

Good Food Access Program Technical Assistance Grant

Fiscal Year 2022 Request for Proposals

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Technical Assistance (TA) Grant offers funding to assist technical assistance providers in working with new or existing for-profit, not-for-profit, and cooperative self-service retail food establishments with needs-based assistance. GFAP TA funds are intended to increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas.

Funding availability

The maximum request is \$50,000, and the minimum request is \$5,000. The MDA anticipates awarding approximately \$100,000 using a competitive review process. We expect that we will award approximately two to three grants, but the final number depends on the size of the awards. Grants may cover up to 75% of eligible expenses. The MDA reserves the right to not award any grants through this Request for Proposals (RFP).

Applicants should anticipate conducting their projects in approximately 18 months, but the MDA may extend grant contract agreements to last up to three years.

Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

Proposals that demonstrate experience providing technical assistance to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and commit to serving these populations will receive priority.

How to submit questions

All questions should be submitted through writing by email (MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) by **4:00 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, March 10, 2022** with “GFAP Technical Assistance Grant” in the subject line. Responses to all questions regarding the application will be posted on the [Questions and Answers](#) section of the GFAP TA grant webpage.

MDA employees are not authorized to provide advice on any applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

How to apply

We must receive your GFAP TA grant application by **4:00 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, March 17, 2022** to be considered for funding. You must submit proposals through our [online application system](#). We will not consider late applications.

Assistance with the online application system can be provided until the submission deadline by calling 651-201-6500 or emailing MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with “GFAP TA Grant” in the subject line. We encourage applicants to apply early so that there is ample time to receive assistance if needed.

The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems resulting in the MDA not receiving the application on time. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that submission is received by the MDA before the deadline.

Application guidelines

- Write for reviewers who are generally knowledgeable but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your organization or project. Use plain, easily understood language.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- The [Project Evaluation Profile](#) included in this document will be used to score and compare the grant applications.

Timeline and deadlines for grant program

It is best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance to prevent unforeseen delays. Applications will not be accepted after the grant deadline under any circumstances.

Questions due no later than 4:00 pm Central Time..... March 10, 2022

Applications due no later than 4:00 pm Central Time..... March 17, 2022

Applicants notified of decisions; grant agreement negotiations begin..... April 29, 2022 (estimated)

Grant Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Non-profit organizations and public agencies with capabilities to provide technical assistance to eligible grocery stores and small food retailers are invited to apply. Examples of potential technical assistance providers include but are not limited to small business development centers, regional economic development organizations, community development financial institutions, regional public health organizations, and foundations.

Eligible organizations serving sovereign nations are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Applicants must be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:

- No back taxes owed.
- No defaults on Minnesota State-backed financing for the last seven years.
- Acceptable performance on past MDA grants.
- Compliant with current state regulations.

MDA employees and their spouses are not eligible to receive grants from this program.

Tribal communities and other organizations that serve Native American Tribal communities are encouraged to apply.

Collaboration

Applicants are encouraged to work in partnership with other technical assistance providers who can expand the breadth and/or reach of the technical assistance. Projects that demonstrate a collaborative, regional approach to technical assistance will receive priority.

A letter of support from at least one eligible grocery store or food retailer will be required to show their commitment to the implementation of the proposal.

Eligible projects

GFAP Technical Assistance Grant Projects include but are not limited to sustainability-focused individualized guidance, presentations, workshops, training, printed materials, mentorship opportunities, peer-to-peer opportunities, or other guidance and resources on relevant topics such as business planning, sales projections, cash flow, succession planning, financing, fundraising, marketing, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) eligibility, food procurement/distribution, handling and merchandising fresh foods, food preparation demonstrations, and workforce training.

Grocers and small food retailers receiving technical assistance under this grant must be located in or serve a U.S. Census tract designated as a “Food Desert” or must serve a substantial subpopulation, such as the elderly or disabled, in a low- or moderate- income Census tract who have low supermarket

access. **It is not a requirement that the grocer or small food retailer be in one of these areas, however they must serve its residents.** A list of eligible areas is available at the [GFAP Eligible Areas](#) webpage.

