March 25, 2026

Request for Proposals

Role: Coalition Coordinator (Consultant): Food & Health Equity Coalition of Essex County
Issued by: Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND)

About the Coalition

The Food & Health Equity Coalition of Essex County (FHEC) (www.fhecessex.org) is a county-wide coalition working to strengthen food security and advance health equity across Essex County, NJ. The coalition brings together community-based organizations, residents, food providers, healthcare partners, growers, schools, funders, and public agencies to align resources, elevate community voice, and move toward systems-level solutions.

MEND (www.mendnj.org) serves as the coalition's backbone organization.

Purpose of This RFP

MEND seeks a consultant to provide coordination and infrastructure support for the Food & Health Equity Coalition.

The primary objective of this engagement is to ensure well-run, well-documented, action-oriented coalition and working group meetings. The consultant will also support the coalition's strategic direction toward systems change and policy advocacy.

Scope of Work

1. Coalition & Working Group Coordination

- Coordinate monthly Steering Committee meetings, monthly Working Group meetings, quarterly Coalition meetings, and Community Advisory Board meetings as needed (preparing and circulating materials, setting agendas, facilitating discussion, and documenting decisions and next steps)
    - *2026 Coalition meeting dates remaining: June 4th, September 10th, December 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., in person (locations vary at sites across the county - with the exception of the December 3rd meeting which will be virtual).*
- Identify and coordinate guest speakers and presenters
- Maintain shared coalition documents and communication systems
- Track and report back on key coalition initiatives advanced through working groups and/or the greater coalition at large.

2. Relationship Engagement & Insight

- Maintain active relationships and regular communications with member organizations (CBOs, food pantries, farmers and growers, schools, healthcare providers, faith communities, academia, local government) to stay abreast of community programming, to connect and align efforts, and to identify and elevate themes, gaps, and priorities.
- Identify and recommend potential new members for the Community Advisory Board for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- Monitor emerging policy, funding, and operational shifts affecting food access in Essex County and support timely information-sharing across the coalition.

3. Strategic & Advocacy Support

- Synthesize coalition discussions into themes and potential policy priorities
- Support development of advocacy direction in collaboration with coalition leadership

Deliverables

- Monthly steering committee and working group agendas, notes, and action summaries
- Quarterly coalition meeting materials and documentation
- Ongoing tracking of coalition activities and engagement
- Timely updates to coalition members regarding significant policy or operational shifts impacting food access
- Periodic summaries highlighting emerging themes, opportunities, and impact

Qualifications

- Established, trust-based relationships with Essex County communities, and deep knowledge of local assets, resources, and populations disproportionately impacted by food and nutrition insecurity and its related health and social outcomes.
- Facilitation skills to lead inclusive, productive coalition meetings and workgroups.
- Skills in community engagement and relationship-building, including listening, co-creation, and supporting resident leadership.
- Ability to translate community experience into clear policy and systems-change priorities.
- Strong organizational and project-management skills to juggle multiple meetings, initiatives, and deadlines.
- Deep commitment to racial, health, and food equity, and to community-driven decision-making.

Engagement Details

- Contract position (1099)

- 10-15 hours per week
- Hybrid; regular in-person presence in Essex County required
- Occasional evening meetings (advance notice provided)
- Anticipated start: Spring 2026
- Initial term: One year, renewable based on performance and funding

Compensation: MEND anticipates an hourly rate in the range of $45–$55/hour, commensurate with experience. Proposals should include a requested hourly rate.

Proposal Submission

Interested consultants should submit:

1. Resume or CV
2. Provide a brief statement of interest (1–2 pages) that:
    a. Describes your relevant experience and overall approach to coalition coordination.
    b. Identifies any schedule or availability limitations.
    c. In your statement, you may wish to address:
        i. Your ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholder groups (for example, government, grassroots organizations, and funders).
        ii. How you ensure that underrepresented or less resourced partners have a meaningful voice in coalition decisions.
        iii. How you prioritize your time and manage workload when coordinating multiple coalition workgroups or initiatives simultaneously.
3. Proposed hourly rate
4. Two professional references

Please submit materials to HR@mendnj.org with the subject line: FHEC Coalition Coordinator Proposal.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. **Priority consideration for those who apply by April 13, 2026.**

Equity Statement

FHEC is grounded in a commitment to racial, health, and food equity. We prioritize community-driven solutions and inclusive collaboration. We encourage proposals from individuals with lived experience in communities disproportionately impacted by food and nutrition insecurity.