

MN Local Food Purchase Assistance Program

2023 Request for Applications

VERSION 2.0

On May 19, 2023, the language regarding legal eligibility for individual applicants was updated on page 7 of the Request for Applications (RFA) and in the application text (page 20 of the RFA and in the online application).



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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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GRANT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) offers Local Food Purchase Agreement (LFPA) funds to communities to determine for themselves how to develop and/or supplement projects that buy local food, purchase the majority of food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers, and distribute that food to underserved communities. Proposals are expected to encompass a wide range of models for local food procurement and distribution, knowing that there is no one-size-fits-all model that can effectively serve the whole state.

This funding is a short-term economic investment, providing a unique opportunity to build relationships and capacity among stakeholders and the agency. The MDA is making Minnesota LFPA funds available to the public via a grants process, per public feedback gathered in spring 2022. Funding for MN LFPA was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant AM22LFPA0000C045. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The MDA anticipates subawarding approximately \$2.125 million in MN LFPA funding in summer 2023 using a competitive review process. We expect 21 to 40 subawards will be issued, but the final number will depend on the size of awards. The maximum award is \$100,000 and the minimum award is \$10,000. The award will cover projects of any length through September 15, 2024.

MN LFPA applications must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. Central Time on May 30, 2023** to be considered for funding.

We anticipate issuing a second Request for Applications (RFA) in fall 2023 to subaward an additional \$1.035 million in MN LFPA funding. The scope and format of a second RFA may be similar or substantially different from the current version, depending on continued public feedback and on-going program evaluation. Interested applicants can review eligibility criteria and submit applications at that time. The application review process for the second round of funding will prioritize applicants that are not already receiving MN LFPA funds.

LFPA Plus

The MDA may receive additional funding and extend the MN LFPA program timeline. These changes are contingent on the MDA's successful enrollment in the LFPA Plus program. 2023 MN LFPA applicants interested in additional funding (beyond the \$100,000 maximum) after initial grant awards are made must indicate this on their application. LFPA Plus requests are capped at a maximum of an additional \$40,000 for 2023 MN LFPA applicants. These additional funds will be available largely for procurement, storage, and transportation-related expenses.

If the MDA secures LFPA Plus funding, 2023 MN LFPA awardees could choose to extend their project end date through September 15, 2025. Applicants interested in extending their project end date can choose to indicate this either as a part of their application or, if awarded, may submit a request to program staff at a later date. Timelines and requirements for grant reporting, monitoring, and project evaluation are subject to change if project end dates are extended.

LFPA Plus funds must be requested by answering the supplemental questions at the end of the application. Funds will be awarded based on the applicant's original LFPA goals and how additional funds could enhance these goals. If applicable, awardee budgets and workplans will be updated after MDA's LFPA Plus funds are confirmed by USDA. The MDA will request these updates and incorporate them in the 2023 LFPA Grant Contract Agreements or amend them at a later date, depending on timing of the MDA's LFPA Plus confirmation.

Receiving a MN LFPA grant does not guarantee the award of LFPA Plus funds. LFPA Plus funds may allow for more awardees in the 2023 MN LFPA funding cycle, rather than increasing the size of awards. In addition to distributing LFPA Plus funds as part of the 2023 MN LFPA funding cycle, the MDA anticipates pooling LFPA Plus funding received from USDA with remaining MN LFPA funding and making funds available in future funding cycle(s).

PRIORITIES

This grant will prioritize local food procurement from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers. This includes: farmers of color; American Indian or Alaskan Native farmers; women; veterans; farmers with disabilities; young farmers; beginning farmers; and LGBTQ+ farmers. Additionally, this grant prioritizes collaboration within communities around the state and distributing food in the same community as it was grown. This collaboration supports the development or strengthening of relationships within communities. Individual projects do not need to have large-scale geographic reach; however, consideration will be given to the range of awarded projects to ensure that overall distribution of funding impacts different geographic areas across Minnesota. This grant also prioritizes novel food sourcing and distribution outside of the traditional emergency food/hunger relief structures.