Recipients of technical assistance must agree to the following conditions:

- Accept SNAP benefits;
- Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements established by the commissioner;
- Promote the hiring, training, and retention of local or regional residents from low-income and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color; and
- Except for small food retailers, as defined, allocate at least 30% of retail food space for the sale of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods, including fruits and vegetables, low-fat and nonfat dairy, fortified dairy substitute beverages such as soy-based or nut-based dairy substitute beverages, whole grain-rich staple foods, meats, poultry, fish, seafood, and other proteins, consistent with nutrition standards in national guidelines described in the current United States Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Technical assistance providers that receive funding under this grant opportunity will be responsible for gathering and maintaining documentation pertaining to these requirements.

Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- Wages and associated fringe for time spent directly on the grant project (provide justification for the hourly rate);
- Consultant fees (provide justification for the hourly rate);
- Durable equipment or other items necessary for the project valued at less than \$1,000 each;
- Training and workshop fees for technical assistance recipients;
- Project-related travel; and
- Postage, printing, and telephone expenses related to the project.

In addition, technical assistance providers may request up to 5% or \$2,500, whichever is less, of the total project costs to be used to increase institutional knowledge that is directly related to the assistance that will be provided to technical assistance recipients. For example, a technical assistance provider may provide their staff with the tools to advise clients about produce safety by contracting a workshop with recognized produce safety experts.

Projects must:

- Increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food (including produce) for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date.
- Be completed in three years or less. Contracts cannot be extended beyond three years.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

Expenses may not be incurred until after a grant contract has been fully executed. Successful applicants should anticipate having contracts available to them around **June 2022**. Grant contract agreements will expire approximately three years after the start date of the contract. Expenses may only be incurred during the grant contract period.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Equipment other than those items listed specifically included in the Eligible expenses section
- Expenditures incurred prior to contract execution
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment, and amusement costs
- Donated or volunteer (in-kind) services. While these may be furnished to an applicant by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor, the value of these services is not an eligible cost.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient)
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to comply with federal, state, local, or Native American tribal laws and regulations
- Indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project)
- Fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists and political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, legal costs, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations
- Land rental and purchases
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Matching funds

Sources of the matching funds may include non-state funds (funds that were not obtained through the budgeting process of the Minnesota Legislature or granted by a state agency) in the form of cash, loans, other grants, liquid capital assets dedicated to the project, or in-kind contributions from technical assistance providers.

Matching funds may be received from technical assistance recipients (grocers and small food retailers). For example, if you provide two hours of work to the grocer and normally charge a rate of \$50 per hour, \$75 may be paid for the grant and the remaining \$25 could be paid for by the grocer or provided in-kind by you. You will need to demonstrate how the costs were determined.

Definitions

Retail definitions

Farmers' market – an association of three or more persons who assemble at a defined location that is open to the public for the purpose of selling directly to the consumer the products of a farm or garden occupied and cultivated by the person selling the product.

Food hub – a centrally located facility with a business management structure that facilitates the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, marketing, and sale of locally or regionally produced food products, and which may include a small-scale retail grocery operation.

Grocery store – a for-profit, not-for-profit, or cooperative self-service retail establishment that sells primarily meat, fish, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dry groceries, and dairy products and may also sell household products, sundries, and other products. It includes a supermarket or large-, mid-, or small-scale retail grocery establishment and may include a mobile food market or a delivery service operation.

Mobile food market – a self-contained for-profit, not-for-profit, or cooperative retail grocery operation located in a movable new or renovated truck, bus, or other vehicle that is used to store, prepare, display, and sell primarily meat, fish, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dry groceries, and dairy products and may also be used to sell a nominal supply of cooking utensils and equipment and other household products and sundries.

Small food retailer – a small-scale retail food outlet, other than grocery store, as defined. It includes, but is not limited to, a corner store, convenience store, farmers' market, mobile food market, and a retail food outlet operated by an emergency food program or food hub.

Budget definitions

Cash match – monetary contribution made by the grantee for eligible costs under this grant.

In-kind match – non-cash donated good(s) or service(s) with an associated monetary value that are eligible costs under this program and support grant outcomes. Grantees should keep careful documentation to support amounts of claimed as match and how the value of the service was determined.

Personnel – names and titles of project leaders who will receive a salary from this project.

Supplies – a general list of types of supplies. Justify the purchase of electronic supplies such as phones, computers, and tablets.

Contractual services – any entities outside your organization that will be retained on a temporary basis to work the project or provide a specific service. Include contractor's name and a short description of services to be provided. Provide the flat rate fee or total hourly rate for each contract.

Travel – include anticipated destination, number of trips, purpose of trips, mode of travel, and anticipated cost per trip. Base cost on the current federal rate. Provide justification for out-of-state travel.

Communication – list type of expenses and estimated costs.

Other – eligible expenses that don't fit any of the budget categories.

Application Review Policies

Review process

A review committee, composed of MDA staff and external reviewers, evaluates all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Project Evaluation Profile. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The commissioner of agriculture reviews the committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The review committee and commissioner may use rural/urban, geographic distribution, services to special populations, applicant's history as a state grantee, and capacity to perform the work when making their decisions. The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. Applicants may request a summary of reviewer comments.

Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [Policy 08-01: Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making, 2021 \(Word\)](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the MDA due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under the Good Food Access Program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the Minnesota Data Practices Act as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited to MDA staff and contractors with a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per [MINN. STAT. 13.599](#):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All remaining data in application responses (except for data classified as trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- **Procedure for Claiming Protection of Trade Secrets**
 - Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e. the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

Requirements for Grant Recipients

Pre-award financial review

All non-governmental organizations (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher. All for-profit organizations (including individuals and farms) and the University of Minnesota are excluded from this requirement.

To comply with [Policy 08-06: Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations \(PDF\)](#), you may be asked to submit one of the following documents:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit, should submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 should submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 should submit their most recent certified financial audit.

Accountability and reporting

Grantees will need to identify and report on measures related to increased access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods for approximately 2.5 years. We will send evaluations approximately 18 and 30 months after awarding the grant.

The evaluation will include a request for basic data (e.g., names, locations, and types of technical assistance received) for all retailers receiving basic technical assistance, and surveys to be completed for all retailers that receive in-depth technical assistance. For example, if you conduct a one-day workshop attended by 25 grocers, you will need to supply basic information about those attendees; alternatively, if you provide ongoing one-on-one or small group assistance to five grocers, you will be expected to complete a more robust survey evaluation for those grocers.

Contact us for an example of the in-depth survey tool, which includes the following components:

- Names and locations of retail food businesses that received technical assistance, and the type of technical assistance that they received
- Number of minority-owned or female-owned businesses that received technical assistance
- Leverage dollars
- Collaborations and how they impacted the leverage resources
- Square footage of retail food space
- WIC and SNAP sales (the MDA is generally able to collect this information directly from the Minnesota Department of Health and the United States Department of Agriculture)

- Overall sales of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods (including fresh fruits and vegetables and locally sourced products)
- Jobs created or retained for local and regional residents from low- and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics

Grantees will also be expected to provide high-level data on all technical assistance recipients and report on progress made towards the grantee's objectives and activities at six months after the grant agreement begins and when requesting payment.

Grantees may use grant funding to support evaluation costs while the grant contract is effective (typically until December 31, 2023). Costs of conducting evaluation outside of the contract period are the responsibility of the grantee. Failure to respond to an evaluation request may impact a grantee's likelihood to receive future grants from the MDA.

The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project. Information submitted in any report is a public record. If the grant recipient considers any information in the report to be trade-secret protected, the grant recipient may request that the trade-secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label that information. The MDA shall notify the grant recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed as protected by the grant recipient.

Grant award agreement and payments

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs](#) webpage.

Upon approval of an application and prior to beginning work on the grant project and receiving reimbursements, the applicant is required to do the following:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, and submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification; and
- Complete and submit a [Grant Affidavit for Individuals \(Word\)](#) if receiving a grant as an individual/sole proprietor (i.e. tie grant to your social security number) within 30 days of receipt of the award; and
- Sign a Grant Contract Agreement indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks. The agreement also authorizes the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The grant award document must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties. Applicants should anticipate that grant contracts will expire on December 31, 2023. Grant contracts may not extend beyond three years from the effective date of the contract.

Grant funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. To receive grant payments, grantees must provide proof that grant project work has been done by submitting details of each purchase on receipts or invoices, and proof that the vendors have been paid. Upon completion of the grant project, submission and approval of a final progress report will be required to receive the final payment.

Payroll records will be required to substantiate all personnel costs and invoiced and proofs of payment will be required for all non-personnel costs. Your grant award may be no more than 75% of your total eligible costs.

Site visits and financial reconciliations

The grant agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The MDA will perform a monitoring visit for all grantees with awards of \$25,000 or more before a final payment is approved. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA.

The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one invoice on grants greater than or equal to \$50,000; financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents requested by the state.

Bidding requirements

All funded applicants will be required to abide by the state's bidding requirements for larger purchases. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

Affirmative action and non-discrimination policy

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship ([Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500](#)).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#).

Audits of project

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98](#),

[subd. 8](#)). This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Voter registration requirement

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

GFAP Background and Program Goals

The Good Food Access Program (GFAP) was established to increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, for underserved communities in low-income and moderate-income areas. These goals will be accomplished by providing financial and technical support and supporting sustainable public-private projects to open, renovate, or expand the operations of grocery stores and small food retailers; expanding access to credit and reducing barriers to investment in underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas; and to provide technical assistance, primarily for small food retailers with demonstrated need.

The GFAP Advisory Committee advises the commissioner of agriculture on managing the program, establishing program criteria, establishing project eligibility guidelines, establishing application processes and additional selection criteria, establishing annual monitoring and accountability mechanisms, facilitating leverage of additional public and private investments, and promoting the program statewide. The MDA drafted this RFP in cooperation with the GFAP Advisory Committee.

Project Evaluation Profile

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Score
Demonstrates organizational capacity to successfully implement the project	15
Shows community engagement and support for the project, such as through local, regional, and/or state partnerships	15
Proposed objectives and activities support program goals	15
Include a viable plan for long-term sustainability or technical assistance recipients	10
Details how the project will contribute to the networks of technical assistance available to food retailers in Minnesota	10
Clearly explains source and amount of cash match	10
Detailed how technical assistance recipients will be identified	10
Demonstrates experience providing technical assistance to BIPOC communities and a commitment to these communities	5
Advances Minnesota agriculture (i.e., creates or retains markets for Minnesota grown/raised products)	5
Includes a strong letter of support from at least one retailer who will receive technical assistance under this grant	5
Total	100

GFAP TA Grant Application Questions

Contact information

Applicant information

- Organization Name
- Organization Mailing Address
- Organization Telephone
- Organization Email
- Name of Primary Organization Contact

Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person that will sign the grant contract agreement for this organization.

- Name
- Telephone
- Email

Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements apply to your organization.

- The organization is in good standing with the State of Minnesota. (No back taxes owed, no defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the past seven years, in compliance with current state regulations, and acceptable performance on past MDA grants.) (Yes/No)
- The organization is in Minnesota or authorized to conduct business in Minnesota. (Yes/No)

Please answer each of the following questions.

- Has work started on your proposed project or will work start before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties? The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the start date of the contract. (Yes/No)
- Is anyone involved in the grant project an MDA employee or spouse of an MDA employee? (Yes/No)
- You must respond “Yes” to at least one of these statements to be eligible to apply for this grant.
 - Applicant is a provider of technical assistance. (Yes/No)
 - Applicant is applying on behalf of one or more eligible applicants. (Yes/No)
- I have the authority to apply for this grant based on my relationship with the Applicant Organization. (Yes/No)

- How did you hear about the Good Food Access Program? Please check all that apply:
 - MDA website
 - Word of mouth
 - Notification from another organization (list organization name)
 - Tradeshow (list which tradeshow)
 - I have previously applied
 - Press release
 - Email notification
 - Other

Previous grants

Have you received a previous GFAP grant? (Yes/No)

If yes, briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including date(s) and amount(s) awarded. *(1,000 characters, including spaces)*

Project summary

Describe the project and goals to be accomplished. The summary of this proposed project must be suitable for dissemination to the public. *(1,200 characters, including spaces)*

- Grant Amount Requested
- Applicant Match
- Total Project Costs
- Estimated Start Date (project cannot start until a grant contract agreement is fully executed)
- Estimated Completion Date
- County(ies) Served by Proposal

