

Request for Proposals

Conference Planner Services

2015 California Farm to School Conference

Background information

The California Farm to School Network (CFSN) is a statewide initiative that links farms, school cafeterias, distributors, youth, and nonprofit and government allies together to increase and strengthen Farm to School programs across California. The CFSN serves as a communications clearinghouse, resource hub, and convener of leaders and practitioners that work to get more specialty crops and other family farm foods into school cafeterias.

The CFSN is a project of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) and the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) and also benefits from a strong partnership with FoodCorps. The CFSN's leadership body is a 15 person steering committee and is supported by 10 regional leads throughout the state. The CFSN is funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The fiscal agent is CAFF.

The first California Farm to School Conference is planned for the spring of 2015 that will bring together Farm to School stakeholders from across the state. The target number of participants is 300. We are seeking a qualified, highly professional, and organized conference planner to execute all logistics for this event. The planner will report to CAFF.

Broadly, the conference planner will:

- Act as the main liaison between CAFF and all parties related to the planning and execution of the conference (vendors, speakers, companies, etc.)
- Track all finances and adhere to all budget constraints, in addition to assisting with conference sponsorships
- Support the creation and implementation of a marketing and publicity plan
- Manage all registration and payment systems
- Coordinate all speakers, workshops, sessions, and schedules, including confirming travel and lodging for speakers and the set up and execution of the reservation process for conference participants
- Act as the primary point of contact for the conference venue and coordinate all communications with venue staff and ensure all audio/visual and other logistical needs are met

More detail on these overall responsibilities is provided below in the Scope of Work.

Request for Proposal

CFSN is seeking information from conference planners who would like to work with CFSN to plan and carry out the 2015 California Farm to School Conference.

The “Scope of Work” section below provides the specific job duties of the conference planner. If your company can meet CFSN’s conference planning needs, please submit a proposal of no more than 7 pages to farmtoschool@caff.org by **May 25, 2014**.

In your proposal, please include:

- Background information about your company, including your resume, list of clients, conferences you have planned with number of participants, and number of employees
- Statements describing your methods for coordinating conferences and events, taking into consideration conference size, number of meeting/sleeping rooms, audio/visual logistics, workshop/speaker coordination, meal and catering planning, and management of registration/payment systems
- Sample programs from other events
- A list of at least 3 current references that CFSN staff could contact for further information about your previous experience in event planning

Term of Contract

The contract between CAFF and the selected conference planner will tentatively be in effect from June 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, pending the final conference date selection. Funding for this contract is provided, in part, by a grant from state agency, the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Contractor may be required to affirm compliance with federal regulations such as the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and proof of workers compensation insurance.

Scope of Work

CFSN will manage the production and control of the conference content, including the conference’s aesthetics and logos, the themes and topics of workshops and sessions, and any preconference activities. Conference planner duties include, but are not limited to:

GENERAL DUTIES

- Provide guidance to the conference planning committee, participating in regular correspondence with CFSN staff and steering committee by email, conference call, or other means on a mutually agreed-upon schedule
- Develop organized timeline for conference planning milestones
- Serve as the central point of contact for all general questions from members, vendors, and general public

FINANCES

- Track all income and expenses, and ensure conference adheres to budget constraints
- Make available at all times all financial records to CFSN staff

MARKETING / PUBLICITY

- Work with CFSN staff and conference planning committee on development of an overall outreach plan and timeline
- Oversee and administer implementation of the outreach plan, including all advertising and submission of conference information to appropriate events calendars, publications, social media networks, etc
- Development of promotional materials including:
 - Web pages/site with links to all relevant conference information, including, but not limited to: downloadable registration information/forms, agenda, speakers and other links as appropriate
 - Press releases
 - Conference name tags for attendees, speakers, and exhibitors
- Arrange for media representatives to be notified and invited to conference

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

- Develop and provide methods for online registration
- Work in conjunction with CFSN staff to develop systems for online (credit card) payment of registration fees, including the tracking of special scholarships, discounts, and complimentary registrations when applicable and the notifications of registration confirmation

ON-SITE CONFERENCE DUTIES

- Coordinate staff and volunteers to help with all onsite duties
- Be onsite prior to opening of the registration/sign-in table and after completion of conference
- Be onsite in conference area on a daily basis during the conference
- Oversee management of registration and sign-in desk
- Serve as primary contact for hotel staff – troubleshooting, equipment needs, etc.
- Coordination of all set-up activities, including, but not limited to:
 - Appropriate banners or signage, including workshop/door listings and wayfinding signage
 - Sponsor recognition materials and/or message boards
 - General message boards to facilitate communication between attendees
 - Identify and provide space for general and local information for conference attendees (Hospitality Table)
- Coordination of transportation to conference hotel for presenters

CONFERENCE FACILITIES

- Establish room arrangements for workshops, breakout sessions, meals, receptions,

special activities, and storage space

- Provide complete listing of all audiovisual and other equipment needs, room setup and menus to hotel one month in advance of conference
- Space and table arrangements for registration tables and miscellaneous
- Determine details and pricing for meals, break refreshments, reception
- Encourage use of sustainable/low-waste practices
- Serve as primary contact for all hotel arrangements
- Visit hotel site and meet with hotel staff prior to the conference with CFSN staff
- Determine availability of complimentary rooms for conference speakers/presenters

SPEAKERS / PRESENTERS

- Provide guidance on process for choosing speakers and session content development (final decision making is retained by CFSN)
- Develop and send confirmation letters to speakers. Confirmation letters may include, but are not limited to:
 - Date/time of presentation
 - Meeting room assignment
 - Fee arrangements (speaker fees, travel, lodging, meals, etc) ;
- Confirm speaker arrangements:
 - Confirm arrival and departure times and arrange for pickup as appropriate
 - Confirm lodging preferences
 - Confirm meeting room set up preferences
 - Confirm equipment needs (podium, LCD projector, laptop, display tables, etc.)
- Obtain biographical information and photographs to insert in promotional materials and/or conference program
- Create "conference at a glance" material including speaker information, session titles time slots and room assignments for inclusion in conference program

SPONSORS

- Work with CFSN staff and conference planning committee to identify and recruit potential sponsors
- Establish levels of sponsorship and accompanying benefits (example: free/reduced advertising in conference program) of each level

POST-CONFERENCE

- Review all invoices for accuracy and present to CFSN staff and conference planning committee for approval and payment
- Prepare thank you letters to all speakers and special guests
- Oversee distribution and collection of conference evaluation materials, designed by CFSN staff and conference planning committee