

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RESTAURANT OPERATOR

Muskegon County Airport (MKG)

Issue Date: July 31st, 2025

Proposal Due Date: September 30th, 2025



<https://flymuskegon.com/opportunities>

1. Introduction

The Muskegon County Airport is seeking proposals from qualified restaurant operators to develop and operate a food and beverage concession inside the main passenger terminal. With the recent completion of a \$3M terminal renovation, the airport seeks a collaborative partner to offer high-quality food options to create a destination environment for the general public and to enhance the passenger experience for airline and general aviation travelers. We are seeking an operator who, through their offerings, will reflect the unique character of the West Michigan Lakeshore.

A one-of-a-kind opportunity to be the first and last impression for West Michigan!

This is a unique opportunity to develop a loyal local customer base that will be supplemented by captive and consistent daily airport users. We anticipate high demand from the non-flying general public as well as the 15,000-20,000 annual airline passengers. In addition to airline passengers, the specific airport market includes charter and general aviation visitors, airport staff, flight crews, rental car patrons, delivery drivers and others who pass through the terminal.

Additionally, a well-run restaurant, with some unique menu items, will be popular with business personnel located in the nearby airport business park, other nearby industrial areas and the staff of West Michigan Christian High School, making it well-positioned to become a go-to destination. Further, the restaurant will have an opportunity to serve the business aviation customers who frequent our airport with box lunches or other catered options.

Parking is completely free at MKG and with a high-flow traffic pattern in front of the terminal, the restaurant is ideally situated for grab and go or curbside pickup operations.

With a limited number of food and beverage options in the immediate vicinity of the airport between the Sternberg and Henry corridors, this restaurant stands to benefit from minimal local competition and strong historical demand from travelers and locals alike seeking convenient, quality food and beverages at MKG.

The airport is committed to supporting the long-term success of our operating partners. The selected restaurant operator will not only play a key role in enhancing the traveler experience but will also have opportunities to grow in partnership with Muskegon County as the airport evolves in the future.

The Airport views this as a mutually beneficial partnership, not just a tenant/lessor agreement.

2. Overview

- **Location:** Inside the main entrance of the MKG passenger terminal, pre-security, accessible to the general public.
- **Available Space:** Approximately 2,500 square feet with kitchen line, food prep, bar, a dining room for 60 patrons, space for 20 customers outside the restaurant (in the lobby), a manager office, a walk-in cooler and freezer, dry storage, dishwashing, and a very visible entrance.
 - ADA accessible and family restrooms are 20 feet from the restaurant and are operated and maintained by the Airport.
 - Also available is a 30'x20' private conference room that can be utilized by the restaurant operator to host catered events.
 - Warm-weather outdoor seating, on the tarmac (protected from the wind) is being considered for future development within 1-2 years.
- **Liquor license:** The Airport has access to a Class-C liquor license that is affordably assignable to the restaurant operator in accordance with MCL Section 436.1507.
- **Expected Opening:** Within 6-8 months of contract execution
- **Lease Terms:** The lease term will be for a period of 5-years with the option for a 5-year extension, subject to mutually agreed-upon conditions. Payment to the Airport will be in the form of a base lease rate OR a proposed percentage of gross receipts (whichever is higher):
 - Monthly minimum base rent:
 - Year 1: \$300/month
 - Year 2: \$400/month
 - Year 3-5: \$500/month

3. Scope of Work

The selected restaurant operator will:

- Operate a full-service restaurant offering quality menu items featuring local or regional cuisine (West Michigan favorites preferred);
- Offer coffee, light snacks, and/or meals to support the daily flight schedule;
- Provide and maintain all necessary kitchen equipment (other than that currently owned by the airport), furnishings, signage, and décor;
- Manage all staff, procurement, food preparation, and service delivery;
- Comply with all applicable local, state, and federal health and safety regulations, as well as airport security requirements;
- Maintain a clean, professional, and customer-friendly environment;
- A summary of specific responsibilities for related operations is as follows:

