

# NON-PROFIT CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

A resource for organizations looking to use  
Food as an Economic & Workforce Development Tool



Information generated through a 2014-15 feasibility study conducted by the Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin, and consultant Karen Fulbright-Anderson suggests that non-profits would benefit from a process that examines their capacity to incorporate the food sector in economic and workforce development activities.

The following questions are not intended to be exhaustive but rather illustrative.

## CONCEPTUALLY: *What is the organization's theory of change?*

1. What is the organization's ultimate goal when it comes to integrating the food sector and economic development activities?
2. Is the organization's ultimate goal in sync with the activities in which it wishes to engage?
3. What barriers might the organization encounter and how will they be addressed?
4. What opportunities are available to support and align this work and how can they be accessed?
5. What methods will they use to evaluate their success? Will activities to be mission-centric, a source of financial sustainability, or both?

## FOOD INDUSTRY: *What knowledge is needed?*

1. Does the organization have an accurate assessment of the demand for its proposed products (e.g. commercial kitchen rental space, workforce training slots, and food products for market...)?
2. Does the organization have sufficient understanding of the local, state and federal rules and regulations that apply to their proposed food sector activities (e.g. licensing requirements, food safety requirements, etc.)?
3. Does the organization have a good understanding of the multiple components that need to be addressed when working in the food sector (e.g. processes for gaining access to markets for their products, labeling and food packaging, distribution, marketing, etc.)

## FINANCIAL: *What knowledge and resources are needed?*

1. Does the organization have an accurate assessment of the costs associated with the type of food based work they wish to do?
2. Does the organization have financial resources to cover the 3-5 years that it may take for their work to be financially sustainable?
3. Does the organization have the financial resources to hire and retain staff skilled in the areas needed to do this work?
4. Does the organization have relationships with grant and loan sources to ensure adequate financial support for the project?

## HUMAN RESOURCES: *What capacities and skills are needed?*

1. Does the organization have access to personnel or partners who have the capacities and skills needed to carry out this work? Depending on the activities in which the organization wishes to engage, these could include a combination of the following: culinary; food science; teaching and/or training; personnel management; facilities management; time management; project management; financial management; business planning; sales; marketing; distribution; accounting, marketing; grantsmanship; research and development; and knowledge of local, state and federal codes and regulations.
2. Does the organization have relationships with or networks and connections to farmers, potential volunteers, and retailers, wholesalers, institutional or other markets that could be outlets for their products?

## PHYSICAL: *What type of infrastructure is needed ?*

1. Does the organization have broad access to production facilities in desired locations? Does the space have room for growth?
2. Does the organization have year-round outlets for its products?
3. Does the organization have access to the commercial grade equipment needed for the type of activities in which it wishes to engage?
4. Does the organization have access to affordable, high quality supplies?