

N.Y.C Groceries Branding & Design Consultant

Project # 11639

Questions & Answers

June 18, 2026

In connection with the **Request for Proposals (“RFP”)** relating to the **N.Y.C Groceries Branding & Design Consultant** released by NYCEDC on **May 28, 2026**, the questions from potential Respondents and answers provided by NYCEDC are below. Capitalized terms shall have the meaning set forth in the RFP unless otherwise defined in this Q&A document or the context otherwise requires.

1. What is the anticipated Maximum Contract Price range, or is there a target budget for the brand and design work?

NYCEDC has identified a Maximum Contract Price amount of up to \$1,000,000 to effectuate the full scope of services as tasked, and for the entire term of the contract.

2. Task 2A asks for brand name concepts. Is "N.Y.C. Groceries" a working placeholder, or has the City committed to that name? If committed, please confirm Task 2A means tagline and identity only.

“N.Y.C. Groceries” is the working title of the project (the “Project”) and remains subject to ongoing review. Task 2A includes concept development of brand name, logos, typography system, color palette, and tagline(s).

3. Has NYCEDC or the City completed any audience research, focus group work, or strategy positioning that the selected Consultant can build on?

NYCEDC has conducted and will continue several activities to solicit feedback about the Project including community listening sessions, industry roundtables, and an engagement survey. These materials will be provided to the selected Respondent as part of their onboarding.

4. Have the Architecture and Engineering (“A&E”) firms for the five Project stores been selected? If so, who? If not, when will they be onboarded relative to the brand development phase?

Two sites have been identified as of June 2026—The Peninsula in Hunts Point, and La Marqueta in East Harlem. At this time, NYCEDC anticipates the A&E firms for these two sites will be announced and subsequently onboarded during the brand development phase, from August through October 2026. NYCEDC is actively seeking sites for the remaining three boroughs.

5. Task 1B references observing City-led sessions. How many sessions, in which boroughs, and during what window?

NYCEDC, in collaboration with the City, expects to host citywide information sessions with program stakeholders and community members on a rolling basis. The number of sessions is to be determined, pending schedules and availability. NYCEDC expects to invite the branding Consultant team to observe sessions that may reveal valuable insights related to the brand development.

6. For Task 1A bespoke focus groups, will NYCEDC or the selected Consultant be responsible for recruitment, facility, and incentives?

Respondents will be responsible for recruitment, facility, and incentives, and should include their recommended approach to this in Part B of their Proposal.

7. For the 2027–2029 brand deployment review phase, what is the anticipated time commitment per store and per year? Retainer or hourly?

The selected Respondent should expect two review moments for each Project store between 2027 and 2029. Further timing details are unavailable at this time. Proposals should include costs in a task-based format.

8. Task 2B includes "product private labeling." Approximately how many Stock Keeping Units ("SKU") and categories should Respondents budget for in the guidelines phase?

Inventory tracking and specifications are anticipated to be the responsibility of the selected N.Y.C. Groceries store operator(s). The number of private label categories is to be determined.

9. If a Respondent is itself M/WBE-certified, does that count toward the 30% goal, or does the 30% apply only to subconsultants?

M/WBEs may submit a Proposal to this RFP as the prime Respondent. As it relates to the M/WBE goal, the Respondent would be self-fulfilling and would meet the MWBE requirement.

10. Will the subsequent Contract follow standard NYCEDC work-for-hire terms with the City retaining ownership of the brand identity and naming.

Yes, that is the expected outcome.

11. Does the 30-page Proposal limit include the cost Proposal (Appendix 6) and references, or only the narrative sections?

The up-to 30 pages is inclusive of A) Organizational Overview and B) Work Plan and Approach. It does not include required appendices. Please see pages 6-8 of the RFP.

12. Please share the registration details for the information sessions and any additional information that may be needed to participate.

Information Session registration was open through June 10, 2026 at [N.Y.C. Groceries Branding and Design RFP | Information Session RSVP - Intellistack](#).

13. Can creative partners outside the State of New York apply for this opportunity?

There is no prohibition for companies outside of New York. Respondents should ensure that, prior to submitting a Proposal, they have confirmed in writing that each prospective partner agreeing to provide Services as set forth in the Proposal, has satisfied, as applicable, all New York State and City doing business legal requirements to provide such Services.

14. Is this RFP is open to international (non-US) studios?

See response to Question #13.

15. Are design-only submissions acceptable or is a broader scope of services required?

Proposals must demonstrate the ability to successfully provide the entire scope of Services, either by a single firm or a consortium.

16. Is NYCEDC open to a Proposal by a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United States, with some currently being the States of California, Hawaii, Michigan, Virginia, Colorado and Wyoming?

See response to Question #13.

17. What is the budget for this Project?

See response to Question #1.

18. Are Canadian firms able to submit a Proposal, or is it limited to US-based agencies only?

See response to Question #13.

19. How does a Respondent schedule a brief discovery call?

As this is an ongoing procurement, calls and meetings with individual Respondents will not be conducted. Inquiries must be submitted to the designated project email address, GroceriesBrandDesign@edc.nyc before 5 PM EST, June 12, 2026.

20. Task 2A asks the Consultant to provide concepts for the brand name. Could NYCEDC clarify how far the Consultant's responsibility extends: name concept development only, or also trademark availability/clearance searches and support in securing a federally registrable name (USPTO)?

Name concept development is expected as part of Task 2. Respondents should include trademark availability/clearance search as part of that development. NYCEDC will be responsible for the registration process.

21. Could NYCEDC confirm the anticipated Contract start date and the expected Contract end date, given that store openings run through end of 2029?

NYCEDC currently anticipates the Contract term will be July 2026 through December 2029.

22. Is there an anticipated fee range or budget for this Project that Respondents should work within?

See response to Question #1.

23. Roughly what cadence of in-person or virtual meetings and progress presentations does NYCEDC anticipate — for example, approximately once per month?

NYCEDC anticipates weekly meetings or status updates from the start of the Contract through completion of Tasks 1 and 2. Frequency of meetings and status updates during Task 3 will be determined at a later date.

24. Are the N.Y.C. Groceries' operators for the two confirmed sites — La Marqueta and the Peninsula campus — already identified, and if so, will the Consultant coordinate with them during brand development?

The N.Y.C. Groceries' operator(s) for this Project have not yet been identified. A Request for Proposals for the Operator(s) is anticipated to be released in Q3 of 2026.

25. As the Maximum Contract Price is negotiated, should the 30% M/WBE participation commitment be calculated against the proposed fee, or against the final negotiated contract value?

The M/WBE participation goal applies to 30% of the final negotiated Contract value.

26. Is there an anticipated timeframe for identifying the three remaining borough locations (Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island)?

NYCEDC is actively seeking sites in the remaining three boroughs. A timeframe for site identification in these three boroughs cannot be confirmed at this time.

27. Does the Consultant's scope include securing brand digital assets such as domain names and social media handles for the selected name, or is this handled separately by NYCEDC?

The selected Respondent will not be responsible for securing domains and social media handles.

28. Is it possible to clarify a budget ballpark for past similar work?

See response to Question #1.

29. Will preference be given to Respondents geographically based in New York City?

The scoring criteria for this Project does not give preference based on geographic location.

30. Could NYCEDC please point to the link to the application?

Proposals should be submitted at <https://edc.nyc/Consultant-services-nyc-groceries-branding-and-design-rfp>.

31. Are non New-Yorkers allowed to send in Proposals?

See response to Question #13.

32. For Task 2B (Environmental Branding Applications) and Task 3 (Architecture and Engineering Collaboration), is the selected Consultant expected to develop detailed environmental graphic design packages and implementation-ready documentation, or is the expectation that the Consultant will establish the brand standards, visual direction, and application guidelines while architecture and engineering teams develop and execute site-specific documentation?

The selected Consultant will be expected to provide guidelines and mockups for in-store and exterior branding applications. Site specific and fabrication-ready designs are not included in the scope of this Contract.

33. During the Task 3: Architecture and Engineering Collaboration phase, is the Consultant's role primarily advisory and review-based, or will the Consultant be expected to create new design work and detailed environmental graphics for each location?

The Consultant will review and provide markups and comments that provide direction to ensure consistent application of brand standards. New design work and detailed environmental graphics are not expected.

34. Are individuals who do not work at or own design companies able to submit designs?

Individuals are welcome to submit a Proposal and are also welcome to propose as part of a consortium. Respondents must not pitch brand concepts as part of their Proposal submission. Please refer to pages 6-8 of the RFP for submission requirements.

35. What is the process for submitting questions related to the RFP?

See response to Question #19.

36. Is "N.Y.C. Groceries" the official brand name, or is NYCEDC hoping the selected Consultant could also help with naming?

See response to Question #2.

37. What format would NYCEDC ideally like the Proposal to be delivered in? (Keynote, PPT, PDF, Figma, etc)

Proposals should be submitted as a single .zip file, labeled with the Respondent's name and the title of this RFP. Within the .zip file, a PDF is preferred.

38. Does NYCEDC have a budget allocated to this Project?

See response to Question #1.

39. Is there a specific timeline for this Project? When is NYCEDC hoping to kick off?

NYCEDC anticipates beginning this Project in Q3 2026. Task 1 is anticipated to take place July – August 2026, Task 2 is anticipated to take place August – October 2026, and Task 3 is anticipated to take place 2027 – 2029 aligned with the design development phase for each of the five Project stores.

40. Task 2A includes brand name development, but the initiative is already publicly referred to as "N.Y.C. Groceries." Is the brand name open for reinvention, or is the Consultant expected to develop visual and verbal identity within the existing name? If naming is in scope, are there constraints related to City/NYCEDC trademark, legal review timelines, or existing public communications?

See response to Question #2.

41. Task 1A calls for "bespoke focus group interviews." Will NYCEDC provide recruitment support, compensation for participants, or venue access, or is the Consultant expected to budget for and manage all logistics independently?

See response to Question #6.

42. Task 2C references "additional rounds of creative ideation." How many rounds does NYCEDC anticipate, and is there a cap?

NYCEDC expects several rounds of review during the brand development of this important NYCEDC initiative. For Task 2 specifically, Respondents should expect a minimum of three rounds of review.

43. How much time should the Consultant allow for feedback and approvals after each round of review?

Review timelines will be established by NYCEDC's appointed Project Manager in collaboration with the selected Consultant team.

44. Tasks 3A–3B spans 2027–2029 — a multi-year period after the core Project brand work is complete. Can NYCEDC clarify the anticipated frequency of brand deployment reviews per each N.Y.C. Groceries' store, and whether this is billed as time-and-materials or included in the fixed scope?

See response to Question #7.

45. The RFP references NYCEDC's Marketing department, an interdepartmental team, and the City. Can NYCEDC describe the decision-making hierarchy for brand approvals, particularly who has final sign-off on brand direction, name, and identity?

NYCEDC will serve as the contracting organization and will be responsible for day-to-day interaction with the Branding and Design Consultant. Approvals and decision making processes will be made by NYCEDC in consultation with the City.

46. Has NYCEDC or the City conducted any consumer research, community engagement, or brand audits related to N.Y.C. Groceries that would be shared with the Consultant at project kickoff?

See response to Question #3.

47. Task 1A mentions "historically significant brands and logos related to the City of New York." Are there specific visual references or City brand assets (e.g., existing NYC sub-brand systems) the Consultant should be aware of or align with?

It is the selected Consultant's responsibility to identify and reference relevant New York City brands and logos that can be used as inspiration for this Project.

48. The RFP does not state a Maximum Contract Price. Can NYCEDC share a budget range or ceiling to help Respondents scope their Proposals appropriately?

See response to Question #1.

49. Are out-of-pocket costs (e.g., recruiting fees, focus group incentives, travel to store sites, printing of mockups) reimbursable as pass-through costs above the fee, or must they be included within the total proposed fee?

All expenses should be factored in the Task-based cost Proposal.

50. The 30% M/WBE participation goal is noted. Does NYCEDC have specific targets by ethnicity category (Black-owned, Hispanic-owned, etc.) it would like to see prioritized, beyond the overall goal?

No, there is only one overall 30% goal.

51. Does the M/WBE need to be the prime contractor, or can they be a subcontractor in the partnership to be eligible to submit a Proposal?

See response to Question #9.

52. The RFP asks for visual examples of past projects but also states Proposals must not include spec creative. Can NYCEDC confirm that presenting completed prior work (e.g., brand identity systems, environmental applications) is permissible, and clarify the distinction it is drawing?

Respondents may include visual examples of past projects. Respondents must not pitch brand concepts including exploratory visuals for N.Y.C. Groceries, as part of their Proposal submission.

53. In the situation of a prime Consultant with no W-2 employees operating through a network of long-term independent contractors and subcontractors, would a New York State Workers' Compensation exemption (CE-200) be acceptable in lieu of a Workers' Compensation insurance policy?

Yes.

54. Additionally related to insurance, are there any restrictions or requirements regarding the use of subcontractors or independent contractors as part of the Consultant team, provided their roles and responsibilities are clearly identified in the Proposal?

No, but subcontractors are subject to the prime insurance requirements, as applicable to scope of Services.

55. Can key subcontractors and long-term consulting partners be included as members of the proposed Respondent team and counted toward the Respondent team's relevant experience and qualifications, provided their roles are clearly defined and they are committed to the Project?

Yes, consortiums are welcome.

56. How can someone schedule a meeting if they want to contribute to this project?

See response to Question #19.

You can find more information related to this RFP here: <https://edc.nyc/consultant-services-nyc-groceries-branding-and-design-rfp>.

57. May I share my design pitch via email?

NYCEDC is unable to accept design pitches via email. Proposals will be reviewed through the RFP submission process.

58. Is this RFP strictly limited to design firms and professionals residing in New York City, or are international designers and agencies permitted to submit Proposals?

See response to Question #13.

59. Are individual freelance designers eligible to apply, or are submissions restricted solely to established advertising and design agencies?

See response to Question #34.

60. Do Respondents have to be based in New York City? If so, can a partner business be based in New York City while 50% of the Respondent team is in another state?

See response to Question #13.

61. If a branding and design consultancy does not utilize company-owned vehicles in the performance of services does the Automobile Liability requirement apply or may it be waived?

Auto liability requirement applies if a Consultant utilizes or operates any automobiles in connection with the Services. If not, then this coverage would not apply. NYCEDC will request written confirmation that no vehicles will be used in connection with the services instead of auto insurance.

62. Does the fee cover only Task 1 and Task 2 (July–October 2026), or does it also include architectural and engineering collaboration for Task 3 (2027–2029) within the same Contract?

Respondents should factor all phases of the scope of Services in their cost Proposal. Please refer to Appendix 6 of the RFP document.

63. Are travel expenses to New York for meetings, focus groups, and store reviews reimbursed as Allowable Additional Costs, or must they be included within the Maximum Contract Price?

Travel expenses are not permitted.

64. Will there be a second round of evaluation, interviews, or presentations with the shortlisted Respondents, or is the decision made solely based on the written Proposal?

NYCEDC expects a second round of review with shortlisted firms. The number of firms and the timeline for presentations is not confirmed at this time.

65. How many firms are being considered or invited to submit Proposals?

This is a public procurement. Any Respondent who believes they can fulfill the Scope of Services is invited to submit a Proposal.

66. What is the estimated date for notifying the selected Consultant?

NYCEDC anticipates notifying the selected Consultant in Q3 of 2026.

67. Is the name “N.Y.C. Groceries” a final name that must be retained, or can the selected Consultant propose alternative names as part of the Scope of Services for Task 2A?

See response to Question #2.

68. Are there any guidelines on how to incorporate or reference historic New York City brands mentioned in Task 1A, such as restrictions on the use of the City of New York coat of arms or the City’s official typeface?

See response to Question #47.

69. How many rounds of creative review are included in Task 2C before final approval of the brand identity?

See response to Question #42.

70. Will the Consultant have access to the community engagement sessions mentioned in Task 1B, or will they only be able to observe them without active participation?