Expected outcomes of MN LFPA funded projects include:

- Strengthen local and regional food systems and support local, socially disadvantaged, and emerging farmers/producers through building and expanding economic opportunities.
- Establish and broaden partnerships with farmers/producers and the food distribution community to ensure distribution of fresh and nutritious foods to underserved communities.
- Demonstrate the ability of this one-time investment in community-based projects to:
 - » Create new and lasting market opportunities for farmers and producers, especially those considered socially disadvantaged and emerging.
 - » Create new and lasting distribution networks, especially ones that can bring food to underserved communities.
 - » Create a needs assessment for infrastructure to support local and regional food systems.
- Demonstrate the utility of creating formal agreements with farmers that may support them in accessing loans or financing for their farm business.
- Demonstrate overall effectiveness of grant administration as informed by public engagement and the overall impact on Minnesota communities.

For a complete list of expected grant outcomes, see [Appendix A](#). For information on how MN LFPA grant applications will be evaluated based on these expected outcomes, see the “Application and Evaluation Profile” section of this document.

HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS

All questions must be submitted and received by **11:59 p.m. Central Time on May 23, 2023**. Questions should be submitted by emailing LFPAGrant.MDA@state.mn.us but may be submitted through email, phone, mail, or in-person communication with designated MN LFPA staff. Current designated MN LFPA staff are Valerie Gamble, Lebo Moore, and Alexandra Cortes. Contact information and any changes to designated staff will be posted on [the MN LFPA grant webpage](#).

Responses to all questions regarding the application will be posted on the Question and Answer section of the MN LFPA 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.

Technical assistance with the online application system will be provided until 5:00 p.m. Central Time on the day of the submission deadline by calling 651-201-6290 or emailing LFPAGrant.MDA@state.mn.us

HOW TO APPLY

- Submit your MN Local Food Purchase Assistance Program grant application by **11:59 p.m. Central Time on May 30, 2023** to be considered for funding.
- Applications are preferred to be [submitted online through our grant application system, Foundant](#). We encourage applicants to apply early so that there is ample time to receive technical assistance if needed.
- If you are a new user, you will need to create an account. View [instructions on creating an account](#).
- Request a paper application if needed, by email, phone, or mailed request to the MN LFPA staff listed on the grant webpage. Applications must be postmarked by May 30, 2023 and received by June 13, 2023. Applications postmarked by the correct date, but not received by the two-week deadline will not be considered for funding. The mailing address is:

MN Local Food Purchase Assistance Program
Commissioner’s Office
625 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55155

- When writing your application, use plain, easily understood language. Assume that grant reviewers are generally knowledgeable about community food systems but do not have a thorough or deep understanding of your organization or project.
- Answer all application questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Make sure that the application evaluation criteria are clearly represented in your application. The **Application Evaluation Profile** included in this document will be used to score and compare the grant applications.

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.

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 under any circumstances after the grant deadline.

- Questions due no later than 11:59 pm Central Time (CT).....May 23, 2023
- Cut-off for technical assistance with the online application system at 5:00 pm CT.....May 30, 2023
- Applications due no later than 11:59 pm CT.....May 30, 2023
- Applicants notified of decisions; grant agreement negotiations begin.....July 17, 2023 (estimated)
- Final contract end date.....September 15, 2024

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

We welcome comments on this RFA. The development of this document and program have been informed by public feedback gathered throughout 2022. Additional feedback will be considered in the development of future MN LFPA RFAs and/or program plans. Stakeholder comments can be emailed to LFPAGrant.MDA@state.mn.us or mailed to the address above at any point during 2023.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Individuals (including farmers), non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, tribal nations, government entities, agricultural cooperatives, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and representatives of a community collaboration are eligible to apply. An applicant's legal business entity must be located in Minnesota.

Applicants Must:

Get a Unique Entity ID from the federal [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](https://www.sam.gov) and provide this ID as part of their application. Please note that applicants are not required to register with SAM.gov, only to get a Unique Entity ID if they do not already have one. Getting a Unique Entity ID validates your legal business name and address as an organization or individual. A [instructional video](#) is available if needed.

Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:

- Not have back taxes owed.
- Not have defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the last seven years.
- If applicable, have acceptable performance on past MDA grants.
- Be compliant with current state regulations.

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

If applying as an individual, the applicant must not have been convicted of a criminal offense such as theft, embezzlement, or forgery related to a federal grant agreement within the past three years, or to a state grant agreement at any point in time.

PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Projects must show joint decision-making between partners. A **partner** is a person or organization with whom there is close cooperation in the management of the project. This can include, but is not limited to, a fiscal sponsorship arrangement. Each project will need to designate one applicant (also known as the "lead applicant") that meets the eligible applicant criteria listed above in the "Eligible Applicants" section. The lead applicant will take responsibility for the grant contract and reporting requirements.

If awarded, a lead applicant's partners who will receive funding will be [considered subrecipients of the awardee's funding](#). Leads will need to follow [federal requirements for serving as a pass-through entity](#).

Projects may also involve work with collaborators. A **collaborator** is a person or organization who will help to carry out the project, but who is not involved in managing the project. If awarded, a lead applicant's collaborators who will receive funding will be [considered contractors](#).

Applicants must provide a letter of support from each partner named in the application. The letter(s) must acknowledge the partner's relationship to the applicant and affirm that the partner understands their proposed role in the management of the project.

Socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers may be involved in projects as either partners or collaborators. If a project does not involve one or more **partners** who identify as a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer, an additional letter of support will be required. This letter must be from a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer and acknowledge their intent to supply food as part of the proposed project.

Please see [Appendix B](#) for project examples that describe relationships with partners and collaborators, and [Appendix C](#) for template letters of support. Additional letters of support beyond those requested in this RFA will not be considered or evaluated.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

MN LFPA awards are intended to fund projects that procure food primarily from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers and distribute that food to underserved communities. Awardees will be expected to complete basic grant administration, including invoicing, reporting, and project evaluation. Projects may also include an engagement and outreach component in order to connect with farmers and/or distribution points.

Projects Must:

- Purchase local and regional food, at least 70% of which (by monetary value) must be sourced from within the geographic boundaries of Minnesota. Eligible products include meat, poultry, fruit, vegetables, seafood, dairy, grains, legumes, and wild harvested foods. Food may be unprocessed or minimally processed.
- Source at least 70% of food purchases (by monetary value) from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers.
- Distribute food to communities in Minnesota, at least 75% of which must be underserved communities. Food may be distributed through direct-to-consumer, wholesale, retail, or foodservice. The food must be provided at no cost.
 - » Note: Individuals **cannot** be provided direct funds or voucher systems (e.g., gift cards, coupons) to make individualized purchases. Individuals **cannot** have conditions placed on them to receive the food (i.e., no mandated trainings, classes, or services).
- Include work shared between the applicant organization and at least one partner, as detailed in the [“Partners and Collaborators”](#) section above.
- Offer written, formal agreements to farmers participating in the project. These agreements will establish a plan with farmers and express the grantee’s intent to purchase specific items and quantities from the participating farmers during a particular timeframe. Formal agreements can help farmers establish loans and financial assistance. Grantees will be provided an optional template for these agreements.
- Follow all applicable federal, state, and local regulations regarding food safety, aggregation, procurement, and licensing.
 - » Note: Buying and aggregating food from multiple suppliers may require a food handling license from the MDA.
- If proposing to fund an existing effort, projects must supplement (i.e., increase or expand) existing food procurement and food distribution activities.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date.
- Be completed before September 15, 2024.

Projects May Also:

- Address food safety training and implementation
- Address food waste prevention

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

All project costs must be directly related to approved project activities and be allowable as described in section 8.2 of the [USDA Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\) Grants Division General Terms and Conditions](#). State, local, or Native American tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, colleges, and universities can find further guidance on cost principles in [2 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 200 Subpart E](#). For-profit organizations can find further guidance in [48 CFR Subpart 31.2](#).

Project expenses may fall under any combination of the following broad categories:

| CATEGORY | BUDGET CONSTRAINTS |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Procurement | Minimum 61% of total budget |
| Storage | N/A |
| Transportation | N/A |
| Administration | Maximum 9% of total budget |
| Engagement and Outreach | Maximum 8% of total budget |

Within these categories, eligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Personnel
- Consultant services and contractual costs
- Materials and supplies
- Equipment (limited to lease or rental of general-purpose equipment)
- Travel costs
- Other

For additional information on allowable expenses for all categories please see Appendix D.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred before contract execution
- Acquisition costs of general-purpose equipment or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own, or rent-to-own)
- Production costs, such as food safety certifications, training, seed, crop insurance, or general-purpose development or training
- Live animals
- Food distributed through schools as part of the National School Lunch Program
- Business license and registration costs
- Indirect costs in a sub-grant contract agreement or for any contractor or consultant services as defined at 2 CFR 200.56.
- 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 Indian tribal laws and regulations
- Fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions
- Political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act ([5 United State Code 1501-1508](#) and [7324-7326](#))
- 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
- Unallowable costs as described in Section 8.2 of the [AMS Grants Division General Terms and Conditions](#).

