



RFP # 25-035

The Common Market Georgia, Inc., also known as the **Common Market Southeast** (CMSE), based in Atlanta, GA, is pleased to submit this proposal to distribute local produce directly from sustainable family farms in Georgia and neighboring states to Bibb County School District. We have supported the district over the past school year (SY24-25) in local food procurement (non-contract). CMSE is a social enterprise with a social and environmental responsibility built into our values-based operations. The organization strives to improve food security, farm viability, and community and ecological health. CMSE provides the infrastructure to support the viability of small and medium scale producers through cold storage warehousing and trucking as well as the service of a committed team providing outreach, technical assistance, marketing, and special event support to schools and other institutional partners. During the COVID crisis, CMSE supported over 40 local farms and obtained multiple federal and local contracts to provide emergency food relief to approximately 166 community organizations throughout the southeast including 45 local area Atlanta organizations.

CMSE was born out of The Common Market, founded in Philadelphia, PA, 2008 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit local, mission-driven food distributor and has extended its reach beyond the mid-Atlantic by opening offices in the Southeast (based in Atlanta, opened in 2016), Texas (based in Houston) and most recently in the Great Lakes (based in Chicago). The national organization is an experienced leader in farm to school procurement, bringing over 15 years of operational experience to expand the accessibility of good food from local family farms.

Annually, the Common Market delivers food to over 300 schools and ECE sites nationally. Through its Mid-Atlantic operations, significant growth in food deliveries came from sales of food to Revolution Foods and DC Central Kitchen, which used the food for meals in Philadelphia and DC public schools that serve predominantly low-income students of color. DC Central Kitchen is a truly mission-aligned nonprofit partner that prioritizes buying good food and is enthusiastic about our local frozen vegetables; while Revolution Foods has a three-year subcontract to spend 20% of their budget with The Common Market for a contract with the School District of Philadelphia.

We work directly with a network of sustainable family farms, managing the sourcing, logistics, aggregation and delivery to partners across the region. Since our founding, large scale institutions have comprised our key customer base, and we have a demonstrated history of meeting significant purchasing requirements at scale. We ensure the highest level of food safety standards, and all products on our availability list are fully source-identified to the farm name, city and state to ensure full supply-chain transparency. We source from growers within a 250-mile radius of our Atlanta warehouse.



At The Common Market, we believe that all environments thrive with greater cultural and biological diversity. The Common Market embodies this value in our organization and all of our relationships throughout the food system. We believe that by building the strength of regional economies, we can promote equitable health and well-being in urban and rural communities. We believe that agriculture can be restorative to the environment. By developing markets for food that is grown with integrity and respect, we can help transform growing practices and heal communities. At every step from seed to table, we are dedicated to building trusting transparent relationships that ensure food safety, foster accountability and maintain traceability.

Our Farms:

Below is a list of farmers that we plan to engage in this work, listed by location and products offered. We also provide Farmer Profiles, which we can offer for all of our farm partners to help you tell their stories.

- BJ Reece Orchards, Ellijay, GA: apples and pears
- Farms 2 U, Augusta, GA: Broccoli and Slicing Tomatoes
- Snapfinger Farms, Stockbridge, GA: Cabbage
- Goodlicious Farms and Produce, Metter, GA: Corn
- Love is Love Farm, Mansfield, GA: Cucumbers
- La Hacienda Sweets, GA: Vidalia onions, bell peppers,
- PL Only Organics, Douglasville, GA: red grape tomatoes
- Watsonia Farms, Monetta, SC: mixed produce (organic)
- Cornucopia Farms, Avera, GA: hydroponic greens and lettuces
- Coastal Georgia Small Farmer's Cooperative, Glennville, GA: yellow squash, zucchini and collard greens
- Grower Network, Lake Park, GA: Satsumas
- Byne Blueberries, Waynesboro, GA: blueberries
- Haynes and Sons, Cullman, AL: watermelons
- D&J Berry Farm, Milan, GA: watermelons and blackberries

We are happy to provide reporting and data on the number of farms supported, number of pounds distributed, and number of dollars reinvested back into the local food economy throughout the contract period.

CMSE Leadership Team

Bill Green is the Executive Director of The Common Market Southeast and will oversee the implementation of this proposal with Bibb County School District. Green joined The Common Market Team in 2019. Prior to coming to The Common Market, Bill worked at The Kroger Co. for 18 years in various roles including Legal Counsel, Store Manager, District



Manager and Vice President of Operations. As an attorney, Bill also served clients in private practice in the areas of civil litigation, mergers and acquisitions, technology agreements and general corporate work. Bill is a graduate of Howard University where he obtained his bachelor's degree in business management and the University of Kentucky where he received his juris doctorate.