Business/organization overview

Describe the business(es)/organization(s) capacity to implement the project. Include information such as years of experience providing technical assistance, experience in the food retail environment or working with underserved populations, other experience with food retail businesses, track record of working with communities of color, community partners, organizations strengths, and any other information to demonstrate your organization's ability to execute the project. *(2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Key project partners

List the organizations and collaborators that will be involved in carrying out this project. Include a description of the relevant experience each will bring and what they will contribute. *(2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Geographic area

Describe the areas that you anticipate providing service to through this grant opportunity. At minimum, list the Minnesota counties where the service will be provided. You may be more specific (e.g., Ramsey County with a focus on the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul). *(2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Project proposal

Content

Describe the content of technical assistance that your organization will be able to provide through this grant opportunity. *(5,000 characters, including spaces)*

Identification of retailers

Explain the process that will guide your organization in identifying and selecting grocers and small food retailers to receive technical assistance. See the [Eligible applicants](#) section of the RFP for details on eligible retailers. In addition, explain how newer, less established retailers will be included in your plan. *(2,400 characters, including spaces)*

- Approximately how many retailers do you anticipate serving through this grant-funded project?

Delivery methods

Describe the methods by which your organization will deliver technical assistance (e.g., one-on-one in-person sessions, webinars, or large group presentations). Applicants should use methods that actively engage diverse and remote populations. *(5,000 characters, including spaces)*

Increased capacity

Explain how grant funding will enable your organization to provide free/reduced cost technical assistance to grocers and small food retailers beyond the current capacity. *(2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Objectives, activities, and timeline

Clearly state your project objectives; use statements that specifically describe the number of retailers that you expect to target, what you hope to accomplish, deadlines for accomplishing each activity, and responsible parties. Your project timeline should start no earlier than June 1, 2022. *(10,000 characters, including spaces)*

Example:

- **Objective 1:** *By December 31, 2022, develop succession plans with at least six small food retailers who anticipate retirement in the next three to seven years.*
 - *Activity: In partnership with the MN Grocers Association, identify grocers in target geography that are expecting to retire.*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, Business Transition Specialist (by August 2022)*

Budget

Budget table

Complete the following table to outline the expected costs of your project. See the [Budget Definitions](#) section for detailed descriptions. Payroll records will be required to substantiate all personnel costs and invoiced and proofs of payment will be required for all non-personnel costs. Your grant award may be no more than 75% of your total eligible costs. You may add additional lines or pages as necessary. The online application will have a table for you to download and re-attach to your application.

Category	Total Costs
Personnel	
-Salaries	
-Fringe Benefits	
Non-Personnel	
-Supplies	
-Contracted Services	
-Travel	
-Communications	
-Other	
Total Request	

Budget narrative

Respond to the following prompts. (6,000 characters, including spaces)

- Detail how the funds will be used and justify each expense listed in the Budget Table. Categories are explained in the [Budget Definitions](#) section.
- Explain how the expenses outlined in the Budget Table connect to the project's results.
- Explain how you arrived at the budget estimates.
- Detail the source(s) of current or pending cash match.

Evaluation and learning

Evaluation plan

Do you agree to report on the following measures related to increased access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods for approximately 2.5 years (roughly at 18 and 30 months)? (Yes/No)

- Names and locations of retail food businesses that received technical assistance, and the type of technical assistance that they received
- Number of minority-owned or female-owned businesses that received technical assistance
- Leverage dollars
- Collaborations and how they impacted the leverage resources
- Square footage of retail food space

- WIC and SNAP sales (the MDA is generally able to collect this information directly from the Minnesota Department of Health and the United States Department of Agriculture)
- Overall sales of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods (including fresh fruits and vegetables and locally sourced products)
- Jobs created or retained for local and regional residents from low- and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics including communities of color
- Progress made on each of the objectives identified in the Objectives, Activities, and Timeline sections of your application

Organizational learning

Describe what you anticipate learning about the retail food sector through this project and how you would share this information with partner organizations to grow retail food technical assistance capacity in Minnesota. *(Limit: 2,400 characters, including spaces)*

Letters of support

Applicants must include at least one letter of support from an eligible grocery or small food retailer who would receive technical assistance if the applicant is awarded a grant. Letters of support may also be included from key partners such as national, regional, and community partners that affirm the applicant's ability to successfully implement the project or to validate their partnership in the delivery of technical assistance.