MATCHING FUNDS NOT REQUIRED

- There is no cost-sharing or matching requirement and there is no competitive advantage to applicants that provide a match.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this grant. These terms may have different definitions in other contexts.

Socially disadvantaged farmers

Refers to farmers or ranchers who are a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Emerging farmers

Encompasses several historically underserved communities including women, veterans, persons with disabilities, American Indian/Alaskan Native, communities of color, young and beginning farmers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) farmers. For more on emerging farmers, see the [2022 Emerging Farmers Report \(PDF\)](#) and [Emerging Farmers website](#).

Food waste prevention

Refers to efforts to minimize the overproduction of food, preventing food from going to waste in the field, and/or successfully connecting food to human consumers. Food waste prevention does not include the feeding of food to animals and/or composting.

Local and regional food

Food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same State, territory, or tribal land.

Underserved communities

Refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. This includes Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; LGBTQ+ persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and, persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Unprocessed or minimally processed

Examples of allowable food products include fruits and vegetables (including 100% juices); grain products such as pastas and rice; meats (whole, pieces, or food items such as ground meats); meat alternates such as beans or legumes; and, fluid milk and other dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt. Foods in a wide variety of minimal processing states (e.g., whole, cut, pureed, etc.) and/or forms (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, dried, etc.) are also allowable.

Partner

A person or organization with whom there is close cooperation in the management of the project. This can include, but is not limited to, a fiscal sponsorship arrangement.

Collaborator

A person or organization who will help to carry out the project but who is not involved in managing the project.

GRANT REPORTING, MONITORING, AND PROJECT EVALUATION

Grant reporting and project evaluation are required to process payments and help determine the long-term impacts of the grant. Grantees are required to respond to requests for follow-up information for three years beyond the term of the grant agreement. Failure to respond to these in a timely manner may impact your ability to secure future funding from the MDA.

GRANT REPORTING

What

Quarterly reports, including invoices for food purchasing, staff time, outreach, engagement, etc., and a review of summary data for each year of funding are required by the state of Minnesota and the USDA. These reports will require names and addresses of people or organizations receiving funds. This data is classified as public data. Please see [Appendix E](#) for an example of the information required in each quarterly report.

Why

These reports are required by the USDA and MDA to measure project administration and goals including the total amount of money spent on local food procurement and distribution; total number of farmers supported, including socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers; and, the total number of underserved communities receiving the food.

How

Awardees will submit reports via email. Required templates will be provided by the MDA. MDA staff will be available to answer questions about the template as requested.

When

Reports will be due on the following timeline.

| DUE DATE | REPORTING RANGE | TYPE OF REPORT |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| October 2, 2023 | July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023 | Quarterly report, invoicing, and year-end data verification |
| January 2, 2024 | October 1, 2023 – December 29, 2023 | Quarterly report and invoicing |
| April 1, 2024 | January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024 | Quarterly report and invoicing |
| July 2, 2023 | April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024 | Quarterly report and invoicing |
| October 1, 2024 | July 1, 2024 – September 15, 2024 | Quarterly report, invoicing, and year-end data verification |

GRANT MONITORING

What

A monitoring visit is required for any organization receiving more than \$25,000.

How

These will be conducted in-person when possible and will include a full review of the awardee’s project, including reporting and evaluation.

PROJECT EVALUATION

What

Awardees are required to participate in an overall project evaluation to help the MDA demonstrate the impact of these funds and identify areas for improvement and development. Project evaluation will focus on the following topic areas.

- Evaluation of each awardee’s individual project. For example, directly assessing farmers’ experience, what works well, what additional infrastructure is needed to support this kind of work, what relationships are made because of this funding, how will awardees share project results in their communities, etc.
- Evaluation of how information about the MN LFPA grant should be shared, including the type and kind of data that is available and how it can be accessed.
- Evaluation of the state administration of MN LFPA funds and how well the MDA supports awardees in their individual projects and grant administration.

Why

An evaluation will be conducted to determine the impact LFPA has in communities across Minnesota in a way that can make a case for ongoing funding and development for local food procurement and distribution.

How

Awardees will be required to participate in a project evaluation cohort. This cohort will be managed by MDA staff and will meet a minimum of three times during the grant period.

