALIGNMENT & SHARED SERVICES**
- D. LOCAL SOURCING & COMMUNITY IMPACT**
- E. PRICING, COST STRUCTURE AND CONTRACTING**
- F. READINESS FOR MUNICIPAL MARKET PARTICIPATION**
- G. ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK**

### **RESPONSE FORMAT**

Please provide responses in narrative form with supporting documentation where applicable. ALL **Responses must be provided on Appendix A RFI Response Template.**

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Invest Atlanta may, at its discretion, ask one or more Respondents to provide additional information and/or meet with Invest Atlanta to further discuss the Respondent's information.

# APPENDIX A — RFI RESPONSE TEMPLATE

## *Food distribution Services for Municipal Grocery Markets*

### Respondent Information

Field	Response
Organization Name	
Primary Contact	
Title	
Email	
Phone	
Business Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor <input type="checkbox"/> Retailer <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain)
Headquarters Location	
Atlanta-Area Operations	
Years in Business	
Ownership Structure	
Certifications	<input type="checkbox"/> MBE <input type="checkbox"/> WBE <input type="checkbox"/> DBE <input type="checkbox"/> SBE <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

## SECTION A — ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

### A1. Company Overview

Provide a brief overview of your organization, including mission, core services, and role within the food supply chain.

**Response:**

### A2. Core Services

Describe your primary services (distribution, retail operations, logistics, procurement, etc.).

**Response:**

### **A3. Existing Partnerships**

List any current partnerships with distributors, retailers, farmers, growers, or food producers. Include partner type, nature of collaboration, and success factors.

**Response:**

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## **SECTION B — DISTRIBUTION & RETAIL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

### **B1. Preferred Partnership Models**

Identify partnership models your organization believes would be effective for municipal grocery markets (e.g., joint ventures, subcontracting, shared logistics, co-location, shared procurement).

**Response:**

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### **B2. Ideal Partner Characteristics**

If you are a **distributor**, describe the qualities you seek in a retail partner.

If you are a **retailer**, describe the qualities you seek in a distribution partner.

**Response:**

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### **B3. Innovative Collaboration Models**

Describe any innovative or non-traditional partnership models you have used or observed in the grocery or food access sector.

**Response:**

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### **B4. Barriers & Solutions**

Identify common barriers to distributor–retailer collaboration and strategies you have used to overcome them.

**Response:**

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## SECTION C — OPERATIONAL ALIGNMENT & SHARED SERVICES

### C1. Shared Operational Services

Which shared services could improve efficiency for municipal grocery markets?

Examples: cross-docking, consolidated deliveries, shared warehousing, shared procurement.

**Response:**

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### C2. Forecasting & Inventory Alignment

Describe your forecasting, inventory planning, and demand management processes. Explain how these could align with a partner organization.

**Response:**

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### C3. Technology & Data Sharing

List the technology platforms you use (ordering portals, EDI/API, route tracking, POS systems). Describe how these systems support collaboration with supply chain partners.

**Response:**

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### C4. Delivery & Logistics Model

Describe delivery schedules, routing models, and logistics approaches that would best support multiple municipal grocery sites.

**Response:**

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## SECTION D — LOCAL SOURCING & COMMUNITY IMPACT

### D1. Local Sourcing Practices

Describe how your organization currently sources from local farmers, growers, or small food producers.

**Response:**

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### D2. Joint Local Sourcing Opportunities

Identify opportunities for distributors and retailers to jointly expand local sourcing within municipal grocery markets.

**Response:**

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### D3. Community & Workforce Initiatives

Describe any workforce development, community hiring, or small-business support programs your organization participates in.

**Response:**

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### D4. Strengthening Local Food Ecosystems

Explain how partnerships between distributors and retailers could strengthen Atlanta's local food ecosystem.

**Response:**

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## SECTION E — PRICING, COST STRUCTURE & TRANSPARENCY

### E1. Pricing Model



Describe your typical pricing structure (cost-plus, fee-based, index-tied, etc.).

**Response:**

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## **E2. Cost-Sharing Opportunities**

Identify pricing or cost-sharing structures that could support collaborative models between distributors and retailers.

**Response:**

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## **E3. Transparency Practices**

Describe your approach to transparency regarding rebates, allowances, surcharges, and other cost components.

**Response:**

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# **SECTION F — READINESS FOR MUNICIPAL GROCERY MARKET PARTICIPATION**

## **F1. Operational Readiness**

Describe any operational adjustments, investments, or resources needed to support multiple municipal grocery sites.

**Response:**

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## **F2. Support Needed from Invest Atlanta**

Identify any infrastructure, incentives, technical assistance, or policy support that would facilitate partnerships.

**Response:**

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### **F3. Risks & Mitigation Strategies**

Describe potential risks or challenges in servicing municipal grocery markets and how partnerships could mitigate them.

**Response:**

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### **F4. Recommendations for RFQ Structure**

Provide recommendations for how Invest Atlanta should structure the upcoming RFQ to encourage competitive, collaborative responses.

**Response:**

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## **SECTION G — ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK**

### **G1. Additional Considerations**

Share any additional information Invest Atlanta should consider when designing future solicitations.

**Response:**

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### **G2. Recommendations for Long-Term Partnerships**

Provide suggestions for fostering sustainable partnerships between distributors, retailers, and local producers.

**Response:**