Good Food Purchasing Practices

1. Agricultural product is sourced from family-owned farms within 250 miles of The Common Market Southeast in Atlanta, GA.
2. Social responsibility policy.
 - a. The Common Market's mission:
 - i. To connect communities with good food from sustainable family farms. We strive to improve food security, farm viability, and community and ecological health.
 - ii. The Common Market's organizational values:
 1. Community: Rooted in community since our founding days, we believe in the potential to build collective power through collaboration across an interdependent food system.
 2. Diversity: We believe that all environments thrive with greater cultural and biological diversity. The Common Market embodies this value in our organization and all of our relationships throughout the food system.
 3. Local Investment: We believe that by building the strength of regional economies, we can promote equitable health and well-being in urban and rural communities.
 4. Stewardship: We believe that agriculture can be restorative to the environment. By developing markets for food that is grown with integrity and respect, we can help transform growing practices and heal communities.
 5. Transparency: At every step from seed to table, we are dedicated to building trusting relationships that ensure food safety, foster accountability and maintain traceability.

Pricing

The Common Market includes all fees associated with providing the specified produce in the extended price per line item listed in The Produce Bid Table (19 items in total). There was not a place to state the units of the pack sizes but we can provide upon request. Since we only work with local farms, we are only able to bid on a subset of the items and those items are available seasonally (see next page on **Seasonality**).



The Common Market Seasonality

The Common Market is a mission-driven local food distributor, connecting small to mid-sized family farms in the region to institutional food service. Our procurement radius is 250 miles from Atlanta, which means our produce availability changes with the seasons. In our specifications submission and in the below list, we have done our best to estimate which months products will be available, based on seven years of data and crop-planning with our farm network. If we experience any changes in product availability due to unforeseen causes, such as extreme weather, we should be able to substitute the product from another family farm or provide a very similar alternative.

- APPLES – August through May
- BELL PEPPERS – June through September
- BROCCOLI – June through March
- CABBAGE – May through January
- COLLARD GREENS (BUNCHEd) – August through March
- CORN – June through October
- CUCUMBERS – May through October
- ROMAINE – year-round
- ONIONS (VIDALIA) – April through September
- ORANGES (SATSUMAS) – November through January
- PEACHES – June, July
- PEARS – September through November
- SQUASH YELLOW – May through August
- STRAWBERRY - April, May
- TOMATOES (SLICING) – June through October
- TOMATOES (GRAPE RED) – year-round
- WATERMELON (MINI) – June through September
- SQUASH ZUCCHINI– May through August
- BLACKBERRIES – May, June
- BLUEBERRIES – May, June

We commit to complete transparency and prompt communication around product availability changes. Working in partnership with The Common Market means supporting a network of local family farms that are stewards of the earth and growing high quality produce for our communities.

Please be in touch if you have any questions.



The Common Market Food Safety, Operational Standards and Records of Quality Control

Who We Are:

The Common Market Georgia, Inc., otherwise known as the Common Market Southeast (CMSE) was founded in 2016 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit local food distributor with a mission to connect communities with good food from sustainable family farms. The organization strives to improve food security, farm viability, and community and ecological health. CMSE was established to empower, strengthen, and connect two vulnerable populations: low-income communities and local farmers. We work directly with a network of sustainable family farms, managing the sourcing, logistics, aggregation and delivery to partners across the region. Since our founding, large scale institutions have comprised our key customer base, and we have a demonstrated history of meeting significant purchasing requirements at scale.

CMSE is committed to source identification and transparency. Our supply chain is source identified by farm name and location, and each case of product is traceable back to the individual lot number. This ensures visibility into when that case was received by our warehouse, and which customer(s) received that product.

Our Food Safety and Operational Standards:

CMSE owns and operates a 60,000 square foot food distribution center in southwest Atlanta, along with a fleet of refrigerated trucks. This distribution center includes warehousing, distribution, and repacking of local product in our scope of Safe Quality Food (SQF) Certification. This allows us to meet the requirements of storage and manufacturing codes that include modules on Cleaning + Sanitation, Environmental Monitoring, and Training. Our Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan identifies all risks and associated process controls, preventative controls, and mitigation measures for our processes.