When

Project evaluation will take place on the following timeline.

| DATE | REPORTING RANGE | FORMAT |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Summer 2023 | Awardee cohort kick-off | Gathering of all awardees to learn about each individual project |
| Winter 2023 | Mid-project check-in | Facilitated discussion with all awardees to learn how projects are evolving For shorter projects that are ending, this will also include a celebration of success and sharing of project summaries |
| Late summer 2024 | Final cohort gathering | Celebration of success and sharing of project summaries with all awardees |

APPLICATION REVIEW POLICIES

REVIEW PROCESS

A review committee, composed of MDA staff and external reviewers, will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Application Evaluation Profile. The MDA reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or request additional information to further clarify or validate application information, provided the application, as submitted, substantially complies with the requirements of this RFA. There is, however, no guarantee the MDA will look for information or clarification outside of the submitted application. Therefore, it is important that all applicants ensure that all sections of their application are complete. An open call for external grant reviewers will be conducted during spring 2023. 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 the level of inclusion of socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers, rural/urban, geographic distribution, services to prioritized 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, per [Minn. Stat.16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making effective date 1/1/22](#).

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. 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 the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data is 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 under Minn. Stat. § 13.643, subd. 1 and 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 found in [Minn. Stat. § 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#). 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 does 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.

All persons, organizations, or corporations applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with [Minn. Stat. § 270C.65, Subd. 3](#), and other applicable law. Under this law, the grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the state, to federal and state tax agencies, and state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring the grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

All grant recipients must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the [USDA AMS Grant Division General Terms and Conditions](#).

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. To comply with [Policy 08-06: Financial Review of non-governmental organizations](#), you may be asked to submit one of the following documents if selected for a grant:

- 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.

All **individual and for-profit businesses** selected for a grant over \$100,000 must submit a Rev-185i or Rev-185b. These forms give the Minnesota Department of Revenue permission to inform the MDA if the grantee owes any back taxes. A recent balance sheet may also be requested from for-profit individuals and organizations.

If a grantee expends more than \$750,000 per year in federal funds, the organization's single audit will be reviewed from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse or provided by the grantee.

GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at [Office of Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms/Forms and FAQs tab](#).

Upon approval of an application and prior to starting work on the grant project(s) 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.
- Submit financial paperwork as necessary for a "Pre-Award Financial Review."
- 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 having a grant contract that will end on or before September 15, 2024.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Grantees must follow the general procurement standards in [2 CFR 200.318](#) and use their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local law and regulations, provided that the requirements conform to applicable federal law and the standards found in [2 CFR 200.302-325](#).

Grantees must have adequate internal controls to assure that federal grant funds are kept separate from other grant funds and general organization expenses and income and have a process for approving expenditures as described in 2 CFR 200.302-303.

Grantees must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.

Grantees must not make subawards or contract with vendors who are included in Minnesota's Suspended/Debarred Vendor Report. Grantees must also verify that sub-awardees have registered in SAM.gov and have maintained an active account.

PAYMENTS

Grantees can request up to 50% of annual funds up-front **each year** of their project, as outlined in their approved budget. **You must indicate in the Budget Section of the application if you are requesting advance funds.** Advance funds must be reconciled within one year of each request. Additional payments will not be made until advanced payments have been accounted for. The MDA reserves the right to not honor requests for initial advanced payments, including if an organization has an existing open grant with the MDA. Note that any cash advance that violates the terms of the grant agreement or does not adequately support the approved project will need to be repaid.

All other 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. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due quarterly or annual reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

SITE VISITS

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 monitoring visits may be conducted at the discretion of the MDA.

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 regarding 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

Per [2 CFR 200.334](#) and [Minn. Stat. 16B.98, subdivision 8](#), 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. 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 to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

VOTER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees. This requirement applies only to government entities and nonprofit organizations.