NYCEDC, in collaboration with the City, has conducted and will continue several activities to solicit feedback about the N.Y.C. Groceries Project including community listening sessions, industry roundtables, and an engagement survey. These materials will be provided to the selected Respondent during their onboarding. At the Consultant's discretion, they may observe or actively participate in any community engagement sessions that are scheduled during Task 1. They will not be permitted to moderate or adjust the structure or process of NYCEDC-organized sessions.

71. Does WBE certification issued in another state qualify toward the 30% M/WBE participation goal, or must the certification be specifically issued by the New York City Department of Small Business Services ("NYC SBS") to count?

Only New York City-certified, MBEs, WBE or M/WBEs are qualified toward the M/WBE goal for this RFP.

72. Does a Respondent need to hold both Minority-owned AND Women-owned certification simultaneously to qualify, or would a team of contractors including both a minority-owned firm and a WBE-certified firm be sufficient to meet the requirement?

One certification is sufficient but must be a City of New York certification.

73. What constitutes "similar scope" for the required experience? Is there a minimum project size (by budget, physical scale, or number of locations) that NYCEDC considers comparable?

NYCEDC has not identified a minimum project size that would constitute scope. If a Respondent believes they can demonstrate relevant experience, they are welcome to submit a Proposal.

74. In the case of a consortium, can a foreign firm act as the lead Respondent if it has a local partner in the United States?

Yes. A foreign firm is also welcome to propose without a local partner. Respondents should ensure that, prior to submitting a Proposal, they have confirmed in writing that each prospective partner agreeing to provide Services as set forth in the Proposal, has satisfied, as applicable, all New York State and City doing business legal requirements to provide such Services.

75. Does the Person in Charge designated in the Proposal need to be based in New York, or can they manage the project remotely and through travel to New York City?

The Person in Charge does not need to be based in New York.

76. Does the 30% M/WBE participation requirement apply to the total Contract value, including Task 3 (2027–2029), or only to the branding tasks (Tasks 1 and 2)?

The M/WBE participation goal applies to 30% of the final negotiated Contract value, and reflective of the entire Scope of Services.

77. Can NYCEDC provide a list of certified M/WBE firms with experience in branding or research that have previously worked with NYCEDC?

An online directory of City Certified M/WBE Businesses can be reviewed at <https://sbsconnect.nyc.gov/certification-directory-search/>.

78. If a Respondent is in the process of obtaining M/WBE certification in the City, can it count its own participation toward the 30% goal even if certification is pending at the time of the Proposal?

A Respondent and, if applicable, sub-contractor must be registered prior to contract execution in order for their work to count toward the M/WBE requirement.

79. The Contract states that all work product is the exclusive property of NYCEDC. Does this include brand concepts that are not selected during the ideation process, or only the final approved concept?

As set forth in the Contract, Work Product is defined to include all materials prepared or furnished by the Consultant, pursuant to the Contract, to NYCEDC.

80. Will the Consultant be permitted to include N.Y.C. Groceries work in their portfolio and marketing materials once the brand is public?

Yes.

81. Will the Consultant have physical access to the La Marqueta (East Harlem) and The Peninsula (Bronx) sites for site visits during the research phase?

Yes.

82. Will the three pending sites (Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island) be identified before Phase 2 of the visual identity is completed, or must the Consultant design without knowing those locations?

NYCEDC cannot confirm announcement timing for the remaining three sites.

83. Do the insurance requirements need to be met before the Proposal submission or can they be met before the final selection?

Insurance requirements must be met upon Contract execution.

84. Is NYCEDC looking for a certain company size to work with? Is there a minimum team/revenue size?

NYCEDC has not identified a preferred size of Respondent team.

85. Please provide a copy of the information session materials.

The PowerPoint from the information session is available at <https://edc.nyc/Consultant-services-nyc-groceries-branding-and-design-rfp>. The recording of the information session will not be posted.

86. Is there a design brief Respondents can refer to?

For the purposes of this RFP, information is provided on the RFP web page at [Consultant Services, N.Y.C. Groceries Branding and Design RFP | NYCEDC](#), and within the RFP document and information session presentation document. The selected Respondent will receive further briefing materials during onboarding.

87. Does the Respondent participating in this RFP need to be registered in the City?

See response to Question #13. Additionally, in order for sub-consultants to qualify toward M/WBE requirements they must be certified by the New York City Department of Small Business Services.

88. For certified WBE's that have served as a prime consultant on branding and design projects but have not previously served as a prime contractor on projects with formal M/WBE participation goals and reporting requirements, how should Respondents complete Section D of the M/WBE Narrative Form when historical M/WBE utilization data is not available?

If your firm has served as a prime consultant on branding, design, or similar professional services projects, you do not have to list those projects in Section D, if they did not include formal M/WBE participation goals.

89. Can NYCEDC provide additional guidance on what is expected as part of the desktop research component? Are there specific topics, data sources, or outputs NYCEDC would like included?

Under Task 1A, the Branding & Design Consultant should study existing, published research related to the grocery industry, and use those insights to complement the custom research that the Consultant will lead during the Brand Research, Strategy, and Concepting stage. Sample research topics could include shopper attitudes towards existing grocery brands, shopper priorities and preference, and consumer price index data.

90. Can NYCEDC provide guidance on the anticipated scope of the qualitative research, including the number of focus groups and interviews expected? What length of interviews do NYCEDC like?

The Consultant is expected to recommend the number of focus groups and length of interviews that will generate sufficient insights for brand strategy and concepting.

91. Are there specific target audiences, demographic groups, geographies, or other segments that NYCEDC would like represented in the research? How should the qualitative groups be broken out?

Brand research should span across all five boroughs of New York City, as N.Y.C. Groceries will be a citywide program. Participants in qualitative research studies should span across a range of demographic backgrounds to accurately reflect the city's diverse market.

92. If NYCEDC would like Hispanic/Latino audiences represented in the research, does NYCEDC anticipate dedicated Spanish-language groups/interviews, or should Hispanic/Latino participants be included within the general market sample?

Diverse demographic backgrounds should be represented within the custom research studies. The selected Consultant team will be responsible for sourcing participants and translating any outreach materials as needed.

93. How many NYCEDC/City-led community engagement sessions are anticipated, and what level of participation is expected from the selected Consultant?

See response to Question #3.

94. Does NYCEDC have priority customer segments in mind for the psychographic profiles, or should these be identified through the research process

These should be identified through the research process.

95. Are there specific grocery retailers, food access initiatives, or affordability-focused concepts that NYCEDC would like included in the competitive analysis?

The competitive analysis should feature grocery brands that are based in New York City and national grocery brands that have presence in New York City, as well as comparable publicly-supported food initiatives that have been launched outside of New York City. NYCEDC does not expect this analysis to cover an exhaustive list of grocers within the New York City market, but rather a representative sample that will uncover brand strategy insights.

96. What level of depth is expected for the competitive landscape assessment?

See response to Question #95.

97. Should the competitive analysis focus primarily on New York City grocery retailers, or should it also include relevant national and international examples?

See response to Question #95.

98. Beyond audience insights and psychographic profiles, are there any specific research deliverables NYCEDC expects at the conclusion of Tasks 1A-1D?

In addition to audience insights and psychographic profiles, the selected Consultant will be responsible for conducting a competitive analysis of existing grocery brands and comparable publicly-supported food initiatives. The Consultant is also expected to research and consider historically significant brands and logos related to the City of New York that can be incorporated or referenced while developing a distinct N.Y.C. Groceries brand.

99. Would NYCEDC share if there are any supplemental materials, updates, or future communications related to the RFP?

See response to Question #12 and Question #30.

100. How does NYCEDC envision the relationship between brand development, community engagement, customer experience, and long-term implementation across the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative?

NYCEDC is managing all components of the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative and welcomes Respondent recommendations on how the new brand could interact with other parts of the N.Y.C. Groceries Project.

101. Are there opportunities for independent designers and creative directors to be hired for this job if their extensive work experience with a global company is relevant to this exact project?

See response to Question #36.

102. What kind of Contract will this Project use?

This will be a Consultant contract between NYCEDC and the selected Respondent. NYCEDC anticipates making payments based on task completion, for the entire term of the Contract and for the full Scope of Services included in the RFP.

103. The Request for Proposals describes the Scope of Services. Can NYCEDC clarify the research, brand management and visual design tasks vs the architecture collaboration? Do the Proposals need to include an architecture/ engineering and a construction team or are these separate companies that the design/ branding/ research within this Proposal are listing as tasks? In other words, are the only Respondents being considered, Design Build companies?

Proposals should not include an architecture/engineering and/or construction team. For Task 3 specifically, the Consultant will review and provide markup and comments on drawings submitted by other contracted engineering teams to ensure consistent application of brand standards.

104. What are the requirements for the financial sureties as a design and branding Consultant?

NYCEDC's risk management for this Contract is addressed through the selected Consultant's compliance with all contractual and insurance requirements set forth in the Contract.

105. Are the terms of the RFP posted somewhere else, or could they be sent?

The requirements for Proposal submissions and terms are included in the RFP document, which can be downloaded as a PDF from <https://edc.nyc/Consultant-services-nyc-groceries-branding-and-design-rfp>.

106. I'm a woman sole proprietor. My M/WBE application with the City is still in process. It likely will not be processed until after the RFP submission deadline. Does a pending application grant any scoring credit? Can I submit a birth certificate noting that I am female as a placeholder until the application is processed?

No, it does not.

107. Are agency teaming relationships accepted to pursue this Contract to fulfill requirements?

Yes. Respondents may be a consortium with partners and subcontractors to ensure relevant experience for the full Scope of Services.

108. How many Proposals per Respondent are allowed?

Respondents should submit one Proposal. Please note that Respondents must not pitch brand concepts as part of their Proposal submission. Please refer to pages 6-8 of the RFP for submission requirements.

109. Can freelancers submit a Proposal?

See response to Questions #34.

110. Are Respondents allowed to bring on design students as part of the Consultant team once the school year begins? If so, would they need to submit any paperwork?

Respondents are welcome to assemble their proposed Consultant team; provided that the Respondent ensures each of their Consultant team members are in compliance with all local, state and federal labor laws.

111. If there are other technologies that our parent company could help with for the grocery store? Who can we get in touch with?

Technology deployed in the NYC grocery stores will be the responsibility of the contracted operator. That RFP is expected to come out this summer. Interested may seek opportunities to participate as Consultants or sub-Consultants. [Sign up for subcontractors and suppliers list.](#)

112. What is the primary emotional job this brand needs to do? Is the goal for N.Y.C. Groceries to feel empowering, neighborly, proud, something else?

Any must-have elements of the brand's ethos and emotional appeal will be communicated to the selected Consultant during their onboarding.

113. How much latitude exists to create a truly distinct visual identity versus one that reads clearly as a City of New York institution? Is there appetite for something genuinely fresh and modern, or does the brand need to lean into civic iconography to signal legitimacy and government partnership?

NYCEDC encourages the selected Consultant to consider multiple approaches to the brand's nature, using research and insights to narrow in a shortlist of concepts to be developed during the Visual Identity and Design Application stage.

114. Who is the final decision-maker on brand approval, and who sits in the governance group around them?

See response to Question # 45.

115. Has any prior research on New Yorker attitudes toward publicly supported grocery been conducted, and is it available to the selected Consultant?

NYCEDC encourages the selected Consultant to source publicly-available research, interviews, and polling related to New Yorkers' support of the municipal grocery program. Any research findings led by NYCEDC on public sentiment of the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative will be communicated to the selected Consultant during their onboarding.

116. What does success look like for this brand in Year 1, and in Year 5?

Success during the initial rollout of the N.Y.C. Groceries' stores is tied to adoption, foot traffic, and viability of a sustainable and scalable operating model.

117. What is the relationship between the branding Consultant and the architecture and engineering teams already engaged or to be engaged? Have A&E firms already been selected, and how does NYCEDC envision the working dynamic; will the brand Consultant lead, advise, or simply review?

See response to Question #4.

The selected Respondent is expected to contribute insights at the mid-fitout and pre-fabrication presentations that will be provided by A&E firms for each site in support of the brand's universal guidelines and standards. This process will be facilitated by NYCEDC staff.

118. Are there any pre-existing City of New York brand governance rules or style constraints that apply to this initiative?

There are no pre-existing guidelines or standards that must be applied to the new N.Y.C. Groceries brand.

119. What is the intended approach to private label product branding included in Task 2B?

The selected Consultant will be expected to provide a design system for one private label brand, with mockup examples of the application of this private label brand across a variety of grocery products.

120. How will NYCEDC manage feedback and revisions across the interdepartmental team? Will there be a single designated point of contact or does the Consultant manage feedback directly from multiple departments?

A core team across NYCEDC and our City partners will be involved in the brand development process. A presentation to a group of select stakeholders may be required during Task 2. As the contracting agency, NYCEDC will aim to establish one primary point of contact for this Contract to streamline communication.

121. Does NYCEDC have target customer segments and household profiles?

The N.Y.C. Groceries locations will be open and accessible to all New Yorkers. During the research stage, the selected brand Consultant should engage with New Yorkers of diverse demographic backgrounds.

122. Is there a planned assortment and local product strategy?

Product assortment and strategy will be determined by the N.Y.C. Groceries program operator.

123. Should Respondents consider loyalty, digital, and customer relationship management capabilities?

No. These services fall outside the Scope of Services of this RFP.

124. Are there any planned community partnership opportunities?

NYCEDC welcomes creative ideas in the approach section of Proposals.

125. Are there grand opening and first-year marketing priorities?

The priority of this RFP is to establish a vibrant, cohesive brand identity for the network of N.Y.C. Groceries stores. The marketing and amplification of the stores falls outside the scope of this RFP.

126. Are there any health, wellness, and affordability initiatives tied to this Project?

N.Y.C. Groceries is expected to provide shoppers with direct relief at the cash register through discounted prices across a core basket of goods. Any additional health and wellness features of the stores have not been determined at this time.

127. Does NYCEDC have key traffic, basket, and customer acquisition goals?

This information will be shared with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

128. Will there be any package design needed for, say, a house brand?

See response to Question #119.

129. Can NYCEDC share more about how the two confirmed store locations mentioned in the RFP were selected, and whether the five stores are expected to adapt to the demographics, languages, and needs of each neighborhood?

Among other factors, NYCEDC prioritized City-owned sites during the initial site selection stage, to ensure that these stores will be long-lasting public resources for the City. NYCEDC expects one cohesive brand identity that unifies all five store locations.

130. Who at NYCEDC will be the decision maker for this Project, and what will be the process of decision making/time frame of decision making?

See response to Question #45.

131. How much input will the operator have in defining or evolving the Core Basket over time?

This falls outside of the scope of this RFP.

132. How many focus group sessions is NYCEDC anticipating?

See response to Question #90.

133. Can the primary Respondent company include an outside consultant that's is not a M/WBE?

Yes. The 30% M/WBE requirement applies to the selection of sub-contractors.

134. What is the date in June NYCEDC expects to shortlist firms and date of award?

It is anticipated that the Consultant will be selected and onboarded during Q3 of 2026.

135. Would it be possible to get the slides or a small summary of what was discussed in the information session?

See response to Question #85.

136. Will MWBE subcontractors who are not yet NYC SBS-certified but have applications pending be considered toward the 30% participation goal?

No.

137. What is the anticipated number of focus group sessions and participant targets under Task 1, or is that left to the Respondent to propose?

See response to Question #90.

- 138. For purposes of the 30% M/WBE participation goal, may work performed directly by a certified M/WBE prime Consultant be counted toward the M/WBE Participation Commitment Percentage, or must the participation goal be satisfied through subcontracting to additional certified M/WBE firms? If participation by a certified M/WBE prime Consultant counts toward the participation goal, how should Respondents reflect that participation in Appendix 3 (M/WBE Narrative) and Appendix 4 (SubConsultant Participation Plan)?**

See response to Question #9.

- 139. Is NYCEDC partial to larger agencies, or equally open to independent contractors?**

Individuals, firms, and consortiums of all sizes are encouraged to submit Proposals. The size of Respondent parties is not included in the RFP selection criteria.

