REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - Marquette Pavilion Catering Services

The City of Gary, Indiana, through its Department of Parks & Recreation invites qualified catering companies, hospitality firms, culinary consortiums, restaurants, and food service professionals to submit proposals to provide catering services at the historic Marquette Park Pavilion.

Situated along the southern shore of Lake Michigan within the Indiana Dunes region, Marquette Park Pavilion is one of Northwest Indiana's premier event destinations. The Pavilion offers spectacular lakefront views, historic architecture, expansive indoor and outdoor event spaces, and an unforgettable setting for weddings, corporate meetings, conferences, nonprofit events, family celebrations, cultural gatherings, and community functions.

The City seeks innovative partners capable of delivering exceptional culinary experiences that reflect the diversity, creativity, and hospitality of Northwest Indiana while supporting the Pavilion's continued growth as a regional destination venue.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The selected contractor(s) will have the opportunity to provide catering services for events hosted at Marquette Park Pavilion.

The City encourages proposals from:

- Full-service catering companies
- Restaurants
- Hotel culinary services
- Hospitality management firms
- Minority-owned businesses
- Women-owned businesses
- Veteran-owned businesses
- Local food entrepreneurs
- Culinary consortiums and collaborative partnerships

Multiple firms may be selected to ensure clients have diverse catering options and price points.

OBJECTIVES

The City seeks partners that will:

- Deliver exceptional food quality and customer service.
- Offer diverse menu selections representing a wide range of cultural traditions and cuisines.
- Accommodate events ranging from intimate gatherings to large celebrations.
- Support economic development by showcasing regional culinary talent.

- Maintain the highest standards of food safety and professionalism.
- Enhance the reputation of Marquette Park Pavilion as a premier hospitality destination.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Selected caterers should be capable of providing services including, but not limited to:

Wedding Receptions

- Formal plated dinners
- Buffet service
- Cocktail receptions
- Hors d'oeuvres
- Dessert stations
- Late-night menus

Corporate Events

- Breakfast meetings
- Luncheons
- Conferences
- Executive dinners
- Training seminars
- Board meetings

Social Events

- Family reunions
- Birthday celebrations
- Anniversary parties
- Retirement celebrations
- Holiday parties
- Proms
- Graduations
- Community events
- Repasts & Memorials

Specialty Events

- Galas
- Fundraisers
- Cultural celebrations
- Festivals
- Government receptions

- Tourism events
- Public ceremonies

MENU EXPECTATIONS

The City encourages proposals that include diverse culinary offerings such as:

- American cuisine
- Southern cuisine
- Soul food
- Pescatarian cuisine
- BBQ
- Italian
- Mexican
- Puerto Rican
- Caribbean
- Mediterranean
- Middle Eastern
- Asian cuisines
- African cuisines
- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Kosher-style options
- Healthy menu selections
- Children's menus

Innovation, seasonal ingredients, locally sourced products, and chef-inspired menus are strongly encouraged.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Successful proposers should demonstrate the ability to provide:

- Full-service catering
- Buffet service
- Plated dining
- Family-style service
- Hors d’oeuvres service
- Beverage stations
- Coffee service
- Bartending (licensed where applicable)
- Event staffing
- Setup and teardown
- Table service

- Linen coordination
- Event rentals (optional)
- Custom menu development

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Proposers should demonstrate:

- Experience catering weddings and large events
- Large-scale fine dining services
- Valid business licenses
- Food service certifications
- Health Department compliance
- General liability insurance
- Experience serving events of varying sizes
- Excellent customer references
- Financial stability
- Ability to work collaboratively with Pavilion staff

PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals should include:

Company Profile

- Business history
- Ownership structure
- Years in operation
- Number of employees

Experience

Describe comparable projects including:

- Weddings
- Corporate events
- Government functions
- Large community events

Culinary Philosophy

Describe:

- Menu diversity
- Food sourcing

- Customer experience
- Innovation

Sample Menus

Provide examples for:

- Weddings
- Corporate meetings
- Holiday events
- Community events
- Budget-friendly options
- Premium dining experiences

Pricing Structure

Include:

- Pre-set pricing menu options
- Service fees
- Staffing fees
- Beverage packages
- Equipment rental options

Staffing Plan

Describe staffing levels and event management approach.

References

Provide at least three professional references.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

Criteria	Weight
Experience and Qualifications	25%
Menu Diversity and Quality	20%

Customer Service Approach	15%
Pricing and Value	15%
Operational Capacity	10%
Innovation and Creativity	10%
Local Economic Impact	5%

CONTRACT TERM

The City anticipates awarding one or more agreements with an initial term of two (2) years, with options for renewal.

Selection as a preferred caterer does not guarantee a minimum number of events.

CITY GOALS

The City seeks to establish Marquette Park Pavilion as one of the premier waterfront event venues in the Midwest. Catering partners will play a critical role in creating memorable guest experiences while showcasing the culinary richness, cultural diversity, and hospitality that define Gary and Northwest Indiana.

Through this partnership, the City aims to:

- Expand event bookings and tourism.
- Support local businesses and workforce development.
- Celebrate diverse culinary traditions.
- Provide clients with exceptional dining experiences.
- Promote Marquette Park as a destination for weddings, conferences, and signature regional events.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The City of Gary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, request additional information, negotiate with proposers, and award contracts in the best interest of the City.

The City may select multiple catering providers to ensure a broad range of culinary offerings and event experiences.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Proposals shall be submitted electronically and/or in sealed envelopes no later than:

Proposal Due Date: October 30, 2026 by 4p

Submit To:

City of Gary
Division of Public Works
401 Broadway - Suite 105
Gary, Indiana 46402

bbuggs@gary.gov

Questions regarding this solicitation shall be submitted in writing by the deadline established in the procurement schedule to bbuggs@gary.gov.

/rmc