APPLICATION EVALUATION PROFILE

MN LOCAL FOOD PURCHASE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

| Evaluation Area: Minimum Qualifications (Approval/Denial) | | |
|---|----------|--------|
| CRITERIA | APPROVAL | DENIAL |
| Project partners are identified and a letter of support is included from each. | Present | Absent |
| If no project partners are socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers, a letter of support from a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer collaborator is included. | Present | Absent |
| (If funds are directed to existing programs) Funding will expand or increase those programs. | True | False |

| Evaluation Area: Relationships (40 possible points) | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (10) | MEDIUM SCORE (5) | LOW SCORE (0) |
| How well does the project define the community where the work will happen? | Project defines community AND there is clear alignment between those producing the food and those receiving it | Project defines community but doesn't describe or form alignment between those producing the food and those receiving it | Project doesn't define community |
| How well does the project outline plans for sharing power as part of the proposed project? | Project addresses power dynamics AND names specific actions to change them | Project addresses power dynamics but doesn't name specific actions to change them | Project doesn't address power dynamics |
| How effectively have project partners demonstrated previous work involving sharing of power? | Example provided addresses power dynamics of previous work AND specific actions taken to address them AND lessons learned | Example provided addresses power dynamics of previous work AND specific actions taken to address them | Example provided doesn't address sharing of power in previous work |
| How well has the project demonstrated opportunities for building sustainable relationships within their community? | Project demonstrates how work will strengthen community relationships, support community foods planning, AND identifies how work will create pathways for additional long-term market opportunities | Project demonstrates how work will strengthen community relationships and support community foods planning | Project doesn't demonstrate how work will strengthen community relationships |

| Evaluation Area: Outcomes (30 possible points) | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE | MEDIUM SCORE | LOW SCORE |
| How well does the project demonstrate food purchasing from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers? | Project plans to purchase all or nearly all (90 – 100%) of food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers (15) | Project plans to purchase a great deal (80 – 89%) of food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers (10) | Project plans to purchase 70 – 79% of food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers (5) |
| Does the project establish new sources of food or food products? | Most (75 – 100%) sources of food OR food products in the project are new (5) | Project establishes some (26 – 75%) new sources of food OR food products (3) | Project establishes few (0 – 25%) new sources of food OR food products (1) |
| Does the project distribute food to underserved communities? | Project distributes nearly all the food (95 – 100%) to underserved communities (10) | Project distributes a great deal of food (85 – 94%) to underserved communities (5) | Project distributes 75 – 84% of food to underserved communities (1) |

| Evaluation Area: Food Waste Prevention (5 possible points) | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (5) | MEDIUM SCORE (3) | LOW SCORE (1) |
| How well does the project address food waste prevention? | Project includes planning for food waste prevention during production AND distribution | Project includes planning for food waste prevention during production OR distribution | Project has minimal planning for food waste prevention |

| Evaluation Area: Food Safety (5 possible points) | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (5) | MEDIUM SCORE (3) | LOW SCORE (1) |
| How well does the project address food safety training and implementation? | At least one individual has completed relevant food safety training AND the project has systems in place to monitor and control food safety concerns | At least one individual associated with the project has completed relevant food safety training AND conducts at least one food safety practice relevant to product(s) | Either food safety training OR food safety practice implementation |

| Evaluation Area: Work Plan Timeline (10 possible points) | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (5) | MEDIUM SCORE (3) | LOW SCORE (0) |
| Does the project work plan timeline include key elements related to procurement and distribution? | Project work plan clearly identifies timeline and key activities related to procurement and distribution | Project work plan includes some timing elements and key activities related to procurement and distribution | Project work plan does not include timing elements or key activities related to procurement and distribution |
| Does the project work plan timeline support planned partnerships? | Project work plan clearly supports planned collaborations and places them in context of other key activities | Project work plan includes some elements related to planned collaborations within the context of other key activities | Project work plan does not include activities or timing related to planned collaborations |

Evaluation Area: Budget (10 possible points)

| Evaluation Area: Work Plan Timeline (10 possible points) | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (5) | MEDIUM SCORE (3) | LOW SCORE (0) |
| How well does the project budget explain how planned expenses support the overall LFPA grant program goals? | Project budget clearly Evaluation Area: Budget (10 possible points) explains how all planned expenses support overall LFPA grant goals | Project budget explains how some planned expenses support overall LFPA grant goals | Project budget does not explain how planned expenses support overall LFPA grant goals |
| How well does the project budget explain how requested funds will help meet milestones and goals included in the project timeline? | Project budget clearly explains how requested funds will help meet all milestones and goals included in the project timeline | Project budget explains how funds will help some meet milestones and goals included in the project timeline | Project budget does not explain how funds will help meet milestones and goals included in the project timeline |

MN LFPA Total Maximum Score = 100 points

LFPA PLUS (OPTIONAL)

