

**Request for proposals: Public Market Trust Consultant**  
**Electric Works Public Market Trust**  
**October 2023**

**Background**

The Electric Works Public Market Trust is an independent, tax-exempt nonprofit organization created during the development of Electric Works in downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana. Electric Works is a mixed-use historic redevelopment of the former General Electric campus that closed in 2015. Currently, Electric Works is home to the world headquarters of Do it Best and many other commercial operations, as well as the home of Fort Wayne Community Schools' Amp Lab.

The Union Street Market is at the heart of the Electric Works campus and features independent local businesses selling fresh, specialty, and prepared foods and beverages, with a focus on products grown and produced in Northeast Indiana.

A partnership between the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County and the developer created the non-profit Electric Works Public Market Trust to support healthy food access, education, and outreach programs within the community. The specific mission of the Trust is to create a dynamic and inclusive place that supports the farmers and food producers of Northeast Indiana while enhancing community wellness and providing access to healthy foods to underserved residents. The Trust is currently governed by an eight-member board of directors and receives organizational support from the leadership team of Union Street Market.

**Project Goals**

The Trust is seeking the assistance of a consultant to research and help establish a strategic operating plan for the organization. Specifically, the consultant will:

- 1) Research information and conduct interviews with key stakeholders to determine current Allen County programming that: supports farmers and food producers of Northeast Indiana and provides access to healthy foods for underserved residents. The Trust and consultant will jointly identify potential interviewees, and the Trust will provide introductions where appropriate.
- 2) Research and conduct interviews with key stakeholders regarding the role the Electric Works Public Market Trust could play in improving food access for underserved residents and providing support for local farmers and food producers, including those from BIPOC and immigrant communities.
- 3) Research and conduct interviews with key stakeholders to understand how the Public Market Trust can best support Union Street Market and its efforts to improve food access and the local food system. This research could include best practices for expanding nutrition incentives at public markets nationwide.
- 4) Examine the region's current nutrition incentive programming and explore its strengths and weaknesses as well as identify new strategies for expanding nutrition incentives in the community and at Union Street Market. Research how nutrition incentives are supported at other public markets across the country to determine if similar strategies could work at Union Street Market.
- 5) Research the feasibility of applying for a USDA GusNIP nutrition incentive grant, which would support the development of a regional SNAP-matching program at participating farmers markets and retail locations. The grant would expand the current Double Up program operated by the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation to all of northeast Indiana, adding market and retail locations. SNAP-matching would be operated in coordination with the Indiana Department of

Health and its SNAP-matching programs, also currently operated by the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation.

- 6) Research what resources are needed to successfully expand and administer a regional SNAP matching program in northeast Indiana and provide a summary to the Trust.
- 7) In consultation with the Electric Works Public Market Trust, develop a three-year strategic plan for the Trust's food access and local food promotion work. The plan should include the demographic and geographic audiences to be served, as well as recommendations for communicating with those audiences.
- 8) If approved by the Public Market Trust Board of Directors, the consultant will research and prepare the FY 2024 GusNIP grant application, expected to be posted in February and closed in late May. If the Board determines it does not want to pursue the GusNIP application, the consultant's work will be concluded.

### **Budget**

The Electric Works Public Market Trust is the recipient of a Nutrition Incentive Hub Capacity Building Grant of \$24,000, which will fund the work of the consultant. Proposals from consultants should estimate hours of each of the above deliverables and determine a project cost. If selected, the Trust will enter into a contract with the consultant and establish the deliverables and an hourly rate if additional work is needed beyond the scope that is outlined. It is expected that a range of 150-200 hours will be needed to complete this project; fewer hours will be needed if the consultant does not assist the Trust in applying for a GusNIP grant.

### **Timeline**

- Interested applicants should submit proposals to the Public Market Trust at [trust@unionstreetmarket.org](mailto:trust@unionstreetmarket.org) by October 31, 2023.
- The Trust may select to interview applicants in person or via videoconference.
- A consultant will be selected and a contract drawn up by the beginning of November 2023 with work to begin immediately.
- A recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding whether to apply for a GusNIP grant should be received by March 1, 2024 with an analysis supporting the recommendation.
- A three-year, high-level strategic plan for the Trust's work in food access and local food system initiatives should be developed by April 1, 2024.
- Depending on the research and direction provided by the Board of Directors, the GusNIP FY 2024 application should be prepared by the deadline, likely May 31, 2024.

### **Response**

All interested applicants should submit the following to the Board of Directors at [trust@unionstreetmarket.org](mailto:trust@unionstreetmarket.org):

- Information about the consultant's expertise in nonprofit planning and food access/food system work.
- Information about the consultant's experience writing applications for federal grants.
- Examples of past work that is similar to this project, including relevant work with underserved communities, particularly low-income, BIPOC and immigrant communities.
- A list of references that may be contacted.
- A proposed scope of services, identifying how you would approach this project and the processes you would use.
- Proposed budget.