We are happy to provide the following documents upon request as support for our operational standards:

- SQF Certificate
- The Common Market's Good Manufacturing Practices Overview Document



Delivery/Logistics Overview

The Common Market Southeast (CMSE) acknowledges all of the delivery locations in Addendum VIII and may be able to deliver to each and every location on a refrigerated truck as needed between 6:00 am and 2:00 pm. However, we do have a \$400 minimum order per delivery location (\$400 per school minimum) for deliveries outside the metro-Atlanta area. Our preference is for Tuesday and Friday delivery days but we are happy to work around the school schedules. As we order from the family farms based on orders from our customers, we generally will require the schools to order two weeks in advance, but we will send clear order instructions once the delivery days are set.

CMSE owns and operates a 60,000 square foot food distribution center in southwestern Atlanta, along with a fleet refrigerated trucks. This distribution center includes warehousing, distribution, and repacking of local product. The fleet of refrigerated trucks can accommodate the requested deliveries for this opportunity once a week.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns in this matter.



June 4, 2025

To the Bibb County School District,

On behalf of The Common Market Southeast, please accept our letter of self-certification as a Nonprofit Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) vendor. We are excited about the opportunity to serve the District with local foods from local family farmers in Georgia, and neighboring states.

The Common Market was founded by and is led by people of color in response to issues of poverty and its resulting food insecurity and disease disparity in lower resource neighborhoods. The organization was founded in Philadelphia in 2008, expanded operations to the southeast based in Atlanta in 2016, and has been a trusted partner to a number of initiatives focused on alleviating these conditions of poverty and food insecurity across the nation. The Common Market is not currently eligible for third party MWBE certification due to a lack of equity ownership inherent to the nonprofit corporate structure. In 2017, the organization was registered as “a Non-Profit/MWBE” by the School District of Philadelphia, setting precedent for its inclusion in diversity supplier contract spend.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the children of Bibb County School District through contract opportunities facilitated by this registration. I hope the attached supporting documentation meets your requirements. Please note that our organizational executive leadership is comprised entirely of “people of color” (100% minorities) and 50% woman led. Our senior leadership team is 67% “people of color” (minorities) and 50% woman led. Our Board of Directors is 64% women and 55% “people of color” (minorities). Please let me know if I can answer any questions in support of this work.

Sincerely,

Haile Johnston

Co-Founder, Chief Development Officer, The Common Market

Board Member, The Common Market Southeast



The Common Market - Non-Discrimination Statement

The Common Market is committed to providing services and equal employment opportunities without regard to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, or on the basis of handicap or age to participation in, or in receipt of the services and benefits of any of its programs and activities or in employment therein directly or through a contractor or any other entity with whom The Common Market arranges to carry out its programs and activities.

As part of its commitment to maintaining a discrimination-free environment, The Common Market encourages employees to discuss questions and concerns affecting their employment with management or other appropriate individuals.

To address questions concerning this policy, or in the event of a desire to file a complaint alleging violations of the above, please contact:

Provider Name: The Common Market

Chief Operating Officer: Tatiana Garcia-Granados

Telephone number: 215-275-3435 ext. 6

Haile Johnston
Chief Development Officer
Date: 4/7/2023

Tatiana Garcia Granados
Chief Operating Officer
Date: 4/7/2023



The Common Market Supplier Diversity Program Policy Statement

The Common Market recognizes that our procurement has economic impacts among business owners. We do not discriminate under any circumstances on the basis of race, gender or disability-status when making purchasing decisions or contracts. We make every effort to contact, engage and support minority-owned, women-owned, disabled own and locally-owned businesses and suppliers so long as we do not jeopardize or favor any entrepreneurs to the detriment of our fairness and impartiality. Our Supplier Diversity Program ensures that minority-owned, women-owned and disabled owned businesses are fairly considered and unimpeded for business.

Objective:

Ensure level playing field (free of discrimination) for suppliers, contractors and those submitting bids to work with Common Market. Make decisions so that resources are allocated in an equitable manner, striving to contract with minority-owned, women owned, disabled-owned and locally-owned businesses when opportunities arise without compromising price or product quality.