LFPA Plus funding, if available, will be allocated after MN LFPA decisions are made. An applicant’s request for LFPA Plus funds will not impact the scoring of their MN LPFA application.

| Evaluation Area: LFPA Plus Plans (10 points possible) | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | HIGH SCORE (10) | MEDIUM SCORE (5) | LOW SCORE (0) |
| How well will the additional requested funding support the goals of the LFPA program? | Additional requested funding will clearly support overall LFPA grant goals | Additional requested funding will support some overall LFPA grant goals | Additional requested funding will not support overall LFPA grant goals |

LFPA Plus Total Maximum Score = 10 points

APPLICATION CONTENTS

These questions are provided for your reference. Applicants will answer these questions in the [MDA's online application system](#) or in a paper application (available by request).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

- Applicant name
- Organization name (if applicable)
- For the organization (if applicable), or individual (if not):
 - Mailing Address Telephone Email
 - Unique Entity ID (as assigned by the federal System for Award Management (SAM))

Authorized Representative

If awarded a grant, this person will sign the MN LFPA contract agreement for the organization named above:

- Name
- Title
- Telephone
- Email

Type of Applicant

Please indicate the type of applicant that is applying:

- Individual
- Non-profit organization
- For-profit organization
- City/county/state government
- Tribal nation
- Other: Please describe _____

ELIGIBILITY

Please confirm if the following statements are true:

- The organization is in good standing with the state of Minnesota. (No back taxes are owed, no defaults have occurred on Minnesota state-backed financing for the past seven years, applicant is in compliance with current state regulations, and applicant has had acceptable performance on past MDA grants.) (Yes/No)
- Your organization is located in Minnesota. (Yes/No)
- No one involved in the project or the application for the grant is an employee or spouse of an employee of the MDA. (Yes/No)
- I am applying as an individual (not as a business). (Yes/No)
 - » If yes, I attest that I have not been convicted of a criminal offense such as theft, embezzlement, or forgery related to a federal grant agreement within the past three years, or to a state grant agreement at any point in time. (Yes/No)
- At least 70% of food purchased (by monetary value) will come from within Minnesota. (Yes/No)
- Food will be distributed at no cost, without conditions for the end-users. (Yes/No)
- I understand that the MDA is unable to reimburse any work performed prior to the start date of the contract. (Yes/No)
- The organization applying has a Unique Entity ID and is eligible to receive federal funding by having an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM).

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Grant Request

- Project name
- Total grant funds requested. (Maximum of \$100,000, minimum \$10,000.)
- Expected project start date
 - » Must be after the contract is signed by you and the state of Minnesota.
- Expected project end date
 - » Contracts will end on or before September 15, 2024.
 - » You will have up to one month after your contract end date to submit expenses for reimbursement.
 - » All items and services must be paid for by the end date of the contract.
- Region(s) your project will purchase food from. (Check all that apply.)
 - Northwest Minnesota Northeast Minnesota West Central Minnesota
 - Twin Cities Metro Southwest Minnesota Southeast Minnesota
 - Outside of Minnesota state boundaries, per the definition of local and regional food
- Region(s) your project will distribute food in. (Check all that apply.)
 - Northwest Minnesota Northeast Minnesota West Central Minnesota
 - Twin Cities Metro Southwest Minnesota Southeast Minnesota

Project Description

Projects must purchase and distribute food or facilitate these activities. Provide a brief description of your project outlining what you plan to complete and how you will work with socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers and underserved communities. Limit your description to 1 – 3 sentences. If awarded, this will be used to share information about your project with the public. (500 characters, including spaces)

Project Partners

Partner Roles

List each of the partners involved in this project (including the lead applicant) and provide a 1 – 2 sentence, high level description of each partner’s role in this project. See the “Partners and Collaborators” section of the RFA for a definition of partners. (Max 2,000 characters, including spaces)

Letters of Support

Provide a letter of support from each partner named in the application (not including the lead applicant). The letter should acknowledge the partner’s relationship to the applicant and affirm that the partner understands their proposed role in the management of the project.

If a project does not involve one or more partners who identify as a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer, provide an additional letter of support. This letter must be from a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer and acknowledge their intent to supply food to the applicants and support of the project.

Applicants must also include a letter of support from any contractor that they plan to purchase more than \$10,000 worth of food from.