	Operator	Airport
Point of sale operation, business records, cash receipts, funding, reserves, etc.	X	
Food, stock, office equipment, consumables, wares and other supplies	X	
Payroll and all related employee or staffing costs	X	
Maintenance and repair of food service equipment	X	
Utilities (electric, gas, water, sewer, dumpster, wireless internet are provided)		X
Landline phone, signage, decor	X	

Pest control, landscaping and all exterior facility maintenance		X
Daily cleaning – Kitchen/dining areas and trash removal to dumpster	X	
Bathrooms – Operation and daily cleaning		X
Licenses, permits and other regulatory requirements	X	
Marketing, advertising and promotion (collaborative partnership)	X	X

4. Minimum Qualifications

- 4 years of relevant business operating experience in the food service industry
- Demonstrated financial capacity to successfully develop and operate a restaurant
- Provide a trained, customer service oriented individual to manage the restaurant
- Proven ability to meet regulatory and safety requirements in public settings

5. Proposal Requirements

Submissions should not exceed 10 pages and must include the following:

- A brief introduction that includes the operator's background and experience (1-2 pages);
- Business concept and sample menu (3-5 pages);
- Design & layout concept (1-2 pages);
- Operational plan that includes proposed hours of operation, meal coverage, staffing, supply chain, timeline for development, soft launch and opening, etc. (1-2 pages);
 - Clearly lay out proposed hours of operation that includes specified meal coverage (breakfast and/or lunch and/or dinner)
- Financial Proposal (1 page)
 - Proposed percentage of gross revenue sharing (2-15%)
 - Estimated initial investment and build-out cost
 - Any additional considerations such as a request for base lease rate concessions, subsidy request, or a one-time stipend to help offset startup costs
- Required certification pages, ability to meet insurance requirements, and legal statements (not included in page count);
- Three references from current suppliers, as well as customers

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Airport Development Advisory based on:

Criteria	Weight
Experience and qualifications	20%
Quality and appeal of the proposed concept	20%
Financial offer, business terms and viability	20%
Marketing and customer service approach	20%
References related to current role in West Michigan	10%
Design and functionality of the space	10%

- The selection committee may, at its discretion, reach out to the point of contact for each proposal to:
 - Request additional information
 - Schedule an interview

7. Site Visits, Questions & Clarifications

- Site visits will be **by appointment only** and will be held between August 25th and September 26th between the hours of 7 AM – 4 PM
 - Please e-mail eftingke@co.muskegon.mi.us and lynnma@co.muskegon.mi.us to schedule a site visit
- Questions, clarifications and requests for additional information should be emailed to eftingke@co.muskegon.mi.us
 - All requests will be answered and consolidated into an addendum. Addendums will be posted weekly for public viewing on Friday at the URL below:
 - <https://flymuskegon.com/opportunities>

8. Submission Instructions

- Two submissions are required, one digital and one printed
- Submit a digital MS Word or Adobe PDF via e-mail to:
 - eftingke@co.muskegon.mi.us
 - Airport Administration will confirm receipt and outline next steps for evaluation
- Mail or deliver one printed copy to:
 - Muskegon County Airport – Restaurant RFP
Attn: Ken Efting
99 Sinclair Dr.
Norton Shores, MI 49441
- Ensure that proposals include a copy of signed insurance requirements, certification documents and references listed at <https://flymuskegon.com/opportunities>
- **Submission Deadline: September 30th, 2025 at 4 PM**
 - The duration of this solicitation is intentionally long at 6-weeks to allow adequate flexibility to operators to deliberate, research and propose during peak season

9. Rights Reserved

The Muskegon County Airport reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Negotiate terms with one or more proposers
- Perform due diligence research
- Waive any requirement, informality or irregularity
- Require additional insurance or higher limits based on the scope of the proposed operation
- Cancel this RFP at any time