Activities:

- 1. Actively seek diverse suppliers across business categories through networking, memberships in local organizations and the use of solicitation lists.*
- 2. Report and document all transactions and periodically review with respect to supplier diversity.*
- 3. Train staff members on making decisions in alignment with policy statement (above).*

Haile Johnston
Chief Development Officer
Date: 4/7/2023

Tatiana Garcia Granados
Chief Operating Officer
Date: 4/7/2023



About The Common Market: The Common Market, a nonprofit food distributor, is celebrated as a national model for connecting local, sustainably grown food to underserved communities. Our mission is to connect communities with good food from sustainable family farms. We strive to improve food security, farm viability, and community and ecological health. The Common Market was founded in 2008 to empower, strengthen and connect two vulnerable populations: food insecure communities and regional family farmers.

We have experienced incredible growth over the last 15 years, increasing the amount of local and nutritious food reaching communities through schools, hospitals, workplaces, grocery stores and faith institutions. This focus on institutions, as opposed to other market segments, has allowed The Common Market to reach the greatest number of urban food insecure individuals. The Common Market provides healthy and affordable food distribution services including procuring, warehousing and delivering to over 400 wholesale customers annually. It is simply impractical for large food buyers to maintain relationships with dozens of local producers or for each of those farmers to deliver to nearly 100 loading docks every day. We provide an efficient and safe delivery system for these institutions to procure fresh food from farms throughout our region. Year-round, food arrives from regional farms and is stored and packed in The Common Market's Atlanta based warehouse to be delivered to our customers' loading docks. Each day, hundreds of cases of fresh produce, meats and dairy products leave The Common Market's warehouse destined for school lunches, hospital meals and the shelves of local grocery stores.

Since our founding in 2008, The Common Market has moved more than 52 million pounds of food, valued at over \$67 million, from 150 regional producers to 600 customers. The Common Market serves a range of institutional customers to enable us to reach a scale of operations and distribution that will allow us to support our mission work, partnering with institutions that reach our region's most vulnerable. Serving the whole market – both independent and public schools, natural food co-ops and supermarkets in food deserts, community-based organizations and faith-based institutions – allows The Common Market to drive the creation of a fairer, more equitable regional food system.

Healthy Food Initiatives: The Common Market prioritizes work with institutions that serve a high percentage of vulnerable populations. We have found that encouraging dramatic shifts in the way institutions procure and serve food takes time and requires ongoing support from The Common Market. In response to this need, The Common Market has developed specific programs such as Farm to School, and "Good Food, Healthy Hospitals" to allow us to work more in depth with these institutions to achieve their healthy food goals. Working closely with leaders and the wholesale buyers at these institutions, we help build their capacity to base menus around seasonal availability, lead dialogue about strategies to improve food procurement, and communicate the values of the local and healthy food they are serving to their clientele. This work is in addition to our food distribution activities.



The Common Market Southeast Board List

2023 Board:

- Chair- Wesley Myrick; African American male
- Treasurer- Ian Stribling; Caucasian male
- Member- Bill Green (Ex officio); African American male
- Member- Haile Johnston (Common Market Umbrella Rep); African American male
- Member- Taylor Clark; Caucasian female
- Member- Michael Roberts; Caucasian male
- Member- Caree Cotwright; African American female
- Member- Darrah Gist; Caucasian female
- Member -Whitney Barr; African American female
- Member- Diana Abellera; Asian/Pacific American female
- Member-Shia Hendricks; African American female

The Common Market Executive Leadership:

- Tatiana Garcia Granados, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer- Latina female
- Haile Johnston, Co-Founder and Chief Development Officer- African American male

The School District of Philadelphia
Office of Procurement Services



Small Business Development

February 7, 2017

The Common Market
Haile Johnston, Co-Founder & Director
428 E Erie Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19133

Re: Non-Profit Registration Confirmation

Dear Mrs/Ms:Johnston

The School District of Philadelphia, Small Business Development (SBD) Division has reviewed your non-profit registration documentation and has designated ***The Common Market a Non-Profit/MWBE for School District of Philadelphia contracting opportunities.***

Your organization will be listed in our database with a status of **NP-MWBE**.

As a NP-MWBE, Small Business Development has determined that ***The Common Market*** will be provided the opportunity to bid as a MWBE prime contractor and be considered for subcontracting opportunities where a range of participation of MWBE firms are required.

This status is for the School District of Philadelphia use only. It is not a certificate of certification. It is not intended to imply that your organization is guaranteed any School District of Philadelphia contracting opportunities.

We wish you success in your business endeavors. Thank you for your interest in the School District of Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

Richard K Brown
Office of Procurement Services
Program Coordinator, Small Business Development
Education Center, 3rd Floor
440 N. Broad Street, Portal A, Suite 302
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 400-6061
Fax: (215) 400-4382
rkbrown@philasd.org