- 140. When NYCEDC say an architectural/engineering firm would be following the brand guidelines the selected Consultant creates, does that mean the Consultant should create store interior mockups in order to better visualize the in-store branding? And will the interior mockup be the design that architectural Consultants are expected to follow? Will an interior store mockup be something that will be considered as a real design suggestion, or simply a way to visualize in-store collateral and marketing?**

As part of the scope the Consultant should provide mockups for all items listed under Task 2. A full store interior mockup is not required. The brand guidelines and these mockups will be provided to the architecture/engineering teams to illustrate how the brand can be applied to a set of common on-site elements; however adaptations are expected to address the specific needs of each site.

- 141. Does the cost proposal need to be included in the Proposal deck? The RFP says that the cost Proposal is to be filled out on a form. Does that form need to be in the deck?**

See response to Question #11.

- 142. Part C: REQUIRED APPENDICES of the RFP lists multiple requirements. Are these all required as appendices IN the Proposal deck?**

See response to Question #11.

- 143. What does this mean: "Respondents must not pitch brand concepts as part of their Proposal submission"?**

Proposals should showcase the Respondent's organizational structure, past relevant work, ability to satisfy the scope of services, and all other items outlined in sections A, B, and C of the Proposal Submission Requirements. Respondents may not include brand concepts for N.Y.C. Groceries, including exploratory visuals, as part of their submissions.

- 144. Part C of the RFP says "M/WBE Forms: Respondents must provide an M/WBE Narrative and Sub-Consultant Participation Plan, substantially in the form of Appendix 3 and Appendix 4". Please confirm if only sub-contractors require M/WBE certification?**

These forms are required. Prime Consultants must have a plan to reach the 30% M/WBE requirement and communicate that plan via these forms. M/WBE utilization is 15% of the Proposal score.

- 145. Is NYCEDC able to share the general art direction preferred? e.g. bold, vibrant, wholesome; minimal, simple, earthy; cool, edgy, street; etc.? OR is this entirely up to us and NYCEDC will choose based on whatever ends up resonating the most?**

NYCEDC encourages the selected Branding and Design Consultant to recommend brand concepts that are informed by strategic insights and then adhere to any must-have features that will be communicated during the onboarding period.

- 146. Will RFP responses and supporting materials be kept confidential and only reviewed by the evaluation team? We would like to include examples of previous work that demonstrate our capabilities, but some of these projects are protected under client NDAs and cannot be shared publicly.**

Upon submission, RFP Proposals become the property of NYCEDC. To the extent that the Respondent seeks to avoid compromising NDAs involving its clients, it is recommended that the Respondent's Proposal contains only information that it is able to share publicly.

- 147. Will the selected Consultant work with a core team providing feedback, or will additional levels of stakeholder reviews be needed?**

See response to Question #120.

- 148. Is NYCEDC open to working with agencies located outside of New York State?**

See response to Question #13.

- 149. Is the timing flexible for the Visual Identity and Design Application phase (Anticipated August-October 2026) of the scope?**

The timeline may shift; however, the stated timing is what is currently anticipated.

- 150. Does NYCEDC have an internal legal and/or marketing team securing legal business name (or DBA), establishing trademarks, securing domain and social media handles, or any other services related to a name changeover?**

See response to Question #20.

- 151. Is a custom brand illustration or iconography kit something we should consider as we scope our work?**

See response to Question #145.

- 152. For Task 2B of the Scope of Services, is NYCEDC looking for concepting/mocks only or production-ready files for the assets listed?**

The selected Consultant should provide guidelines and mockups. Production-ready files are out of scope of this RFP.

- 153. Under Tasks 2B and 4B of the Scope of Services, is NYCEDC looking for the chosen agency to manage vendors and production of all assets listed in 2B?**

The selected Consultant will not be responsible for vendor management or production.

- 154. Can a representative from a nonprofit organization based in Germany submit a Proposal, and if so, are there any specific requirements we should be aware of?**

See response to Question #13.

- 155. Task 1B of the RFP states "Observe City-led community engagement session(s) if schedule alignment allows to support brand research." To what extent should the team exhibit expertise in community engagement? If the session(s) are City-led and for the Respondent to observe only, is it advised to include a community engagement firm?**

The selected Consultant is invited to observe any NYCEDC/City-led community engagement sessions that may align with and support their market research efforts. Respondents are asked to provide an approach to market research as outlined in Task 1. Additional community engagement is not suggested in the Scope of Services.

- 156. To what extent should social media strategy be included in the response?**

Social media strategy is not included in the Scope of Services for this RFP.

- 157. Is there a preference for how to price Task 3? Shall it be project-based, a retainer with a not-to-exceed clause, or simply hourly?**

NYCEDC anticipates that this entire Contract will be billed on a Task basis. Please use projected hours, number of staff, and staff hourly rates to calculate total cost per task and list on Appendix 6, the cost Proposal sheet.

- 158. Can two studios partner together on this? And if so, how best should the partnership be structured? If two studios, can there be two principals (one from each studio) or must there only be one? Will they require MWBE certification?**

NYCEDC welcomes creative partnerships or consortiums which should be expressed in Section A of the Proposal. Regardless of the configuration, the 30%

M/WBE sub-Consultant plan is required, either by selecting M/WBE sub-Consultants or by one of the prime contractor's self-performance.

- 159. How should the brand account for the unique cultural identities of each borough while maintaining a consistent citywide brand system.**

See response to Question #91.

- 160. Are there any specific audience segments that NYCEDC views as priority audiences during launch, such as families, seniors, essential workers, or cost-conscious shoppers?**

See response to Question #91 and Question #121.

- 161. Are there any brands, within or outside the food and grocery industries, that NYCEDC particularly admires or would like to move away from?**

See response to Question #145.

- 162. How will the selected vendor collaborate with NYCEDC and the City throughout this process?**

See response to Question #120.

- 163. Will NYCEDC help arrange focus groups?**

See response to Question #6.

- 164. What is the anticipated timeline or cadence for each store opening?**

The City has a goal to open five stores – one in each borough – by the end of 2029. Further details are not available at this time.

- 165. For the new brand name, is the selected Consultant responsible for proposing names that have been pre-screened for trademark availability (i.e. names cleared through a United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) similar-mark search and assessed as having a medium-to-high likelihood of registrability), with the actual trademark filing and registration then handled by NYCEDC? Or does the Consultant's scope also include the filing/registration itself?**

See response to Question #2 and Question #20.

- 166. Should the five stores share one common brand name with a location identifier or is the intent to develop five distinct names — one for each store?**

All N.Y.C. Groceries stores should share a common brand name.

- 167. Roughly how many presentations does NYCEDC anticipate during Phases 1–2, and can these be held virtually?**

See response to Question #42.

Presentations may be held virtually.

168. What is the anticipated kick-off date once an agency is appointed?

See response to Question #134.

169. What will NYCEDC do in cases where M/WBE certification has been submitted, but certification is not yet issued?

See response to Question #78.

170. Does every single subcontractor need to be picked out already by the time of submission?

Respondents should clearly describe their planned use for subcontractors in Part A of their Proposal, even if specific subcontractors are not yet confirmed. If subcontractors are selected, the bios/resumes of principals involved in the Scope of Services should be included.

171. Does each subcontractor need to get their own insurance, or can the team leader have the insurance?

Subcontractors are subject to the prime insurance requirements, as applicable to scope of work.

172. Does NYCEDC have any suggestions on where to get this insurance and how to set it up to be transferable after 3 years?

NYCEDC is not able to recommend insurance products or providers.

173. If we are a consortium, does the submitting team count towards the M/WBE subcontractors or does the Respondent team not count as subcontractors since we are submitting as a unit?

Every Proposal is required to include an M/WBE subcontractor utilization plan. It is up to the Respondent to structure their partnership or consortium to meet the requirements. If M/WBE's are part of the prime team, they can self-perform toward the 30% goal.

174. Do the M/WBE subcontractors need to have already agreed to join our team when we submit or can we list a few people we would like to reach out to once we've secured the project?

The required appendix should reflect the M/WBE utilization plan. Subcontractors do not need formal commitments.

175. How would NYCEDC prefer a consortium of individual businesses and creatives to be structured? Would NYCEDC prefer if one business subcontracted all of the others?

Consortiums should be structured as the Respondents see fit and described in Part A of the Proposal.

- 176. Can the team shift after the first part of the Project (July-October 2026), i.e., if the project manager needs to leave after this year and be replaced with a new one, as long as the core design team stays on? Or is every individual expected to work on the project until 2029?**

NYCEDC acknowledges that staffing changes may occur and reserves the right to review and approve new team members.

- 177. Will the diversity of the team still be considered, even if not technically certified with NYC's M/WBE?**

The diversity of teams is not included in scoring criteria.

- 178. Do we need to hire a certain number of subcontractors? If we hire 1-5 subcontractors and they are all M/WBE certified, would that count? Or does it have to be a certain number plus the 30%?**

Compliance is not measured by the number of M/WBE subcontractors.

Subcontracted work by M/WBEs must total 30% of the total final contract value.

- 179. What exactly is included in "brand parameters" that will guide physical store design? Are deliverables limited to a visual identity system, or does the scope extend to environmental design, signage specifications, packaging, store setup, and/or store experience design?**

Brand parameters will be set by brand guidelines and mockups of the applications listed in Task 2B of the Scope of Services.

- 180. Will the selected firm be expected to work alongside or hand off to the third-party grocery operator(s), and if so, how will that relationship be structured?**

The selected firm will provide the deliverables of this contract to NYCEDC, who will be responsible for sharing with the contracted N.Y.C. Groceries operator.

See response to Question #7.

- 181. Is there an expectation for the Consultant to develop marketing or launch campaign creative, or is this strictly a brand identity engagement?**

Marketing and launch campaign materials are not included in the Scope of Services for this Contract.

- 182. Do the NYCEDC/City-led engagement sessions (within the scope Task 1B) need to be in person or can it be attended virtually?**

City-led engagement sessions have been held in-person to date.

- 183. Does NYCEDC have previous consumer data or other data Respondents can work off of, especially for segmentation?**

See response to Question #3.

- 184. What will the process look like from 2027 to 2029, building the stores and collaborating with the architecture and engineering teams, and how many hours per quarter each year do they expect to need help?**

See response to Question #7.

- 185. What's the payout structure (net 30/60/90) and deposit? How early does NYCEDC prefer invoices to be submitted?**

Please refer to "Draft Consultant Contract" Appendix 5 of the RPF, specifically Article 2 "Compensation" and Appendix C "Payments".

- 186. How much will the stores differ within each borough, and how much wiggle room is there to cater the store to the specific borough?**

The brand identity will be leveraged across the initial five stores and potentially any subsequent locations that are opened in the future. Respondents are welcome to address borough identity within their approach assuming the goal of a consistent overarching brand it met.

- 187. Would NYCEDC like us to also help with the strategy of what items to stock and how to price them?**

This work is not part of the scope of services for this RFP.

- 188. Does the project budget account for focus groups?**

All costs associated with focus groups should be included in the Respondent's cost Proposal.

- 189. Can Respondents propose ideas outside of the exact scope laid out in the RFP that would support the efforts of the store design and marketing if it fits within the budget?**

If a Respondent proposes ideas outside of the stated scope of services, they should be clearly identified as out of scope in their approach narrative and call out as additional on the cost Proposal (Appendix 6).

- 190. Would NYCEDC pair two teams if they both are strong but would be stronger together or does NYCEDC expect Respondents to pair up and submit together already?**

Respondents should form consortiums at their own discretion. NYCEDC reserves the right to approach multiple Respondents for a consortium after the initial review of Proposals.

- 191. For a prime that is a women-owned firm with an NYC SBS certification application in progress, will NYCEDC accept a good-faith commitment to meet the 30% participation goal through certified M/WBE sub-Consultants?**

See response to Question #78.

192. Does New York State (ESD) M/WBE certification satisfy the requirement, or is NYC SBS certification required?

See response to Question #71.

193. The M/WBE Narrative Form requests five prior projects in which the firm served as prime and formal M/WBE goals were set. For a firm newly entering public contracting that has not previously held contracts with established M/WBE goals, how should this section be completed, and will the absence of prior M/WBE-goaled contracts affect scoring where a strong good-faith participation plan is provided?

Each good-faith effort documentation will be reviewed independently

194. Is there a target or not-to-exceed Maximum Contract Price for the 2026 brand-development phase (Tasks 1–2), distinct from the multi-year Architecture & Engineering collaboration (Tasks 3–4, 2027–2029)?

See response to Question # 1.

195. Should the task estimates in Appendix 6 include the 2027–2029 work in Tasks 3 and 4, and is there a preferred convention for pricing multi-year effort whose timing is not yet defined?

Yes, the cost Proposal should include all four task phases.

See response to Question #157.

196. Does the 30-page limit include the cover, table of contents, and section dividers, and do team bios and resumes count toward the 30 pages or are they treated as appendices?

The maximum number of pages is 30, including any covers, tables, or dividers. The only exclusions are the five Appendices listed as Proposal Section C.

197. If a Proposal names subconsultants (for research, focus groups, or M/WBE participation), do their bios count toward the 30-page limit, and must they be formally committed at the Proposal stage?

Yes. Bios should be included for any partner or subconsultant who are considered principal members involved in delivering the scope of services. Subconsultants do not need to be formally committed to the project to be included in the Proposal.

198. Will NYCEDC provide access to the NYCEDC/City-led community engagement sessions and participants, or is recruiting focus-group participants the Consultant's responsibility and within the proposed budget?

Firms are invited to observe any NYCEDC/City-led community engagement sessions that may align with and support their market research efforts.

See response to Question #6.

- 199. To inform the brand narrative authentically, can NYCEDC share its intended approach to sourcing and product mix — for example, whether the stores will partner with local or community-based food producers and non-profit growers (such as urban farms or egg and produce cooperatives), and the intended balance between fresh, whole foods and shelf-stable packaged goods?**

The selected Respondent will receive further briefing materials during onboarding.

- 200. What is the anticipated timeline for any interviews or presentations following the June 30 submission?**

See response to Question # 64.

- 201. Is the size format for the 30-page submission flexible, or should it be a standard 8.5 x 11 portrait orientation size?**

Standard letter (8.5 x 11) is preferred. Portrait or landscape orientation is acceptable.

- 202. Are references provided for each key Respondent team member or just the primary point of contact?**

References should be for principals who will be involved in the delivery of the scope of Services. References can also be clients of firms, speaking to the work of the firm overall.

- 203. Is there a document size requirement other than the 30-page limit? ie, letter, tabloid, or 1920x1080?**

See response to Question # 201.

- 204. Task 2B: Are mockups physical and material? Or 2D and within a PDF?**

Mockups are expected to be 2D, or at the Consultant's preference) 3D within a PDF.

- 205. Is sourcing required for uniforms, or will that be managed by another team?**

The selected Consultant is not responsible for sourcing uniforms.

- 206. Is the information session attendance list available?**

The attendance list from the information session is available at <https://edc.nyc/Consultant-services-nyc-groceries-branding-and-design-rfp>.

- 207. Can NYCEDC confirm that the insurance requirements outlined in the draft agreement are standard and non-negotiable, and clarify whether equivalent coverage under existing professional liability policies may be acceptable where applicable? What are the minimums that subcontractors need to have?**

The insurance requirements outlined in the draft agreement are standard. Equivalent coverage may be acceptable at NYCEDC's discretion. Subcontractors are subject to the same minimums as the prime.

- 208. What level of coordination is anticipated with architects, engineers, operators, and other project stakeholders throughout the engagement?**

See response to Question #120.

- 209. Are there any existing strategic, legal, operational, or community considerations that Respondents should be aware of when approaching the naming and brand development process?**

See response to Question #145.

- 210. Are there existing City government design guidelines N.Y.C. Groceries must align with?**

See response to Question #145.

- 211. Must our scope fee cover any research costs or is there a separate out-of-pocket budget?**

All costs should be reflected in the cost Proposal (Appendix 6).

- 212. If a Respondent is submitting a Proposal as just one company and no subcontractors, are NYCEDC still looking for us to be M/WBE certified?**

See response to Question #173.

- 213. How does NYCEDC envision the brand's relationship to existing City of New York and NYCEDC marks? Are there City brand/identity standards the new identity must comply with, and are there co-branding requirements with the selected grocery operator(s)?**

N.Y.C. Groceries is contemplated as a standalone brand.

- 214. For Task 2B product private labeling, should Respondents anticipate a full packaging system across the Core Basket or illustrative guideline mockups? Approximately how many SKUs/categories?**

See response to Question # 8 and Question #119.

- 215. Will findings from the NYCEDC/City-led community engagement sessions (Task 1B) be shared with the Consultant if schedules don't align?**

Yes.

- 216. Can NYCEDC clarify what specific information NYCEDC are seeking in the Respondent team resumes?**

Respondents should determine what bio/resume information is relevant to the scope of Services.

217. Will the selected agency be publicly announced following being selected?

NYCEDC anticipates publicly announcing the selected Respondent.

218. Can NYCEDC share some detail on the NYCEDC team we will be working with and the kinds of support we should expect?

See response to Question #120.

219. May we augment a focus group with a survey for wider distribution?

Respondents may pose additional or alternative subtasks and should explain in the approach section of their Proposals.

220. What is the expected output of Task 1C (psychographic profiles)? A brief deck or a full research report?

The preferred output is briefing deck.

221. How many initial concept directions should the Consultant present for Task 2A (logo, name, etc.) — e.g., 2 directions? 3?

Three initial concept directions is preferred.

222. For the environmental branding mockups in Task 2B (the list is notably long and says "including but not limited to") — are mockups expected for every item listed, and should they be 2D renderings or 3D visualizations?

Yes, mockups are expected for all listed items.

See response to Question #204.

223. Is product private labeling included for a handful of hero SKUs, or across a full product assortment?

See response to Question #8 and Question #119.

224. Is the plan for each operator to implement the design for ongoing marketing and promotional needs on an ongoing basis or will there be dedicated design resources to support the program/stores as a group?

The N.Y.C. Groceries Project operator will be responsible for ongoing marketing.

225. Five stores, each requiring brand deployment review — how many review cycles per store are expected, and is the Consultant expected to travel to sites?

The Scope of Services indicates two review moments per store, across five stores.

The Consultant will receive materials digitally and is not expected to travel to sites.

226. Three of the five store sites haven't been identified yet. Will there be a formal handoff process when sites are confirmed, or does the Consultant need to stay on retainer in the interim?

NYCEDC currently anticipates that all five stores will be identified and developed within the term of this Contract.

227. Are digital applications (website, social media templates, app UI) explicitly out of scope?

Yes.

228. Should the brand be consistent across all five boroughs, or is there flexibility for borough-specific variations?

See response to Question #186.

229. Will there be a separate implementation and supervision of installation budget or is that meant to be included in the scope?

Implementation and supervision of installation is not included in the scope of this RFP.

230. The contract term is left as [•] — what is the anticipated contract length given the 2026–2029 timeline?

The approximate length of contract is 3.5 years.

See response to Question # 21.

231. If a Respondent is serving as the prime contractor and is 100% WBE owned and certified with NYC, are they required to fill out the rest of the MWBE Narrative form?

Yes.

232. If a Respondent is serving as the prime contractor and is 100% WBE owned and certified with NYC, are they required to fill out the MWBE Subcontractor Participation Plan?

Yes.

233. Post-RFP submission, what are the expected milestones/presentations?

See response to Question #64.

234. What is the expected timing of the mid fit-out presentation with selected architecture and engineering?

NYCEDC is not able to provide further details at this time.

235. In addition, what is the expected cadence of meeting with the selected architecture and engineering firm?

See response to Question #7.

NYCEDC anticipates the output for Task 3 to be document review. In person or virtual meetings may be contemplated in the future, but are not planned at this time.

236. Will the design Consultant be expected to be on site at one or more of the N.Y.C. Groceries' sites during this Project?

The brand and design Consultant is not required to be on site, but site visits can be arranged.

237. Is production of designed mockups from Task 2B under the design Consultant or architecture and engineering teams responsibilities?

See response to Question #152.

238. Please clarify what is meant in terms of "size" of examples of similar projects.

See response to Question #73.

239. Should we assume a single citywide brand system that will be applied consistently across all locations, or should the proposed approach accommodate borough-specific adaptations while maintaining overall brand cohesion?

See response to Question #186.

240. For private-label products, is NYCEDC seeking development of a packaging architecture and design guidelines only, or should we include design of specific initial product packaging concepts and applications within the scope?

See response to Question #119.

241. Tasks 3A and 3B contemplate ongoing brand deployment review and collaboration with architecture and engineering teams through store development and rollout. Should we assume these services will be performed under the same contract term, and does NYCEDC anticipate this phase being structured as a fixed-fee engagement or retainer-based support?

See response to Question #7 and Question #157.

242. Please confirm the M/WBE participation goal percentage for this contract, and whether it is calculated as a percentage of the total contract value or as a percentage of subcontracted dollars only.

See response to Question #25.

243. If a Respondent's proposed scope allocation cannot reach the stated M/WBE goal through NYC SBS-certified subcontractors, is there a good-faith-efforts or waiver process, or is meeting the goal a threshold requirement for a responsive Proposal?

Yes, the respondent can submit a Good-faith effort.

244. Can a proposed subcontractor whose NYC SBS M/WBE certification application is pending at the time of Proposal submission count toward the M/WBE participation goal if certification is obtained prior to contract award?

See response to Question #78.

245. If a listed subcontractor becomes unavailable between Proposal submission and contract award, what is the process for substituting a firm, and would a substitution affect the evaluation of the M/WBE Participation Proposal?

They will have to substitute it with another MWBE. We will need to why and who will substitute the old firm.

246. For the in-store brand elements in Task 3, what level of fidelity is expected in the brand guidelines and mockups (e.g., signage family specifications, material and finish palettes, illustrative renderings) versus direction that the separately contracted A&E teams will develop?

The Consultant should develop guidelines and mock-ups that the A&E teams develop.

247. Does the scope of services conclude with delivery of brand guidelines and A&E collaboration, or does NYCEDC anticipate the Consultant supporting launch communications, marketing materials, or campaign development for store openings, whether within this contract or a subsequent procurement?

See response to Question #125.

248. Can NYCEDC confirm the anticipated contract start date and the expected duration of active work for Tasks 1 and 2, given the first store opening in late 2027?

See response to Question #39.

249. Do required forms and appendices, including the Appendix 6 cost Proposal sheets and the M/WBE Participation Proposal, count toward the 30-page maximum, or are they excluded?

See response to Question #11.

250. Should the three references reflect brand identity and design engagements specifically, or are references for related strategic, creative, and production work acceptable?

References should give insight into the Respondent's ability to successfully complete the scope of services.

251. For the product private labeling component of Task 2B, can NYCEDC confirm whether the expectation is a private label design system and

guidelines for application internally/by another vendor, or SKU-level packaging design? If the latter, how many SKUs are included in the Core Basket?

See response to Question #8 and Question #119.

- 252. Are there any required brand relationship rules between N.Y.C. Groceries and the City of New York, NYCEDC, or other City agencies? For example, required endorsements, lockups, seals, disclaimers, or visual references.**

No.

- 253. For the Manhattan and Bronx sites, are architectural plans, renderings, site photos, neighborhood context materials, or design constraints available for review by the selected agency?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share relevant materials with the selected Respondent as they become available.

- 254. For the remaining three borough locations, should the brand system be developed to flex across unknown site conditions, or will additional site details be available during the brand development period?**

The brand should be applicable across all N.Y.C. Groceries sites. NYCEDC will endeavor to share site details as they become available.

- 255. For the research phase, should Respondents include the cost of focus group recruitment, incentives, facilities, translation, and moderation in the proposed fee, or will NYCEDC provide support for any of these components?**

See response to Question #6.

- 256. Will the same evaluation criteria be used for both the written Proposal and any potential follow-up presentations?**

Yes.

- 257. Will the products and merchandising approach — including the Core Basket and any community-specific assortment — be informed by community needs and preferences, and will those inputs be shared with the branding Consultant as a brief for the research and identity work?**

See response to Question #3.

- 258. Should the brand identity express attributes connected to neighborhood ownership, local workforce, and community pride (for example, in signage, messaging, or in-store communication), or should the brand remain a unified citywide system independent of site-specific community identity?**

See response to Question #145.

259. Will the stores accept SNAP and WIC benefits, and to what extent should the brand and environmental-design system anticipate benefit-program signage, EBT acceptance cues, and related in-store communication?

Shoppers will be able to use SNAP and WIC benefits. The selected Consultant does not need to prepare guidelines or mockups for any SNAP or WIC program-specific signage.

260. Is N.Y.C. Groceries intended to operate as a standalone consumer brand with its own identity, or as a program brand that remains visibly connected to NYCEDC and City of New York parent branding?

See response to Question #213.

261. For community research, does NYCEDC have an existing panel, community group, or list of New York City Respondents that the selected Consultant can reach out to, or should Respondents assume they will recruit their own participants for any proposed research?

See response to Question #6.

262. Should Respondents assume a limited set of sample packaging applications, or a broader SKU/category packaging system? Are there specific product categories, packaging formats, Core Basket items, or number of SKUs that should be assumed for scoping and pricing?

See response to Question #119.

263. Should Respondents assume that private label products will use the same name and identity as the store brand?

Respondents are welcome to provide recommendations.

264. Should Respondents assume that private label packaging design and rollout will be part of this scope, if the Respondent has those capabilities? Or does NYCEDC expect to issue a separate RFP or engage a separate partner for production packaging design, rollout, and implementation?

No. See response to Question #119.

265. Should Respondents assume one mid-fitout brand deployment review and one final pre-fabrication submittal review per store, as described in the RFP, or should Respondents include additional meetings, rounds of comments, or implementation support per location?

Respondents should assume two review moments per store.

266. Since Task 3 extends through 2029 and the needs may vary by store, how should Respondents price this future architecture and engineering collaboration? Should this be a fixed task-based estimate, a per-store estimate, an allowance, or another structure within Appendix 6?

See response to Question #157.

- 267. Should Respondents include anticipated third-party licensing fees, such as typefaces, illustration, photography, or other licensed assets, within the proposed fee? Or should these be treated as separate pass-through costs or allowances, since final licensing needs will depend on the approved visual identity?**

These costs should be accounted for in the cost Proposal.

- 268. Are Respondents allowed to include a short video or other supporting material as part of the submission, or should all Proposal content be limited to the 30-page PDF and required appendices?**

Please submit your Proposal as a single .zip file labeled with your company name and title of this RFP. Within that zip file, a PDF file is preferred. You are welcome to provide hyperlinks to multimedia items, but please do not exceed the maximum 30-page maximum requirement.

- 269. Can NYCEDC clarify the anticipated start date for the selected Consultant? The RFP references Brand Research, Strategy, and Concepting as anticipated for July-August 2026, while the information session referenced Consultant selection and onboarding in early August, with brand development running August-October. Should Respondents assume work begins in July, or should the proposed schedule begin with onboarding in early August?**

See response to Question #39.

- 270. Given the expected number of submissions, can NYCEDC share how Proposals will be reviewed and shortlisted before final scoring? For example, will Proposals first go through an initial completeness or responsiveness screen, a preliminary scoring round, automated or keyword-based screening, or another process before being fully evaluated against the published selection criteria?**

All Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the criteria defined in the RFP.
See response to Question #64.

- 271. Should Respondents include all project-related reimbursable expenses within the proposed fee, including focus group recruitment, participant incentives, translation/interpretation, travel, printing, image/font/licensing costs, and meeting expenses? Or will any categories of reimbursable expenses be separately authorized?**

All expenses should be reflected in the task-based cost Proposal.

- 272. Will serving as the Branding & Design Consultant, or as a subconsultant to the Branding & Design Consultant, create any restriction or conflict that would prevent the Consultant or its team members from pursuing future N.Y.C.**

Groceries procurements related to architecture, interior design, environmental graphics, signage, fabrication, store planning, developer services, or related work?

No.

273. NYCEDC noted that the brand development period is intended to move quickly, with at least weekly meetings or status updates. Please confirm the anticipated meeting cadence for Tasks 1 and 2 and the review turnaround time Respondents should assume for NYCEDC/City feedback at major milestones. See response to Question #23 and Question #42.

274. Please clarify whether all sub-Consultants must independently carry the insurance coverages and limits listed in Appendix E, or whether any coverages may be satisfied through the prime Consultant's policies.
Subcontractors are subject to the prime insurance requirements, as applicable to scope of Services.

275. Please identify any existing research, community engagement findings, demographic analyses, market studies, or stakeholder insights that will be made available to the selected Respondent to inform the strategy process.
See response to Question #3.

276. To what extent should the selected Respondent validate existing stakeholder and community engagement findings versus conducting net-new research to support strategic recommendations?
See response to Question #3 and Question #6.

277. Is there a number of concepts Respondents can anticipate as a base line for the Proposal? (i.e. provide up to 3 concepts per element)?
See response to Question #221.

278. At what stage, if any, will selected grocery operators provide input into in-store experience decisions, including merchandising, navigation, or customer flow?
See response to Question #24.

279. Should Respondents assume the in-store applications are intended as conceptual design guidance only, or should they anticipate a higher level of detail to support implementation across multiple store formats?
The Scope of Services asks for guidelines and mockups. These will serve as conceptual guidance.

280. Is there an estimated timeline (# weeks) for Task 3A and 3B for each location?

See response to Question #39.

- 281. To what extent is the branding Consultant expected to influence in-store customer experience decisions (e.g., navigation, signage hierarchy, customer journey) vs responding to layouts and decisions developed by A/E teams?**

See response to Question #32.

- 282. We were also wondering if it would be possible to see examples of brand guidelines that align with what is desired for NYC Groceries. If not, is it possible to get further details in what those guidelines should cover?**

It is the responsibility of the Respondent to demonstrate through their past work examples, their ability to craft brand guideline documents.

- 283. Is this grocery project an extension of NYCEDC's historical public market mission, or an entirely separate initiative? Why?**

While there are parallels to Public Markets, NYCEDC considers N.Y.C. Groceries a separate initiative requiring a separate brand.

- 284. In the RFP, one goal is to "demonstrate a new role for public sector leadership in food affordability." Does NYCEDC see the stores taking on roles beyond grocery retail — food education, local events, community programming?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 285. Do Respondents have the opportunity to suggest additional deliverables or initiatives that serve the broader mission — such as a loyalty program — within our approach?**

See response to Question #189.

- 286. Who is the primary audience — those facing the greatest affordability challenges, or a broader cross-section of New Yorkers looking for affordable options?**

See response to Question #91 and Question #121.

- 287. What is the anticipated mix of private label versus name brand products in the Core Basket and broader grocery assortment?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 288. Can NYCEDC share more on the anticipated stock and assortment — primarily pantry staples, fresh food, or both? What sorts of items might be in the Core Basket?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

289. What is the expected average basket size?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

290. Should packaging design be considered as part of our proposed approach?

These services fall outside the scope of this RFP opportunity.

291. What is NYCEDC's ballpark budget for brand identity development?

See response to Question #1.

292. Who are the key decision makers for this RFP process?

See response to Question #45.

293. Who owns this brand when the work is done, and who is responsible for protecting it post-launch?

All Work Product becomes the property of NYCEDC per the terms of the anticipated Contract.

294. Will grocery employees be NYCEDC employees or third-party operator employees?

This topic is outside the scope of Services for this RFP.

295. What does success look like after 12 months? How will the city measure it?

See response to Question #116.

296. Has it been determined whether shortlisted Respondents will be invited to interview?

See response to Question #64.

297. Does NYCEDC anticipate selling private label products in the grocery stores?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

298. Are naming and visual identity processes meant to take place simultaneously, or does the selected partner have the leeway to conclude naming before exploring visual concepts?

The selected Consultant is welcome to propose an order for deliverables.

299. Are there opportunities for in-person meetings or will they be conducted remotely for the most part?

NYCEDC is open to in-person and virtual meetings.

300. Given the timeframe of the branding phase, does NYCEDC have an ideal limit to the number of rounds/iterations?

See response to Question #42.

301. Do all sub-contractors have to be committed to the project through its entire duration (through 2029?)

Subconsultants need only to be committed for the portion of the scope of Services they are delivering.

302. Do we need to include portfolio pieces for sub-contractors in our Proposal?

The Respondent should determine what examples best reflect their qualifications.

303. Are there any constraints that we should be aware of that are not listed on this RFP (e.g. preferences towards design platforms or any technical constraints?)

No.

304. Does the 30% M/WBE participation goal need to be met through certified M/WBE subconsultants, or can it be satisfied in part through the demographic composition of the internal project team?

See response to Question #173.

305. The scope references "historically significant brands and logos related to the City of New York" as research inputs. Is there an existing archive or City brand standards library the Consultant will be given access to, or is this entirely desk research-driven?

Respondents should be prepared to complete this research.

306. Who are the key decision-makers and approvers at NYCEDC for creative sign-off? Will there be a single point of contact, or should the Consultant expect to present to a broader interdepartmental team?

See response to Question #45 and Question #120.

307. Are there any City of New York review or approval bodies (e.g., the Public Design Commission) whose sign-off will be required for the brand identity before implementation?

See response to Question #45.

- 308. The brand development period is anticipated to run August-October 2026, with the first store opening by end of 2027. Is the October 2026 completion date for Tasks 1 and 2 a firm deadline, and what flexibility exists if the research phase surfaces the need for additional time?**

See response to Question #149.

- 309. Task 3 (Architecture & Engineering Collaboration) runs 2027-2029. Will the Consultant be expected to remain on retainer through that entire period, or are those engagements expected to be discrete and as needed?**

See response to Question #39.

- 310. The RFP does not specify a budget range. Can NYCEDC provide any guidance on the anticipated contract value or acceptable fee range to help Respondents scope their Proposals responsibly?**

See response to Question #1

- 311. Appendix 5 states that General Terms and Conditions are non-negotiable. Are any elements of the Specific Terms and Conditions (Part I), including contract term length and the Person in Charge designation, open to negotiation?**

As set forth in the RFP, the Specific Terms and Conditions (Part I) are open to further discussion among the contracting parties. The General Terms and Conditions (Part II) and the Appendices (Part III) of the Contract Draft, other than its Appendix B and Appendix C, are not negotiable.

- 312. All work product is designated as work-made-for-hire and assigned exclusively to NYCEDC. Will the winning agency retain any rights to reference the work in their portfolio or case studies, and if so, under what conditions?**

The selected Respondent may reference their work in their portfolio or in case studies. Conditions will be discussed with the selected Respondent.

- 313. Has the City identified the “Core Basket” items and product categories for the NYC Groceries concept? If so, will this information be made available to the Consultant team during the branding and design process?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent, when relevant.

- 314. Can NYCEDC clarify the intended retail model and customer experience for the La Marqueta pilot location? For example, should the Consultant team assume a full-service grocery store, a smaller neighborhood-format store, or a flexible retail concept still in development?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

315. Since the brand is intended to scale across future N.Y.C. Groceries locations in all five boroughs, what information will be available during the branding phase about future store formats, neighborhoods, operating models, and customer experience needs?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

316. Can NYCEDC clarify the anticipated stakeholder review and approval structure for the Project? Who will be the primary decision-makers and approvers for the name, visual identity, brand applications, signage, and environmental graphics?

See response to Question #45.

317. Should the Consultant team anticipate involvement from NYCEDC only, or from additional City agencies, community stakeholders, elected officials, operating partners, retail partners, or other entities?

See response to Question #45 and Question #120.

318. Does NYCEDC have a publicity and marketing strategy in place for NYC Groceries, and if so, how should the Consultant team coordinate with that strategy during brand development?

See response to Question #125.

319. Who is planning and leading the City-led community engagement sessions referenced in Task 1B?

NYCEDC's Government and Community Relations team, with support from the N.Y.C. Groceries interdepartmental team is leading current community engagement sessions.

320. What level of community input is expected to inform the naming, brand strategy, visual identity, and/or final brand selection?

See response to Question #3 and Question #6.

321. What is driving the October deadline for completion of the naming and visual identity work? Is this date tied to a public announcement, funding milestone, stakeholder presentation, City initiative, or other project schedule requirement?

NYCEDC will discuss timelines in further detail with the selected Respondent.

322. Would NYCEDC be open to a Consultant-recommended schedule that supports a complete naming, community-informed, and brand identity process while still meeting any critical interim milestones?

Yes.

323. Can NYCEDC clarify the final deliverables expected under Task 2A? For example: name, logo/wordmark, brand strategy summary, messaging platform, typography, color palette, graphic language, photography/art direction guidance, brand guidelines, and sample usage examples.

NYCEDC expects, minimally, a brand guideline document that includes the items listed in Task 2A of the RFP.

324. For Task 2B, can NYCEDC clarify which brand applications are expected from the branding team versus the environmental graphics/signage team? For example: packaging, uniforms, tote bags, shelf labels, digital/social templates, exterior signage concepts, in-store graphics, murals, wayfinding elements, or other retail touchpoints.

See response to Question #32.

325. What is meant by “Product private labeling” in Task 2B? Should the Consultant team assume conceptual brand application examples only, or development of a private-label product/packaging system?

See response to Question #119.

326. Does NYCEDC have a proposed design and construction schedule for the Architecture and Engineering Collaboration phase anticipated for 2027–2029?

See response to Question #39.

327. If a proposed schedule is available, when is the anticipated date for the “mid-fit-out presentation of store location and layout”?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

328. If an Architecture and Engineering firm has not yet been awarded, what is the anticipated timeline for the bid and award process?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

329. Are there any limits or restrictions on the number of firms, subconsultants, or specialist consultants that may participate on a Proposal team?

No.

330. How will NYCEDC define success for the branding effort during the first three years following launch?

See response to Question #116.

331. How many name concepts are expected at presentation?

See response to Question #221.

- 332. Does NYCEDC expect name selection and trademark clearance to wrap up before visual identity work begins, or will those run in parallel?**

These efforts will run in parallel.

- 333. If a name doesn't clear, is there flexibility in the August–October timeline to accommodate a restart or delayed start of visual identity work?**

The selected Consultant will be expected to make every effort to maintain the identified timelines.

- 334. Are there platform or file format requirements for final deliverable handoffs?**

This information can, upon completion of the RFP process and execution of the Contract, be made available to the Respondent, or at such time when deliverables are to be prepared.

- 335. Are environmental mockups expected to be photorealistic, or are designed comps and mock-ups acceptable?**

See response to Question #204.

- 336. Will the Consultant have access to floor plans, architectural drawings, or site specs for the Manhattan and Bronx locations to inform environmental design?**

See response to Question #4.

- 337. Has A&E work begun on either identified location — and if so, will the brand Consultant have visibility into drawings, material selections, or design decisions already in progress?**

See response to Question #4.

- 338. Is there a lead A&E firm coordinating across all five stores, or will the brand Consultant be working with separate architecture teams at each location?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 339. Are there in-person requirements or preferences for presentations, working sessions, or site visits — and if so, how frequently and at what project stages?**

See response to Question # 23 and Question #236.

- 340. How does NYCEDC see this brand competing and or working with existing grocery chains such as Key Food, Super Fresh, Trader Joe's, and etc.?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

341. Are these grocery stores available for everyone regardless of income bracket?

Yes.

342. Does NYCEDC foresee connecting the N.Y.C. Groceries's stores with current and or future food service related City programs like 'Summer Meals'?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

343. Are there deadlines for when each of the remaining store locations (Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island) will be identified by?

See response to Question #4.

344. Does NYCEDC envision the N.Y.C. Groceries' locations functioning solely as grocery stores, or also as community gathering spaces, educational resources, or cultural destinations?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

345. How much flexibility does NYCEDC anticipate between locations? Should each store reflect its neighborhood in a visible way, or is the priority creating a highly consistent citywide experience?

See response to Question #186.

346. Can NYCEDC clarify the expected design phases for environmental graphics and signage deliverables? Should Respondents assume the work concludes at concept design, schematic design, design development, or construction documentation/fabrication-ready packages?

The scope of this Contract includes concept design in Task 2 and review of other teams' schematic and fabrication-ready designs in Task 3.

347. Is the expectation that the selected Consultant develops a scalable prototype system for future locations, or site-specific solutions for the initial locations only?

The selected Consultant will develop a scalable brand system.

348. Can businesses that qualify for M/WBE certification but are not yet formally certified still be considered for the project, given the 30% M/WBE requirement?

No.

349. If a business meets the eligibility requirements for M/WBE certification but is not yet formally certified, how should this be represented within the Proposal and submission materials? Should the M/WBE field be marked "Yes" or "No"?

No.

350. Could NYCEDC please clarify whether a women-owned business that is not yet formally M/WBE-certified would be expected to engage an M/WBE-certified subcontractor or partner to satisfy the 30% participation requirement?

Yes.

351. Given the June 30 submission deadline and anticipated July project kickoff, could NYCEDC please share more about the review and selection process, including the timeline for shortlisting finalists and making a final selection?

See response to Question #64.

352. Given the proposed timelines, could NYCEDC provide additional context on how reviews are typically structured within your organization? Should proposers anticipate consolidated stakeholder feedback at key milestones, or multiple sequential review cycles for individual deliverables?

See response to Question #42 and Question #120.

353. How many SKUs does NYCEDC project being included in the store brand "Core Basket"?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

354. Is there a preference for the Proposal to be formatted in landscape or horizontal orientation?

See response to Question #201.

355. Will the selected Respondent be permitted to post the case study of the N.Y.C. Groceries work to their website, social media, and other PR channels? If so, at what point?

Yes. NYCEDC will indicate preferred timing at a later date.

356. Are there pre-existing brand elements, visual assets, or priority research that NYCEDC will provide to the selected Consultant at onboarding? The briefing materials included "City-led research" and guidance on "must haves". Will this include any existing visual direction or mood board materials?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 357. Is community engagement work expected to be led or supported by the branding Consultant , or is that entirely managed by NYCEDC? The session mentioned ongoing community sessions. Is the Consultant expected to participate observe or simply incorporate findings provided by NYCEDC.**
See response to Question #3.
- 358. Is confirmation of subcontractor participation required at time of Proposal submission or is a good-faith outreach plan acceptable?**
See response to Question #173.
- 359. What products are currently anticipated to be included in the Core Basket? Approximately how many store departments are expected within each location?**
NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.
- 360. What is meant by “brand-aligned displays or kiosks” within the scope? Should the branding Consultant anticipate recommending refrigeration units, displays, fixtures, or other equipment as part of the design process?**
Specialized equipment such as refrigeration do not need to be considered.
Respondents should focus on displays, such as those used to promote the brand or support a promotion.
- 361. How many private-label brands are anticipated, and approximately how many products are expected under each private-label program?**
See response to Question #8.
- 362. Are recommendations for employee uniforms, merchandise, and related branded applications expected as part of the scope? If so, are there any parameters or limitations we should consider?**
Yes, these are included in Task 2B. The selected Respondent will provide recommendations for these items in context of the brand.
- 363. Does NYCEDC anticipate future digital brand applications beyond this scope, such as websites, email marketing, social media, or other digital communications?**
These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.
- 364. Who will be eligible to shop at N.Y.C. Groceries locations? Will there be any restrictions or qualification requirements for customers?**
N.Y.C. Groceries’ stores are intended to benefit all New Yorkers.
- 365. Is there a maximum file size requirement for Proposal submissions beyond the 30-page limit?**

See response to Question #37.

- 366. Will multilingual signage be required? If so, will translation services be provided by NYCEDC, or should Respondents anticipate coordinating translation as part of the project?**

The brand system should accommodate multilingual applications, however execution is outside of the scope of this Contract.

- 367. Will the selected Consultant have direct access to community stakeholders and future grocery operators during the research and strategy phases?**

See response to Question #3 and Question #24.

- 368. Has NYCEDC determined how the stores will ultimately be operated? Will they be City-operated, managed by a single third-party operator, or managed by multiple operators?**

NYCEDC intends to release an Operator RFP this summer.

- 369. New York has a meaningful history in food access and public food retail, the FRESH zoning incentive program, the City's public markets including La Marqueta, where the first store will be located. What lessons from those efforts does NYCEDC believe should inform how this brand is developed and perceived?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 370. Beyond opening the first store on schedule, how will NYCEDC measure the brand's success, resident trust and adoption, perception relative to commercial grocers, repeat patronage? Will the selected Consultant have access to any baseline perception or community data to design against?**

See response to Question #3 and Question #116.

- 371. Have the community engagement sessions to date revealed consistent themes about how residents want these stores to feel and be positioned, for example, the balance between civic pride and simply being a great neighborhood grocery store that NYCEDC would want the brand foundation to honor?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 372. Does NYCEDC envision this identity living within the city's broader civic brand family, or standing fully independent? Are there existing City or NYCEDC brand standards the identity must coexist with?**

See response to Question #213.

373. Each of the five stores sits in a distinct borough and neighborhood context. Does NYCEDC envision a single uniform expression across all locations, or should the brand system accommodate boroughs? Or neighborhood-specific expressions, local vendors, languages, community partnerships, within consistent standards?

See response to Question #186.

374. For Tasks 3A–3B, have the architecture/engineering firms been selected? Approximately how many brand deployment reviews and fabrication submittal reviews per store should Respondents assume as the level of effort? Should this phase be priced as a fixed fee, retainer, or hourly within the Maximum Contract Price?

See response to Question #4, Question #7 and Question #157.

375. Who are the key internal decision-makers and approvers for brand concepts; specifically, does final approval rest with NYCEDC Marketing, City Hall, or another entity?

See response to Question #45.

376. The RFP references "product private labeling" as a deliverable. How many SKUs or product categories should the Respondent anticipate designing for?

See response to Question #8.

377. For Tasks 3A and 3B (Architecture & Engineering Collaboration, 2027–2029), how many brand deployment reviews per store should the Respondent anticipate, and what is the expected level of on-site presence?

See response to Question #236.

378. Can Respondents provide digital brand expertise and guidance for UX/UI for ecommerce, social platforms, etc?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

379. Are there language and/or accessibility requirements for brand materials?

See response to Question #366.

380. Are there any existing City of New York brand standards, visual identity systems, or municipal design guidelines that the N.Y.C. Groceries brand must align with?

See response to Question #213.

381. How many focus groups are expected?

See response to Question #90.

382. Are translations required?

These services are not required as part of the Scope of Services.

383. What deliverables are expected at handoff?

NYCEDC will provide a comprehensive list of deliverables and preferred format to the selected Respondent.

384. Does NYCEDC have a budget range in mind for this work?

See response to Question #1

385. NYCEDC has limited all Proposals to 30 pages. Is there a preferred format, such as a letter-size document (primarily designed for reading) or a screen-based presentation (primarily designed for sharing)?

See response to Question #37 and Question #201.

386. With one location in each of the five boroughs, we can already see opportunities to celebrate and incorporate each borough's culture into that store's identity. Is this something NYCEDC would be open to, or are NYCEDC interested in a more unified overall identity?

See response to Question #186.

387. NYCEDC mentioned a budget of \$70 million. Can Respondents assume that about 20% of that will go to each of the 10,000-square-foot store locations? And does that number include everything (signage, uniforms, merch, etc.)?

The \$70M figure refers to the City's Capital investment in N.Y.C. Grocery store construction. See response to Question #1 regarding the price and scope of this RFP.

388. Would N.Y.C Groceries ever develop or sell products under its own store brand(s)? Also, will the stores engage in traditional (advertising, weekly flyers, etc.) or social media-based marketing, either with outside Consultants or in-house staff?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

389. Will N.Y.C Groceries have in-house design and/or marketing departments moving forward? If so, is there a staffing plan in place? The design guidelines we develop are often informed by (and made in collaboration with) the people who use them.

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

390. Does NYCEDC have a plan to consolidate feedback, or would NYCEDC look to the Respondent to help make that happen?

See response to Question #120.

- 391. Has NYCEDC identified architecture firms? If so, could NYCEDC share who they are? What might that collaboration look like? Could the Respondent contribute ideas to and/or collaborate on the store designs, beyond the graphics and signage?**

See response to Question #4 and Question #7. NYCEDC does not anticipate further collaboration between the brand Consultant and the architecture and engineering firms beyond what is described in Task 3.

- 392. If these five locations succeed, would N.Y.C Groceries expand to more locations? Or would the City branch out into more kinds of stores? Or other services?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 393. Does the City or NYCEDC have an overall project vision, plan and/or roadmap to share?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 394. Is more information available about the ‘Core Basket’?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 395. Is there an established timeline for sequencing of the individual store development projects?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 396. Will Consultants or subcontractors selected through this opportunity be eligible for other opportunities within the store development projects?**

Yes, should they choose to apply.

- 397. The informational webinar indicated one NYCEDC ‘point person’, as well as a broader NYCEDC team to serve as the chosen Consultant’s in-house team. What is the expertise and authority of that group? Are there other decision-makers that will be a part of the brand development process?**

The interdepartmental team at NYCEDC and our City Hall partners represent experts in areas such as marketing, design, strategy, policy, community engagement, and real estate.

- 398. Is the City contracted with any NYC-local grocery experts that will be available to the brand Consultant team?**

No.

399. Have sales forecasts been developed for each location?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

400. Regarding the surface palette, does this scope include specific finish recommendations, or is it limited to the palette itself?

NYCEDC seeks a brand palette and finish recommendations.

401. Has any work been done to define store programming (departments, sales allocation, etc) and/or product mix?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

402. Is further detail available about the private-labeled product plans or aspirations?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

403. Does NYCEDC anticipate how many review rounds and decision-makers should be built into the process?

See response to Question #42 and Question #45.

404. Will there be a final brand presentation at the close of the 2026 phase of work?

No. The final brand guidelines will be adopted and distributed to applicable Consultant parties.

405. Is there expectation of a public-facing presentation of the brand that will include members of the chosen consulting team?

No.

406. During the design development work, will it be possible to work collaboratively and proactively with the A&E teams, versus just markup/review?

NYCEDC does not anticipate further collaboration between the brand Consultant and the architecture and engineering firms beyond what is described in Task 3.

407. Is there a current draft development timeline for the store spaces to inform assumptions around ongoing engagement past October 2026?

See response to Question #39.

408. Will M/WBE businesses certified outside NYC have any relevance to the selection considerations?

See response to Question #71.

409. Can the prime contract holder contribute to the 30% M/WBE goal? If not, does it effectively eliminate non-NYC M/WBE certified proposers from full consideration without subConsultants?

See response to Question #9.

410. Does NYCEDC have an intended review/interview plan for this RFP?

See response to Question #46 and Question #120.

411. Can NYCEDC provide additional context regarding the "without transfers and changes" language? Does it refer to maintaining the proposed project team throughout the engagement, or is there another intended interpretation?

Respondents will be scored on the experience of the proposed Consultant team. NYCEDC is setting an expectation that the staff proposed will be the staff working on the Project.

412. Is NYCEDC seeking expenses (travel, etc) to be identified separate from fees for work/deliverables (within the Proposal and/or during project invoicing)?

See response to Question #157.

413. Is there a process or requirement for subcontractor selection/approval by the Corporation?

Subcontractors should be identified in Section A of the Respondent Proposal, and M/WBE subcontractors specifically should be identified in the required M/WBE appendices.

414. Is NYCEDC looking for this grocery store to also function as a community hub with consistent programming?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

415. Is the branding agency also responsible for sourcing the venues?

No.

416. How is the \$1million dollar budget being distributed? Even distribution over 3 years or a large lump in the beginning due to the heavier lift?

See response to Question #157.

417. Can NYCEDC provide a required final deliverables list for the brand strategy, visual identity, brand guidelines, environmental applications, and implementation toolkit?

See response to Question #383.

418. What original research, if any, is expected from the selected Consultant, and should Respondents assume focus groups, interviews, surveys, or other consumer/community research across all five boroughs?

See response to Question #3 and Question #90.

419. Given that the stores may be managed by one or more third-party grocery operators, should Respondents assume the brand system must be operator-agnostic and adaptable for use by multiple operators across different store formats?

Yes.

420. Should the brand system and in-store communications account for multilingual applications, accessibility standards, or required City language-access guidelines? If so, which standards or priority languages should Respondents assume?

See response to Question #366.

421. Does the not-to-exceed budget include all subcontractors, original research costs, reimbursables, travel, production support, and ongoing implementation review through 2029?

See response to Question #1 and Question #157.

422. Will the selected Consultant be expected to recommend, coordinate with, or review vendors for signage, merchandise, packaging, or other branded applications?

No.

423. Are there prior branding, naming, or positioning exercises that should be reviewed before commencing work?

No.

424. Has NYCEDC identified primary and secondary target audiences, or is audience segmentation expected to be developed entirely by the Consultant?

See response to Question #91.

425. Are there specific priority communities, neighborhoods, or language groups that must be reflected in the research process?

See response to Question #91.

426. How many initial brand identity concepts are expected? How many rounds of revisions should be assumed for budgeting purposes?

See response to Question #221 and Question #42.

427. Are there existing NYCEDC, City of New York, or NYC Groceries visual standards that must be incorporated?

See response to Question #213.

428. Are there restrictions on use of City seals, logos, or co-branding requirements?

No.

429. What final file formats are required for handoff? Will editable source files (Adobe Creative Suite/Figma) be required as part of final delivery?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

430. Will multilingual versions of the brand system be required? If so, which languages should be assumed in scope?

See response to Question #366.

431. Is there a pilot location that will be used to test the brand system before wider deployment?

No.

432. Should Respondents budget for participation in all store rollouts, or only key milestone reviews?

See response to Question #1 and Question #157.

433. Will implementation support primarily occur remotely, or should site visits be anticipated?

See response to Question #1 and Question #236.

434. Will community organizations or neighborhood stakeholders also review branding concepts before approval?

NYCEDC does not anticipate public review of brand concepts.

435. Will the agency chosen and subsequent subcontractors retain the right to showcase the work in future portfolios and award submissions?

Yes.

436. Following project completion, will NYCEDC maintain the brand internally, or will ongoing design support be procured separately?

The Operator(s) of N.Y.C. Groceries are anticipated to ultimately be responsible for maintaining the brand.

437. What helps drive consensus and momentum across the organization(s)?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

438. What, if any, internal teams or resources exist that might be able to support this work? (e.g. internal design, marketing, or research teams)

See response to Question #3.

439. Are there any fixed milestones we should plan around within the Brand Research, Strategy, and Concepting OR Visual Identity and Design Application phases?

See response to Question #39.

440. Who manages the architectural and branding integration?

Designated members of the interdepartmental project team at NYCEDC are responsible for the transfer of information, distribution of brand guidelines, and facilitating scopes of work, including design reviews.

441. Who has final approval and selection for the environmental branding installation vendors?

NYCEDC provides final approval of vendors identified by architecture and engineering contractors.

442. What is the burden of proof needed to feel confident in audience detail and brand strategy?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

443. Is any in-store digital signage planned?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

444. If digital signage is planned, who is responsible for securing the AV integrator?

These services fall outside of the scope of the brand Consultant.

445. Is there an estimated production budget for the branding materials? If so, what is the total cap?

These services fall outside of the scope of the brand Consultant.

446. What is the most important thing New Yorkers should understand about N.Y.C. Groceries?

N.Y.C. Groceries stores are places for affordable, healthy food for all New Yorkers.

447. Are there any strategic initiatives or partners that relate or directly connect to N.Y.C. Groceries that we should take into account?

N.Y.C. Groceries Task Force is a City Hall convened body of all agencies working on complimentary policies for food access and affordability.

448. Does the scope of qualitative and quantitative research extend to testing and validating design concepts, or is it limited to informing brand strategy development?

NYCEDC is open to research approaches.

449. Are there existing City of New York brand standards, color systems, or visual guidelines that the N.Y.C. Groceries identity should align with or reference?

See response to Question #213.

450. For Task 1A, can NYCEDC clarify the expected number, format, and audience composition for the "bespoke focus group interviews"?

See response to Question #90.

451. Can NYCEDC clarify what information will be available about the five store sites during the August–October 2026 brand development period, particularly for the three locations that have not yet been identified?

See response to Question #4 and Question #39.

452. For the Manhattan and Bronx sites, will NYCEDC provide site plans, architectural drawings, store layouts, or design criteria during the Proposal stage or only after selection?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

453. Does another RFP exist for implementation of the NYC Groceries brand? If so, when will it be released and where can we access it?

Implementation of the brand will be the responsibility of several architecture and engineering firms, as it applies to the design and build out of the five stores, and the N.Y.C. Groceries Operator(s), as it applies to the ongoing management of the stores.

454. Are implementation services (e.g., working with an A&E firm to prepare materials based on final store design) included within the \$1 million budget?

Implementation services are not within the scope of this RFP.

455. Regarding design applications, will website or social media avatar and launch asset executions be required?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

456. How will the handoff of brand guidelines be managed? I.e. What level of facilitation will NYCEDC provide in managing the relationship with the A&E firms? How much direct coordination and partner management will the selected branding Consultant be expected to provide?

See response to Question #120.

457. The RFP permits Respondents to submit as a consortium. Is there a preference for a single-firm lead, and how will NYCEDC evaluate integrated vs. assembled teams?

NYCEDC has no preference in the structure of consortiums. Consortiums will be evaluated on the criteria published in the RFP.

458. Does NYCEDC anticipate any digital design component as part of this scope or future RFPs?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

459. Has NYCEDC developed any preliminary brand positioning, mood boards, or creative guardrails?

No.

460. Have third party store operator(s) been selected yet, and will the brand agency have direct access to them during the process?

See response to Question #24.

461. Will the store operator have approval rights over the brand identity or guidelines?

We anticipate adoption of the approved brand by the contracted operator.

462. Is the \$1M inclusive of hard costs like focus group recruitment and incentives, or are those reimbursed separately as Allowable Additional Costs?

See response to Question #157.

463. Will the agency be expected to revisit brand guidelines if later sites have dramatically different physical conditions?

NYCEDC does not expect to revise brand guidelines based on any one location's physical conditions.

464. Will Proposals be subject to FOIL requests after award, and how will proprietary methodology in Proposals be protected?

See response to Question #146.

465. Will finalists will be required to present their approach publicly or before a panel?

Finalists will not be required to present publicly but may be requested to present to a panel of NYCEDC and/or City Hall representatives.

466. Are all Private Label product SKUs in each grocery store to be designed as part of this scope of work? If so, can NYCEDC please provide more details (quantity, types, etc) of what the products will be?

See response to Question #8 and Question #119.

467. Can NYCEDC provide us with the city's AI protocol, specifically how it pertains to this project?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

468. Is there wiggle room in the process and timeline? Are NYCEDC open to professional recommendations to make it more efficient and collaborative?

NYCEDC is open to Consultant-recommended schedules, while maintaining any required deadlines.

469. Section 1.4.1 of the draft Consultant Contract mentions Director and Agencies. Can NYCEDC please identify the Director, Agencies and other key stakeholders?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

470. Can NYCEDC clarify if the deliverables are visual mockups in the guidelines to show intent, or are they final, print ready files? Example: for in-store signage, is the deliverable to show example usage in a guidelines document, or is the deliverable print-ready files for each sign in each store?

Mockups are to serve as guidelines.

See response to Question #32 and Question #152.

471. Verbal identity can be as important as visual identity. Is tone of voice, messaging, etc. part of this scope?

Tone of voice and messaging are not included in the scope of services.

Respondents are welcome to propose ideas outside of the stated scope – see response to Question #189.

472. Has the City established adoption, customer traffic, or household savings objectives for the stores that the brand strategy should be designed to support?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

473. Will the N.Y.C. Groceries stores accept SNAP and WIC benefits?

Yes.

474. Has NYCEDC or its site-selection process established trade-area or catchment assumptions for the stores (for example, an expected walk or transit radius) that should frame audience definition and competitive analysis?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

475. For primary research under Task 1A, what assumptions should Respondents make regarding the languages in which research should be conducted and NYCEDC staff observation of research sessions?

Respondents should address recommended language needs related to Task 1 in their approach.

476. Should brand name and tagline concepts under Task 2A be developed or evaluated in languages other than English?

Respondents should offer their perspective in the approach section of their Proposals.

477. Is the Core Basket product list, or a representative draft, and any ancillary services that the stores may offer, available to Respondents or to the selected Consultant to inform brand research, competitive price benchmarking, and private label design under Task 2B?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

478. How many distinct concept directions does NYCEDC anticipate reviewing under Task 2A, and how many rounds of refinement should Respondents assume under Task 2C?

See response to Question #221.

479. Section II describes the Task 1D competitive set as "grocery stores and retail food establishments," while Appendix 6 describes "grocery stores and food sources (e.g. bodegas)." Please confirm the intended competitive set for the Task 1D analysis.

The competitive set should include existing grocery stores and food sources (e.g. bodegas).

480. In advance of community engagement insights to be shared during onboarding, are there any top-line themes, stakeholder priorities, or balancing

considerations that could inform our approach to research and stakeholder alignment?

NYCEDC does not have information to share at this time.

- 481. Does NYCEDC envision testing as part of the process? If so, does NYCEDC have a separate budget earmarked and a standard testing protocol/process?**

NYCEDC is open to research approaches. All costs should be factored into the Respondent's cost Proposal. NYCEDC does not have a standard testing protocol.

- 482. Has NYCEDC considered including communities and/or the broader public in the process beyond the immersion phase? For example: does NYCEDC envision communities could play a role contributing to the identity?**

NYCEDC does not anticipate public participation in brand development.

- 483. What challenges do NYCEDC foresee?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 484. Does NYCEDC see any of the existing public-sector brands as strong references (e.g., MTA, NYC Parks, NYC Health + Hospitals)?**

NYCEDC will discuss with the selected Respondent.

- 485. What are the biggest misconceptions or concerns NYCEDC anticipates from New Yorkers?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 486. Could NYCEDC clarify whether the following should be included in the design budget Proposal, or whether they fall under the construction/fit-out budget? Hand-painted environmental signage (sign painter's labor and materials) / Printed product packaging? Should the Proposal reflect design fees only, or design plus print production? / Fabricated signage, such as metal lettering, changeable letter boards, and neon / Brand-driven architectural moments integrated into the build itself, such as the configuration of the checkout area.**

Neither management of production nor production costs are included in the scope of services.

See response to Question #32.

- 487. Can NYCEDC provide a detailed list of expected final deliverables?**

See response to Question #383.

488. How many brand concepts and revision rounds should Respondents assume?

See response to Question #221 and Question #42.

489. What is expected during the 2027–2029 implementation period?

See response to Question #7 and Question #39.

490. Should ongoing implementation be priced as part of the base fee or as optional/additional services?

See response to Question #157.

491. Who are the final approval stakeholders, and how will feedback be consolidated?

See response to Question #49 and Question #142.

492. Are multilingual, accessibility, and public-sector brand requirements expected?

See response to Question #366.

493. Will the selected grocery operator have approval rights over the brand?

See response to Question #461.

494. Does the 30% M/WBE goal count the prime firm if the prime is M/WBE-certified?

See response to Question #9.

495. Are Respondents allowed to submit a video as part of our case study? If so, should it be embedded in the pdf, sent as a standalone m4v file, or uploaded to vimeo and submitted as a link to the vimeo?

See response to Question #268.

496. Beyond in-store digital signage, are other digital brand applications (website, social templates, etc) expected as part of the scope?

See response to Question #227.

497. How many distinct brand identity concepts does NYCEDC expect to review in Task 2A, and depending on the final stakeholders how many rounds of refinement should be assumed under Task 2C?

See response to Question #221 and Question #42.

