



North Central Texas Council of Governments

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FOOD DESERT ANALYSIS**

JUNE 6, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The North Central Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is seeking private companies, consultants, or firms to share information on data related to solving food deserts in the region. NCTCOG plans to use this information to better understand the general model of grocery stores in food deserts and how communities utilize these services. Additionally, NCTCOG will assess the need for innovative grocery store options in food desert regions. It is the intent of this Request for Information to develop a pilot program to evaluate a novel approach to eliminate food deserts within the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of, by, and for local governments, and was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metropolitan Area. NCTCOG's Transportation Department is responsible for regional transportation planning for all modes of transportation. The Department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and its technical committees, which compose the MPO policy-making structure. In addition, the Department provides technical assistance to the local transit providers of North Central Texas in planning, programming, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions. The RTC has established broadband as an eligible transportation mode under 23 USC Title 49. It is anticipated that a broadband network may be necessary to help unlock novel approaches to eliminate food desserts

PURPOSE AND NEED

NCTCOG is seeking private companies, consultants, or firms to share information on data related to solving food deserts in the region. NCTCOG plans to use this information to better understand the general model of grocery stores in food deserts and how communities utilize these services. Additionally, NCTCOG will assess the need for innovative grocery store options

in food desert regions. NCTCOG's intent is for accounting technology to be able to handle payments from supplemental nutrition programs, such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). NCTCOG has been requested by several local governments to initiate a process to help resolve this issue.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

NCTCOG is interested in implementing technology (e.g., broadband) in food desert regions to serve communities through grocery delivery services and drive through grocery services. Broadband technology may be used for food purchases, autonomous vehicle delivery, unmanned aircraft delivery, backroom payment systems and network capabilities for community members to access these services. NCTCOG is seeking information from all parties on the availability of these services and the feasibility to increase the accessibility of cost-effective options to increase food and resources to those in food deserts. As part of this response, NCTCOG is not interested in a direct financial subsidy of a traditional grocery store. NCTCOG is seeking the following information to help shape next steps:

- 1.) If broadband was used to help implement grocery store delivery, what number of homes in the area would need broadband to trigger construction of grocery stores?
- 2.) What technology resources would be needed for the homes to ensure access to grocery delivery options (e.g. iPads, phones, computers) and human understanding to be able to access and pay for operating cost related to such technologies?
- 3.) What "industrial/technology" grocery store models are available that help to reduce the labor cost?
- 4.) What technology is available to help with inventory/supply/ to reduce food waste and lower operating costs for regular retail presentation (i.e., facing materials and dusting products)? Saying this differently, how do we add functional efficiencies as a tool to reduce operating costs?
- 5.) If NCTCOG helps to sponsor the technology portion, does that help to generate enough cost savings to result in the construction of a new "next generation grocery store"? Are there other considerations NCTCOG should understand?
- 6.) What are the universe of stores who might be interested in this opportunity?
- 7.) Are there other financial incentives that would encourage the success of this model?

PLANS FOLLOWING RFI

Since requests for elimination of food deserts have been received, NCTCOG will work to implement capabilities for implementation. Facilities will hopefully be created to fulfill orders and house merchandise. The program aims to increase accessibility of food and resources to those in food deserts.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

All questions regarding the RFI shall be directed in writing by e-mail to TransRFPs@nctcog.org by the close of business on Friday, June 20, 2025. All questions and responses will be posted on the NCTCOG website at www.nctcog.org/rfp by the close of business on Wednesday, June 25, 2025. NCTCOG reserves the right to respond to inquiries as it deems necessary.

NCTCOG wants an opportunity to engage with the industry through an industry forum, which will be hosted at NCTCOG's offices, and virtually, on Thursday, June 19, 2025, at 2:30 pm CST. A link to the virtual meeting will be provided at www.nctcog.org/rfp.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents may submit one hard copy or one flash drive of the proposal to Michael Morris, P.E., Director of Transportation, North Central Texas Council of Governments, 616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011. Flash drives should contain one file preferably with indexed sections. Flash drives that are unreadable or contain corrupted files will be considered non-responsive. **Responses must be received in hand no later than 5:00 p.m., Central Time, on July 11, 2025 at the NCTCOG offices.** Responses received after that time will not be considered and will be returned to the respondents unopened. Responses containing original signatures and notary seals should be labeled "Original". The in-hand submittal will count as the official submittal. In addition to the in-hand submittal, NCTCOG is requesting electronic submission of response documents to TransRFPs@nctcog.org.

OVERALL SCHEDULE

This RFI shall be used to accept and review information based on the following schedule:

Issue Request for Information	June 6, 2025
Industry Forum	June 19, 2025
Last Day to Submit Questions	June 20, 2025
NCTCOG Q&A Posted to Website	June 25, 2025
Responses of Information Due	July 11, 2025

NCTCOG reserves the right to make changes to the above-mentioned schedule. All such changes shall be made by an amendment to the RFI and shall be posted on NCTCOG's website at www.nctcog.org/rfp. It is the responsibility of the individual to frequently check this website for information concerning amendments to the RFI.

DISCLOSURES

This is a Request for Information (RFI) only to identify sources that can provide information on data related to solving food deserts in the region. All documents associated with the RFI shall be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act. All information obtained during the course of this RFI process shall become the property of NCTCOG and will not be returned. Please clearly mark or indicate any submitted material that is considered proprietary or confidential information.

The information provided in the RFI is subject to change and is not binding on NCTCOG. NCTCOG has not made a commitment to procure any of the items discussed, and release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought.