



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
CAFÉ
LOCATED AT 500 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD CT.

HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY PROPOSALS FOR DOWNTOWN LIBRARY CAFE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Hartford Public Library is pleased to offer an exciting opportunity for a well-qualified entity to operate a restaurant/café at its Downtown Library location at 500 Main Street, Hartford CT, 06103.

The successful Respondent will have the ability to finance, design, construct, and operate a restaurant/café. All legally required City and State permits and licenses required to operate the restaurant/café must be obtained. The Library intends to select a Respondent that can successfully create an establishment that enhances the Library and UConn customer experience.

INVITATION

Qualified proposals must have demonstrated experience and knowledge of restaurant operations—including financing, marketing, design, management, and oversight. It is expected that proposals will be based on a thorough understanding of restaurant/café market conditions and trends and that final proposals will contain realistic financial projections.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Activity	Dates
Proposals Issued	August 28, 2025
Q&A Last Day for Questions (must be submitted via email caferfp@hplct.org .)	October 24, 2025
Proposals Due	November 28, 2025 by 4:00pm EST.
Proposal Review	December 1, 2025 – December 5, 2025
Interviews	December 8, 2025 – December 12, 2025
Selection	December 17, 2025

NOTE: All responses to questions will be posted on October 29, 2025 on the Hartford Public Library website at hplct.org in the About section under request for proposals.

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The goals/objective of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to award a lease to an operator who will accomplish the following:

1. Provide a destination restaurant/café with a distinctive menu and dining experience that will appeal to Library customers, UConn Hartford campus students, employees and faculty, area workers and visitors and bring people to the area for a memorable dining and social experience
2. Collaborate with HPL in expanding a comprehensive workforce development program at its Downtown Library. This initiative is designed to:
 - Deliver real-world On-the-Job Training (OJT) and job shadowing in food service, customer service, and hospitality for HPL trainees.
 - Create employment pathways for underemployed and unemployed community members.
 - Support local business growth by providing access to a pipeline of trained, job-ready individuals.
 - Foster strategic partnerships between workforce training programs and local employers to align education with industry needs.

Partner responsibilities may include:

- I. Providing each trainee with approximately 10 to 14 hours of OJT and/or job shadowing over a two-month period.
- II. Supporting a minimum of 12 trainees per calendar year, with staggered participation to ensure quality mentorship.
- III. Prioritizing hires from HPL's pool of ServSafe-certified individuals.

Since 2016, Hartford Public Library (HPL) has offered industry-recognized certification training in food and hospitality to underemployed and unemployed individuals, creating meaningful pathways to careers in this growing sector. Through its ServSafe Certificate program, HPL equips participants with the essential skills and credentials needed to succeed in professional kitchen and customer service environments.

In recognition of this impactful work, HPL received an Innovation Award from the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) in September 2018. The award, presented in the Workforce and Economic Development category, honored the Library's Career Pathways Initiative and its efforts to strengthen workforce readiness in food and hospitality.

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The selected restaurant/café operator will have the opportunity to build on this success, contributing to a proven model that supports workforce development, strengthens community connections, and promotes local economic growth.

SCOPE OF SERVICE

The Library is looking for an entity that will open and operate Café and have the ability to provide catering services. The Library is a hub of activity providing an array of programs and classes for the public and has a collaborative and space sharing relationship with the UConn Hartford Campus and UConn Hartford Library.

Premises

- Approximately 1,904 square feet of café space located on the 1st floor of the Library
- Commercial kitchen space located on the 2nd floor of 750 square feet.
- Outdoor patio seating

UTILITIES

Utilities electricity , heat, air, and water will be included in monthly lease.

PARKING

Parking for restaurant/café employees is not included and will be the responsibility of the operator. Parking for customers is available on street or in area parking lots and garages.

MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS

During the term of the lease, the tenant will be responsible for improvements, maintenance, repairs of equipment and operating expenses associated with the Café.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Café Space Equipment		Café Space Furniture		2nd Floor Kitchen Equipment	
ITEM	QTY		QTY	ITEM	QTY
Refrigerated Display Case	2	Tables High Top	5	Refrigerator	1
Espresso Machine	1	Regular Tables	8	Freezer	1
Water Filtration System	2	Chairs High Top	4	New 6 range stove top (2024)	1
3 Compartment Sink	1	Farm Style Tables	1	Dishwasher	1
Espresso Grinder	1	Patio tables	11	Commercial Three Bay Sink	1
Refrigerator	1	Patio/Inside Chairs	37	Meat Slicer	1
Freezer	1				
Ice Machine	1				
Dishwashing Machine	1				
Commercial Sandwich and Salad Prep Station	1	Vendor may supply their own furniture or additional furniture.			

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INSTRUCTIONS AND PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

In order for your Proposal to be deemed responsive it must be complete, accurate, and contain all of the information requested below in order. Omission, inaccuracy, misstatement, or failure to submit any of the items required by may be cause for rejection of your Proposal. An electronic copy of all proposal elements in Adobe PDF format must be submitted via email to caferfp@hplct.org along with four hard copies delivered to HPL administrative offices on 3rd floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford, CT 01060.

Proposals are **due by 4:00 pm on November 28, 2025**. Library reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive information and minor irregularities in any Proposal received.

All Proposals submitted in response to this proposal become the property of the Hartford Public Library. The Library shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any proposer in relation to the preparation or submittal of Proposals.

The Library reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted and to waive any informality or defect in any of all proposals if such action is in the best interests of the Library. The selection of the successful bidder will be based on several factors as described herein. To that end, the Library reserves the right to award this contract, if at all, in its sole discretion, if it is in the Library's best interests to do so.

FORM OF PROPOSALS

To facilitate comparison and evaluation, proposals must follow the format outlined in this section.

A. Number of copies. One electronic copy in Adobe PDF format.

B. Proposal Format Requirements

- Proposals must be typewritten and submitted in standard 8½" x 11" document format.
- Use 12-point font size and 1.5 line spacing throughout the document.
- The proposal must not exceed 10 pages, excluding any required attachments or appendices.

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C. The proposals should contain the following:

- **Cover Letter**
- **Entity Information**
- **Proposed Concept**
- **Design Intention and Capital Investment**
- **Experience and Financial Strength**
- **Affirmative Action/EEO**
- **Financial Offer**

RESPONSES TO THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SHALL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

COVER LETTER/TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Each Respondent must submit a letter of introduction and executive summary of the Proposal. The letter must be signed by a person authorized by the proposing firm or business to obligate the firm or business to perform the commitments contained in the Proposal. Submission of the letter will constitute a representation by the Respondent that the Respondent is willing and able to perform the commitments contained in the Proposal.

ENTITY INFORMATION

The Entity shall provide a brief summary of itself, including the following information:

- a. Name of company and parent company, if any;
- b. Name of company primary areas of service;
- c. Address of principal office and office from which project will be managed;
- d. Name, address, telephone number and email address of the principal contact person to receive notifications and to reply to inquiries from Hartford Public Library
- e. Legal form of ownership;
- f. Years engaged in above services under your present name and all prior names by which the entity is known.
- e. Three professional references (names, relationship and contact information).
- f. Please also complete and include Exhibit B with proposal

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PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Section Questions

A. Proposed Concept (50 points)

1. Describe the restaurant/cafe proposed. Include information on the theme, ambiance, availability of catering services, days and hours of operation, menu, and pricing. (5 points)
2. Describe how the proposed restaurant/cafe will complement the neighborhood, surrounding environment and the downtown (5 points)
3. Describe how the restaurant/café will collaborate with HPL and contribute to workforce development opportunities, strengthen community connections, and promotes local economic growth. (15 points)
4. Describe a plan for marketing the restaurant/café. (5 points)
5. Provide an operations plan, including the management and operational structure of the business and staffing. (15 points)
6. Provide a timeline for preparing and opening the proposed restaurant/café. (5 points)

C. Experience and Financial Strength (50 points)

1. Balance sheet ending June 30, 2025.
2. Projected assets, liabilities, and net worth on the day expect to open
3. Estimated budget required to operate
4. Projected cashflow for the 1st year of operations
5. Does your company currently have a line of operating credit? If so, how much?
6. How many years has your entity been in business?
7. Attach bio and or resume of individuals who will be responsible for running and managing the operations and the number of years of experience in the food service industry

D. Affirmative Action/EEO

1. Is this a Minority and Woman Business Enterprise (M/WBE)?
2. Does your entity have an AA/EEO policy? If so, please attach.

E. Financial Offer

1. Proposed monthly rent.

Provide the amount of the proposed initial capital investment for improvements, if any, and identify the source(s) of funds. Please note: Any capital investment will be made at the proposer's sole expense. The library will not provide funding for improvements.

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EVALUATION PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Hartford Public Library reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to terminate development negotiations at any time and to request clarification or additional information from individual respondents. The library may interview some, but not necessarily all, of the parties' submitting proposals.

The selection of a qualified proposer will be based upon his/her/their experience in the restaurant/food service industry, demonstrated ability to manage a food service establishment, willingness and ability to partner with HPL and/or other entities in workforce training programs, capacity to operate productively and in collaboration with the Library and its stakeholders, financial capacity and wherewithal to operate a successful business.

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EXHIBIT A

CAFÉ SPACE



KITCHEN 2nd FLOOR





**HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
PROPOSALS FOR DOWNTOWN LIBRARY CAFÉ**

**PROPOSAL PAGES
DOWNTOWN LIBRARY CAFÉ
500 Main Street
Hartford, CT. 06103**

Issued: _____

Reply Date Due: _____

We, the undersigned, submit our proposal titled Hartford Public Library Café in accordance with the requirements outlined in this request and submit for your consideration the following:

RESPONDENT CHECKLIST

We have submitted the following for your review:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Cover Letter | _____ |
| 2. Table of Contents | _____ |
| 3. Cover Letter | _____ |
| 4 Entity Information | _____ |
| 5. Proposed Concept | _____ |
| 6 Design Intention and Capital Investment | _____ |
| 7. Experience and Financial Strength | _____ |
| 8. Affirmative Action /EEO | _____ |
| 9. Financial Offer | _____ |
| 10. Exhibit A Respondent Checklist | _____ |
| 11. Exhibit B Entity Information | _____ |
| 12. Exhibit C Non-Collusive Statement | _____ |

_____	_____	_____
Organization/Company Name	Signature and Title	Date

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Exhibit B

PLEASE NOTE: All of the information below is REQUIRED. Please do not leave any information blank.

Corporation Name (if applicable)

Company Name

Mailing Address: _____
Address

City, State and Zip Code

FEIN NUMBER: _____ -- _____

Type of Organization: ☐ Individual / Sole Proprietor
 ☐ Limited Liability Company
 ☐ Nonprofit Corporation
 ☐ Corporation

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____

Additional Contact: _____

Title: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax _____:

Email Address: _____ Website: _____

SIGN HERE: I hereby certify that the above information is correct.

Print Name & Title

Signature

Date

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EXHIBIT C

NON-COLLUSIVE PROPOSAL STATEMENT

All proposers are required to sign a Non-Collusive Statement as follows:

I. The Proposal has been arrived at by the bidder, independently and has been submitted without collusion with, and without any agreement, understanding, or planned common course of action with any other bidder services described in the Proposal, designed to limit independent bidding or competition; and

2. The contents of the Proposal have not been communicated by the bidder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the bidder or its surety on any bond furnished with the bid and will not be communicated to any person prior to the official opening of the bid.

Note: The Respondent (and related entities) are expected to be current with any taxes, fees, or other funds owed to the City of Hartford.

SIGN HERE: I hereby certify that the above information is correct.

Print Name & Title

Sign

Date