498. Can NYCEDC clarify whether the scope includes development of the overall brand positioning strategy, or if the expectation is that the research phase will inform a positioning strategy to be developed separately by the City? NYCEDC expects that the research phase will inform a positioning strategy.

499. What are the expected deliverables at the conclusion of the research phase, specifically for Task 1A?

See response to Question #383.

500. Are naming services and slogan development intended for the store brand, the core basket products, or both?

Naming and slogan are expected for the store brand.

501. What languages should be considered for the development of final brand materials, including naming, slogans, and signage?

See response to Question #366.

502. What software or content management systems will store employees use to update and refresh signage? Are there any technical constraints that should be considered when designing pricing, promotional, or other high-frequency-change signage?

This information is not yet available. The brand should contemplate various use cases.

503. For the application mockups, are editable source files and templates expected as part of the final deliverables? If so, can NYCEDC provide additional guidance on the desired specifications and approximate quantity of examples expected for each category?

See response to Question #152.

504. Since the current RFP appears to focus on the development of a branded mockup system, should Respondents anticipate a subsequent RFP for the detailed design development and production of final assets?

Design development and fabrication will be the responsibility of each site's architecture and engineering team.

505. Can NYCEDC provide additional guidance on the intended audiences and level of detail expected for the brand guidelines deliverable (e.g., marketing, architectural, environmental, and operations teams)?

See response to Question #32.

506. Is the all-in budget of \$1M intended to cover Consultant fees only, or should Respondents assume it also includes out-of-pocket expenses such as travel, focus group incentives, translation services, legal review, and similar project costs?

See response to Question #1 and Question #157.

507. Is there flexibility to identify certain M/WBE partners after contract award, or is the expectation that the full M/WBE team be established at the Proposal stage?

It is a requirement to submit a subcontractor plan with the Proposal. If a Respondent does not have a subcontractor plan, they will receive a zero for that 15%. While the Proposal will still be scored on the other 85%, lacking an M/WBE plan has an impact.

508. Can NYCEDC share some examples of everyday groceries and household staples? Should we assume these are the same basket of core goods in all five sites?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

509. Should Respondents assume the core basket of goods will refer to one "N.Y.C. Groceries" brand?

Yes.

510. Is NYCEDC open to sub-brands under the N.Y.C. Groceries brand?

The current scope of Services is focused on the development of one brand.

511. Could NYCEDC provide examples of historically significant brands and logos related to City of New York that can be incorporated or referenced?

See response to Question #47.

512. Since only two of five sites have been identified, what assumptions should we make about demographic of audience for research around sites? Will NYEDC be able to help with recruitment?

See response to Question #2 and Question #90.

513. Is NYEDC open to other forms of user and design research methods besides focus group discussions?

Yes.

514. Are audience insights and focus group discussions specific to each site, or NYC as a whole?

See response to Question #2 and Question #90.

515. Can NYCEDC elaborate how the bespoke focus group interviews will be different from City-led community engagement sessions? Will participants who attend community engagement sessions be different from bespoke focus group interviews?

See response to Question #2 and Question #90.

516. If we want to contact / re-engage participants for design research / validation down the road, will the NYCEDC help contact/ re-engage participants who were involved in previous rounds of research?

See response to Question #2.

517. Will competitive landscape analysis of existing grocery stores and retail food establishments include online retailers and marketplaces?

No, focus should be on retail locations.

518. Would Respondents be given site plans to assist in the design of signages? Would we need to design in other languages to assist with accessibility?

See response to Question #32 and Question #366.

519. Will Respondents be made aware of the deliverables the architecture and branding company need? E.g. specification of in-store brand design palette, lighting?

See response to Question #32 and Question #152.

520. What deliverables is NYCEDC expecting at the end of this contract period?

See response to Question #383.

521. Can NYCEDC elaborate more on “physical extensions of those brand identities”, “place-based, immersive environments”? Should Respondents be thinking about placement of the branded products only on site, or is there possibility that it might be placed in other locations too? E.g. signages to assist with way finding of stores.

Respondents should review the list of examples in Task 2B. These are the types of physical extensions of the brand that NYCEDC expects to be considered during brand development. See response to Question #32.

522. It takes a minimum of 60 days to apply for MWBE certification. Can Respondents show proof of application and assisting documents at time of application to be considered?

No.

523. If M/WBE certification has not yet been formally approved by the Proposal submission deadline, would NYCEDC consider documentation showing that our application is actively in process? If so, is there a preferred form of documentation we should provide?

No.

- 524. Can NYCEDC confirm whether the prime Consultant must itself be M/WBE certified or a non-certified prime Consultant may satisfy the participation goal through the engagement of certified M/WBE subcontractors and Consultants?**

Prime Consultants are not required to be M/WBE certified. The 30% goal can be satisfied through the utilization of M/WBE sub-Consultants.

- 525. Do all sub-Consultants listed in the Participation Plan need to be M/WBE certified, or only those firms whose participation is being counted toward the 30% goal?**

A mix of subconsultants may be utilized, as long as the 30% M/WBE utilization goal is met.

- 526. Will NYCEDC be providing any information regarding firms or individuals who have expressed interest in, or intend to submit Proposals for, this opportunity?**

NYCEDC published the list of information session attendees, but will not publish information on who submitted Proposals.

- 527. What will NYCEDC do if a Respondent's M/WBE certification will not come through until after the RFP is due?**

NYCEDC is not a certifying agency.

- 528. How does NYCEDC define long-term success for the N.Y.C. Groceries brand? Are there specific awareness, trust, adoption, perception, or repeat-usage milestones the brand strategy should be designed to support?**

See response to Question #116.

- 529. Should Respondents plan for in-person presence in New York City for key milestones such as stakeholder presentations, creative reviews, research activities, community engagement observations, site visits, or brand deployment reviews? If so, should related travel and on-site participation costs be included in the Proposal?**

NYCEDC anticipates that the majority of the scope of Services can be conducted virtually. All costs associated with the scope should be projected as Task-based.

See response to Question # 157.

- 530. Should Respondents budget for a fixed number of review cycles per store location, or does NYCEDC anticipate that the level of involvement during the architecture and engineering phase will vary based on project needs?**

See response to Question #7.

- 531. Regarding the 30% M/WBE Participation Goal, can a non-M/WBE prime Respondent satisfy the goal through one or more DSBS-certified M/WBE**

subconsultants and must those subconsultants be certified at the time of Proposal submission, at contract award, or prior to commencement of their work?

See response to Question #507 and Question # 78.

532. If a firm is not currently M/WBE certified and does not yet have M/WBE subcontractors identified, can they still submit a Proposal and be considered responsive? If so, are M/WBE subcontractors required to be identified at the time of Proposal submission, or can they be finalized after selection?

See response to Question #507.

533. Will the attendance list and contact info of attendees be published so that we can form teams?

See response to Question #206.

534. Will this Project also be developing an RFP for retail grocery design (store planning/design) to work with the architecture and engineering teams?

NYCEDC anticipates multiple procurements in connection with the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative.

535. Will New York State MBE firms qualify?

See response to Question #71.

536. Is there any assistance that can be provided re: M/WBE certification?

See response to Question #527.

537. Will the selected firm need to be M/WBE certified in New York before submission?

See response to Question #71 and Question #78.

538. May a City certified M/WBE branding agency submit their own Proposal or must they collaborate with another company?

See response to Question #9.

539. Is part of selection criteria that the firm needs to be local to New York City?

See response to Question #29.

540. What is the review and approval process of NYCEDC throughout this Project?

See response to Question #42 and Question #45.

541. Could NYCEDC clarify how M/WBE certification will be verified for this RFP? Specifically, which certifying agencies or programs will NYCEDC recognize for purposes of M/WBE participation or credit?

If a firm is either a prime Respondent or submitting subcontractors that are MWBEs, NYCEDC will confirm that they are City certified. NYCEDC will check the NYC SBS directory to ensure that firms are certified by the City.

542. What is the preferred format for the 30-page document? If we wanted to include links in the 30 pages to online materials (longer bios, case studies, etc.) is that permitted?

See response to Question #201.

543. Is qualitative/quantitative research expected in the first phase of work? If so, and if that is not an in-house offer are NYCEDC open to teams submitting with a subConsultant or would NYCEDC prefer we only submit for pieces we can do in-house?

NYCEDC is interested in hearing how different firms or groups propose handling the research tasks and subtasks in their Proposals. These subtasks can be completed in-house or by a subconsultant.

544. Are there any expectations or added value for the Project team to have an architectural partner on the team?

No. This is not an expectation of this RFP.

545. Given the page count limit, do NYCEDC require full resumes for all project team members or just the project leads?

Biographies and resumes should highlight relevant experience of the principal members that will be involved in delivering the Project scope of Services.

546. Would NYCEDC be open to hourly billing on an add needed basis with an hourly cap for Task 3? Or is this required to be a lump sum fee?

See response to Question # 157.

547. Does everyone on the Respondent team need to be M/WBE certified even if they meet the criteria? How do we get certified, even if we're outside of New York City?

No. The MWBE requirement only applies to subcontractors. For information on M/WBE certification, visit New York City Small Business Services website at <https://sbsconnect.nyc.gov/certification-directory-search/>.

548. Do resumes count as a part of the 30 pages or can we link to them if we are a consortium?

Biographies and resume information should be included within the 30-page maximum submission.

549. Does every subcontractor need to be picked up before submitting?

See response to Question #507.

550. What can smaller or newer studios do to stand out?

Any Respondent who believes they can successfully deliver the Scope of Services is invited to submit a Proposal. Brand and design are creative fields and the Proposal asks for work that best exemplifies Respondents' ability to build a brand and how that brand can live in the real world.

551. Do Respondents need to confirm participation or just send our deck before submission deadline?

No confirmation is needed. Respondents should simply submit their Proposals as directed.

552. Can NYCEDC share the participants list from this session for partnership outreach?

See response to Question #206.

553. Can subcontractors be listed on more than one Respondent team, assuming there is no exclusivity agreement?

Yes, a subcontractor can be listed on more than one Respondent's Proposal.

554. Is there a budget set for this work or a ballpark of pricing?

See response to Question #1.

555. Does the applicant need to specifically need to be New York M/WBE or is being registered as M/WBE in another state acceptable?

See response to Question #71.

556. During the first two phases, what is NYCEDC's ideal day to day or week to week cadence with the design Consultant?

See response to Question #23.

557. Could NYCEDC clarify the RFP process format after the June 30 submission? Will NYCEDC be narrowing the pool down to a formal 'Shortlist' or finalist round for live interviews and presentations, and if so, how many firms do NYCEDC anticipate inviting to that round?

See response to Question #221.

558. Does NYCEDC have expectations regarding the number of focus groups, geographic distribution, languages, or participant recruitment requirements?

See response to Question #6, Question #90 and Question #90.

559. What is the exact scope of NYCEDC/City-led N.Y.C. Groceries publicity and marketing tasks and how will NYCEDC ensure confusion/inconsistency is not created by the use of the term N.Y.C. Groceries with whatever the branding process yields?

It is essential that NYCEDC communicate about the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative milestones and NYCEDC will continue to do so under a general naming and visual convention until the new brand is officially announced. NYCEDC will endeavor to share the publicity plan for summer/fall with the selected Respondent.

560. For any firms or Consultants that are not yet registered as M/WBE, what are some of the ways we otherwise meet the 30% participation goal?

See response to Question #507.

561. Can firms who are currently going through the process of being MWBE certified, note status in the Proposal?

See response to Question #78.

562. If a Respondent developed in house technologies that could help this project, how can information be shared?

Please submit your contact information to our vendors list at:
<https://edc.nyc/vendors-list-signup-0>.

563. How many focus group sessions is NYCEDC anticipating?

See response to Question #90.

564. Will N.Y.C. Groceries be operated by a single operator or multiple operators, and how should Respondents think about maintaining brand consistency across locations if multiple operators are involved?

The third-party grocery operator(s) for this program have not yet been identified. The Brand and Design Consultant should prepare clear brand guidelines that can be shared with and applied by multiple entities.

565. When are NYCEDC targeting the opening of the first stores?

See response to Question #164.

566. Does NYCEDC have vendors lined up for fabrication and installation of the brand elements in the first two store locations?

Contracted architecture and engineering firms will be responsible for securing vendors for fabrication.

567. Is there a budget allocation for this scope of Services? Additionally, should the budget account for fabrication of environmental graphics and branding collateral? Should the costs of fabrication be included in our Proposal?

See response to Question #1 and Question #32.

568. Could NYCEDC dive a bit deeper into collaboration post 2029?NYCEDC does not anticipate the Contract will be extended beyond 2029.

569. Could NYCEDC explain what decks are required as deliverables?
See response to Question #383.

570. How does NYCEDC envision the scope will be for the portion 2027-2029? How would be a good way to estimate this?
See response to Question #7, Question #32 and Question #157.

571. For the M/WBE requirement - is this a combined goal or will it be broken out by MBE and WBE?
There is one combined goal of 30%.

572. What are the multi-lingual requirements?
See response to Question #366.

573. Will the attendees of the informational meeting be logged and uploaded to the solicitation page?
See response to Question #206.

574. If an agency is WBEC and WSOB certified, would that suffice as the M/WBE requirement? Or do we need to obtain NY M/WBE certification?
See response to Question #71.

575. How many presentations will be needed? (for example : 1st presentation (brand strategy), 2nd presentation (brand design)
See response to Question #11.

576. How much input will the operator have in defining or evolving the Core Basket over time?
NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

577. Is this branding RFP for all five sites?
Yes.

578. What type of feedback can bidders expect to receive in response to submissions?
In accordance with the RFP, NYCEDC may reach out to respondents

579. Are there any minimum revenue, staffing, or prior government contract requirements not stated in the notice?

No.

580. Will there be separate RFPs for the architecture of each grocery store after this process is complete?

Multiple Architecture and Engineering teams will be retained.

581. How does NYCEDC propose working relationships between the brand partner and the architecture / interior design / retail experience design partners collaborate on this?

See response to Question #4, Question #32 and Question #120.

582. Who is the brand Consultant?

The brand Consultant will be selected as a result of this RFP and review of Proposals.

583. Is the \$70M construction budget all in for all five sites?

The \$70M figure represents the City's current Capital commitment for the construction program across the proposed five N.Y.C. Groceries' stores.

584. Once the N.Y.C. Groceries' stores are open, does NYCEDC have any success criteria for how well the store is performing? Sales figures are one, but will NYCEDC assess success against any other measures?

See response to Question #116.

585. Are bilingual focus group facilitation and/or materials part of the scope?

See response to Question #92.

586. Is the selected Consultant meant to be the lead design agency for the customer-facing store experience, including environmental graphics, architectural direction, and fixture/display concepts, or is this more narrowly a brand identity scope?

This RFP is focused on brand identity. See response to Question #32.

587. If the applying firm is M/WBE certified with NY City, how do we address it in the response, since the firm already meets the requirement?

See response to Question #9.

588. Who is responsible for sourcing the locations in each borough?

NYCEDC is sourcing the locations of the five N.Y.C. Groceries' stores.

589. If WBME certification is in process, will that count as part of the 50% requirement?

The M/WBE goal for this contract is 30%. See response to Question #78.

590. What are the insurance requirements and required coverage amounts?

Please see Article 6 of the Draft Consultant Contract, included in the RFP.

591. Will NYCEDC consider firms outside of New York to partner virtually? Are any onsite visits required or preferred throughout the project?

See response to Question #13. The brand and design Consultant is not required to be on site, but site visits can be arranged.

592. If a vendor has worked on branding and design projects but not previously as a prime contractor on projects with formal M/WBE participation goals and reporting requirements, how should Respondents complete Section D of the M/WBE Narrative Form when historical M/WBE utilization data is not available?

See response to Question #88.

593. Can past work examples be from freelance portfolios with other agencies where the Respondent's role was leading and critical?

Yes.

594. When will the operator RFP be released? Will the branding team collaborate with the operator?

See response to Question #46. NYCEDC does not expect direct collaboration between the Brand and Design Consultant and the operator.

595. What type of digital signage design is needed?

Informed by research tasks, the Respondent should establish the type(s) of digital signage would advance the brand and customer experience at stores.

596. If a Respondent is 100% WBE do they need to fill out a plan?

See response to Question #9 and Question #71.

597. Should Respondents mention projects done for the Office of the Mayor? Is this applicable or simply retail and other New York City based client branding work?

The Respondent should determine what examples best reflect their qualifications.

598. Will M/WBE businesses with pending applications be considered?

See response to Question #78.

599. What will the review and approval process look like in the first two phases of brand research and visual identity development?

See response to Question #42 and Question #45.

600. Does NYCEDC have to be embedded in the branding? Does the mayor want to be a part of this from a branding or content perspective?

See response to Question #213. We expect Mayor Mamdani to continue to participate in publicity of the N.Y.C. Groceries' initiative.

601. Does one need to follow the order and division of tasks in the RFP or can they be modified based on the Respondent's recommendation?

See response to Question #617.

602. Can naming be treated as discrete deliverables with separate review milestones within Task 2?

See response to Question #617.

603. Please confirm all required appendices for submission.

All required appendices are listed on pages 7-8 of the RFP. The forms are included as Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 4, and Appendix 6 in the RFP document.

604. Does the Respondent need to complete the forms in the Appendix 5 Consultant Contract?

No. These are not required in the RFP Proposal. The selected Respondent will be required to complete these in the contracting phase.

605. Who comprises the evaluation committee for this RFP?

The evaluation committee is confidential.

606. What is the anticipated timeline from submission deadline to contract execution?

The anticipated timeline is approximately one month.

607. For Task 3A, will the firm be responsible for overseeing the signage fabricator and installation for each store?

No.

608. How will the arch/engineering scope design tasks be clearly separate/or intersect with the tasks in this RFP?

See response to Question #567.

609. What are the biggest unanswered questions about the way the audience will engage these grocery stores. What are NYCEDC most curious to learn during that process?

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

610. Are out-of-pocket costs (e.g., recruiting fees, focus group incentives, travel to store sites, printing of mockups) reimbursable as pass-through costs above the fee, or must they be included within the total proposed fee?

See response to Question #6 and Question #157.

611. Could NYCEDC share the City's strategic goal in opening this up to a wider public audience versus a closed, traditional agency bidding process?

A public RFP was chosen based on the size and scope of the proposed Contract. Additionally, NYCEDC, on behalf of the City, was interested in hearing from the broadest range of creative consultants to inform this Project.

612. Should the Proposal document format be A4 vertical or horizontal form?

See response to Question #40.

613. Is the development of the Store Communication package part of this RFP. It simply mentions 'mock-ups' of a number of in store elements.

Store communication is expected to be the responsibility of the third party Operator(s).

614. Are there any minimum revenue, staffing, or prior government contract requirements not stated in the notice?

No.

615. Will NYCEDC accept different formats for the Proposals, can it include animation? MP4, High res and Low res (compressed)? What is the preference?

See response to Question #40.

616. How many focus groups sessions is NYCEDC anticipating?

See response to Question #90.

617. What are the M/WBE certification requirements for a freelance team? Does each freelance member need them?

See response to Question #204.

618. How can someone certify as M/WBE?

Visit <https://www.nyc.gov/site/sbs/businesses/certify-with-the-city.page>.

- 619. The RFP asks for visual examples of past projects but also states Proposals must not include spec creative. Can NYCEDC confirm that presenting completed prior work (e.g., brand identity systems, environmental applications) is permissible, and clarify the distinction it is drawing?**
See response to Question #298.
- 620. Does NYCEDC require on-site attendance for any project phases, particularly environmental design walkthroughs?**
See response to Question #236.
- 621. Beyond the branding scope outlined in the RFP, are there anticipated marketing, communications, or customer engagement initiatives that the selected Consultant should consider when developing the brand system to ensure it can scale effectively across future campaigns?**
These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.
- 622. MWBE certification has been pending for two years. Can NYCEDC provide fast track contact?**
See response to Question #527.
- 623. Will NYCEDC seek Proposals for A&E services for the grocery stores?**
Multiple Architecture and Engineering teams will be retained.
- 624. How does NYCEDC define long-term success for the N.Y.C. Groceries brand, and are there specific target audiences (across the various boroughs of NYC), behavioral shifts, or adoption milestones the strategy should be designed to achieve?**
See response to Question #116.
- 625. Will there be any RFP for digital engagement (Apps+ marketing)?**
These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.
- 626. Will Respondents have access to proposed space and layouts prior to June 30th?**
No.
- 627. If you are an interior design/architecture firm, can you include cost savings in your Proposal if awarded branding and architecture/design scope?**
No.
- 628. Wayfinding design is sometimes part of the branding team and sometimes part of architecture team. Should Respondents to this RFP include a wayfinding team member in the submission?**

Please refer to Task 2B and the level of design expected (guideline and mockups) in order to determine your staffing plan.

- 629. Task 1A mentions "historically significant brands and logos related to the City of New York." Are there specific visual references or City brand assets (e.g., existing NYC sub-brand systems) the Consultant should be aware of or align with?**

See response to Question #47.

- 630. Beyond one store per borough, is there any information NYCEDC can share about prospective locations or target neighborhoods?**

NYCEDC will endeavor to share further information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

- 631. Will a tentative touchpoint application list be published, for example, will NYC Groceries branded packaging be a part of the scope.**

Please refer to the items listed in the Scope of Services Task 2B.

- 632. Is there any more detail around the August–October 2026 brand development window? Would we have the full 13 weeks?**

No further detail is available at this time.

- 633. Does NYCEDC have a specific list of subconsultants which NYCEDC would like to see included in the RFP? Such as code Consultants, mechanical engineers, sustainability Consultants, etc.**

NYCEDC encourages Respondents to source subconsultants that can best deliver their proposed approach.

- 634. This phase spans 2027–2029 — a multi-year period after the core brand work is complete. Can NYCEDC clarify the anticipated frequency of brand deployment reviews per store, and whether this is billed as time-and-materials or included in the fixed scope?**

See response to Question #39 and Question #157.

- 635. Does NYCEDC have an idea of how many companies will be bidding for this, or a range?**

NYCEDC expects a large volume of competitive Proposals.

- 636. Do NYCEDC foresee a digital component to this scope of work or future RFPs? Ex. Digital design guidelines, Digital design system, website development?**

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

637. Does responding to this RFP preclude a firm from responding to future associated RFP's.

No.

638. Will firms with inhouse fabrication and production capabilities be able to bid on our own signage design for production if selected.

Signage fabrication will be bid as part of construction processes. Please submit your contact information to our Vendor's list at: <https://edc.nyc/vendors-list-signup-0>.

639. Is NYCEDC planning to conduct consumer research on the branding concepts?

See response to Question #448.

640. Will there be web development / backend engineering needs around this project in the future, and as such will product & UI design be a valuable skill for the contractor?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

641. As a woman-owned-business (marketing firm) in NYC, would the submission be stronger if partnered with another firm? If so, what percentage does NYCEDC expect the prime to do and percentage for subConsultant?

See response to Question #55 and Question #173.

642. Will NYCEDC choose a vendor solely based on Proposal submission? Or will agencies be narrowed down to a smaller group for subsequent pitch presentations?

See response to Question #64.

643. Given the anticipated volume of submissions, does NYCEDC expect to use any automated tools, AI-assisted review, keyword screening, or other technology-enabled process to support the initial review or shortlisting of Proposals? If so, can NYCEDC clarify how those tools will be used in relation to the published selection criteria?

NYCEDC is unable to answer at this time.

644. Will we know how many SKUs and deliverables will be needed, or is this part of how we assess our Proposal?

See response to Question #8 and Question #119.

645. Would NYCEDC accept an appendix for the Proposal as an extra beyond the 30-page limit?

No.

646. Can M/WBE participation requirements be satisfied through firms certified in other states, or must the participating firms be certified as NYC or New York State M/WBEs?

See response to Question #71.

647. Does the Respondent need to attend in-person sessions regarding the project?

See response to Question #236.

648. Is there a bi- or multilingual expectation - either for the branding output or the team?

See response to Question #366.

649. Under these M/WBE terms, only NYC-based businesses will "count" due to the requirement for NYC M/WBE certified businesses being located in the 5 boroughs - is that correct?

City M/WBE Certification is not limited to businesses located within New York City. Subconsultants must be City certified in order for their work to qualify toward the 30% goal for this contract. See response to Question #71.

650. What subcontractors are NYCEDC envisioning in this phase of work if this is primarily a design scope versus a production scope?

Respondents should familiarize themselves with the scope of Services included in the RFP document and proposed applicable subcontractors.

651. Is an additional visual deck component allowed with submission or must it be hyperlinked in pdf?

No, visuals should be contained in the Proposal's PDF layout. Multimedia elements may be hyperlinked from the PDF.

652. Will all questions from the Information Session be answered in writing and where will they be available?

See response to Question #85.

653. Does NYCEDC anticipate accepting one company/consortium exactly as proposed, or may NYCEDC consider customizing your choice based on Proposals received?

See response to Question #190.

654. Must the scope fee include any research costs or is there an additional out of pocket budget for that?

See response to Question #6 and Question #157.

- 655. Are NYC Groceries planning to be in direct competition with existing groceries, and grocery chains within the areas they serve, carrying ALL items (and brands) that can be found in local grocery stores, or will there be a unique product/inventory strategy focused on just fresh food items, or local vendors? Is there a point of difference?**

The N.Y.C. Groceries stores are intended to serve as grocery stores that complement existing grocery options. Merchandizing will be determined with the selected Operator.

- 656. For emerging studios founded by designers who may have years of experience leading high end work within larger established firms but are now building a newer independent practice, how are NYCEDC evaluating that balance? Are NYCEDC open to newer firms with strong individual experience and fresh approaches, or are NYCEDC primarily looking for firms with a longer organizational track record?**

See response to Question #139.

- 657. Does NYCEDC have a well-defined audience profile across the five boroughs and has NYCEDC chosen retail locations for the stores?**

See response to Question #4 and Question #91.

- 658. Will construction drawings and interior store design be part of other RFPs once the Brand Identity has been completed?**

NYCEDC anticipates multiple procurements being launched in connection with the N.Y.C. Groceries initiative.

- 659. What insurance minimums do subcontractors need to have?**

Subcontractors are subject to the prime insurance requirements, as applicable to scope of Services.

- 660. With regards to providing a detailed Work Plan and Approach section, is there a general square footage of the stores we can account for?**

The facility in East Harlem is expected to be 9,000 SF and the facility in Hunts Point is expected to be 20,000 SF. Please note, the work plan and approach should be based on the scope of Services described in the RFP. Store architecture and engineering is not included in the scope.

- 661. Will the operator's own brand (when selected) appear anywhere in-store (dual branding), or is the experience exclusively N.Y.C. Groceries?**

See response to Question #462.

- 662. How extensive is the private label product line expected to be?**

See response to Question # 8 and Question #119.

663. Will brand guidelines need to be fully finalized before A&E teams begin their work, or is there an overlap period where both workstreams run in parallel?

NYCEDC expects that brand guidelines will be substantially complete before the first A&E team begins.

664. Should the brand guidelines cover campaign, digital, social, and web applications, or strictly identity and environmental?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

665. Does NYCEDC envision these locations functioning solely as grocery stores, or also as community gathering spaces, educational resources, or cultural destinations?

NYCEDC shall endeavor to share additional information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

666. Will NYCEDC have an experiential design procurement process or is that expected to be delivered by either the brand, or architecture/engineer partner chosen?

Selected architecture and engineering teams will be responsible for experiential design, either directly or through sub-consulting.

667. Can NYCEDC share what these “Core Basket” products are?

NYCEDC shall endeavor to share additional information with the selected Respondent as it becomes available.

668. Will NYCEDC have any video marketing needs as part of the RFP?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

669. What does the payment structure look like? Is there a down payment?

See response to Question #157. Consult the payment terms included in the Draft Contract included in the RFP document.

670. Are presentation and other Project meetings preferred in-person? If agency is out of state, can reimbursables be part of the fee plan?

See response to Question #236.

671. Is there a ‘years of operation’ requirement or preference?

No.

672. What would qualify as a brand concept pitch to NYCEDC? is it a disqualifier if our Proposal format is visually evocative in nature, or is it disqualifying if branding/visual concepts are included as part of the Proposal narrative?

See response to Question #52.

- 673. Can the Respondent propose an alternative bespoke community engagement approach (such as public intercepts, sidewalk conversations/tabling, digital surveys, etc.)?**

Yes.

- 674. Does the M/WBE subcontractor have to already agree to partner with the Respondents or can we include them with the intent to reach out after?**

See response to Question #173.

- 675. The RFP asks for “5 past similar size/SOW projects where MO was prime/construction manager and MWBE goals set and met.” Is it considered disqualifying for agencies who cannot provide 5 past instances?**

See response to Question #88.

- 676. Does submitting a Proposal to this RFP preclude a firm from responding to future associated RFPs?**

No.

- 677. Is there a reason why the M/WBE requirement is only required for sub and not prime Consultant?**

M/WBE firms are welcome to propose as the prime Consultant and self-perform the requirement.

- 678. Is M/WBE being used to target MBEs and WBEs or specifically targeting Minority Women-owned businesses?**

The 30% goal is not limited to a specific category.

- 679. Will estimating/value-engineering support be needed from the Consultant?**

No.

- 680. Are any of the Project review meetings throughout the engagement expected to be held in person?**

See response to Question #236.

- 681. Can we include UX/UI brand guidelines in our submission.**

UX/UI brand guidelines are not included in the scope of Services. See response to Question #189.

- 682. Is pitching a brand concept expected to be part of the decision making/ procurement process at any point?**

This will be considered based on the progression of Proposal review and selection.

683. Would there be a chance to refine deliverable definitions during contracting?

NYCEDC will engage constructively with the selected Consultant to confirm alignment with respect to the Scope of Services.

684. How is NYCEDC going to review the assumed volume of Proposals in time to select a partner to meet desired timeline?

NYCEDC shall review all Proposals in a timely manner in accordance with the announced timeline, however, NYCEDC retains the right to adjust any timeline related to the Project.

685. Does NYCEDC have an allocated budget or an existing master contract for translation and interpretation services that the selected Consultant can utilize for non-English focus groups?

No.

686. Will in-person meetings be required? Or are meetings virtual?

See response to Question #236.

687. Are there any City procurement or legal restrictions regarding how stipends/incentives (like gift cards or MetroCards) are distributed to community focus group participants?

No.

688. Does only the prime Consultant fill out the Doing Business Data Form? Or everyone in the consortium?

The prime Consultant is responsible for contract forms including the Doing Business Data Form.

689. Are Consultants allowed to put out a general digital survey to the public? Would NYCEDC need/want to be involved with this in any way?

NYCEDC will discuss with the selected Respondent.

690. Are there any particular psychographic profiles that NYCEDC would want the Respondent to focus on?

See response to Question #91.

691. Is digital brand application; website, social media, app — within or outside the scope of this RFP?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

692. Are digital applications part of the design?

These services fall outside of this RFP opportunity.

693. What was the RFP email address?

GroceriesBrandDesign@edc.nyc

694. How can Respondents also put our name out as a subcontractor?

Attendee information will be posted to the RFP web page to facilitate partnership and subcontracting. See response to Question #244. Additionally, organizations can submit contact information to NYCEDC's Vendor's list at:
<https://edc.nyc/vendors-list-signup-0>.

695. What is the feasibility of a small nonprofit's Proposal being seriously considered for this work?

All responsive Proposals will be considered. See response to Question #34.

696. Can NYCEDC please clarify appendix D-3? What does this mean?

Appendix D-3 is a required form to be included in the executed Contract between NYCEDC and the selected Respondent. This form is an acknowledgement that any non-original content that will be used in the project has been legally procured by the Consultant and usage rights have been documented.

697. Can a company be considered an MWBE if it is owned and operated by minority and/or women founders, but has not obtained formal MWBE certification or registration?

See response to Question #78.