A letter of support template is in Appendix C.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Existing Work (if applicable)

If your project plans to direct MN LFPA funds to existing sourcing, purchasing, and distribution programs, this funding must be used to expand or increase that work. Please describe how your proposal will expand or increase your existing programs. Examples of potential impacts include but are not limited to increased number of farm businesses, diversification of products purchased, and/or changes to your distribution locations. (Max 1,000 characters, including spaces)

Relationships

Community

How will this project support distribution of food that is produced within the community? Please explain your definition of community. Is it geographic, cultural, etc.? (Max 2,000 characters, including spaces)

Building and Sharing Power

To demonstrate this project's capacity to fulfill the objectives of this grant to work with socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers, please:

Describe steps your project is taking to intentionally build and/or share power with populations that haven't historically had power. This includes the proposal development process to planned execution of the work, decisions about who is involved as project partners, a decision-making process, and models for food distribution outside of the traditional emergency food/hunger relief distribution structures. (Max 2,000 characters, including spaces)

Give an example of previous work completed by project partners to share power within communities and among populations that haven't historically had power. Include lessons learned if applicable. (Max 2,000 characters, including spaces)

Sustainability

What opportunities will this project present for developing long-term local food sourcing, purchasing, and distribution in your community? What relationships, long-term market opportunities, and food distribution networks may be created that can outlast this grant funding? (Max 2,000 characters, including spaces)

Food Waste Prevention

How do you plan to support the prevention of wasted food? Describe any steps taken during production and distribution as applicable. Food waste prevention in this case includes minimizing the overproduction of food, preventing food from going to waste in the field, and/or successfully connecting food to human consumers. Food waste prevention does not include the feeding of food to animals and/or composting. (Max 1,000 characters, including spaces)

Food Safety

Describe how the applicant and/or other partners or collaborators have addressed food safety in relation to this project. Has at least one individual associated with this project completed relevant food safety training? If yes, which training? Describe food safety practices followed and any systems that are in place to monitor and control for food safety. (Max 1,000 characters, including spaces)

OUTCOMES

Please complete the table below to indicate your estimate of who will benefit from your project.

Farm Businesses

Socially disadvantaged and emerging farm businesses include:

- Black
- Latino/Latine
- Hmong/Asian American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Veterans
- African/East African
- Women
- Farmers with disabilities
- Beginning
- Young
- LGBTQ+

Please identify the total number of farm businesses that you plan to work with in this project (including your own if you are a farmer): _____

Please identify the % of all food purchasing funds that will be directed towards farm businesses that identify as socially disadvantaged and emerging: _____ % (minimum 70%)

Of the total number of farm businesses:

- What percent of those farms are new sources of food or new relationships for one or more of the project partners? _____ %
- What percent are providing new food products for one or more of the project partners? _____ %

Food Distribution to Communities

Please identify the total number of distribution locations that this project plans to serve: _____

Please identify the % of the total number of distribution locations that meet the definition of underserved communities _____ % (minimum 75%)

PROJECT PLAN

For purposes of the workplan and budget, a project start date of August 2023 is proposed. The expected project end date is September 15, 2024 or earlier if desired.

Work Plan Timeline

Include a timeline of milestones for your project that states, at a minimum, months and key activities planned. These key activities should relate to overall LFPA program goals for procurement and distribution, including planned partnerships. The timeline will be used to evaluate high level progress of projects. It can be helpful to include discrete, measurable goals, and to allow some space for adjustments in timing.

An optional template, that uses the below formatting, is available in [Appendix F](#). In the below example, the grant project involves buying directly from farmers and distributing food through local community partners over the course of two years. This covers two growing seasons, called seasons one and two here. This is intended to be an example, only, and does not include all milestones needed to complete a project.

| TIMEFRAME | DESCRIPTION OF KEY ACTIVITIES |
|-----------------------|--|
| August 2023 | Confirm available food sources as applicable with farmers for season one |
| August 2023 | Confirm locations for food distribution with community partners |
| September 2023 | Begin season one food procurement and distribution |
| November 2023 | End season one food procurement and distribution |
| December 2023 | Finalize review of purchases for season one |
| February 2024 | Develop purchase agreements with farmers for season two |
| April 2024 | Confirm locations for food distribution with community partners |
| May 2024 | Begin season two food procurement and distribution |

Budget

Include a budget for your project that states, at a minimum, all major planned expenses. If you have costs associated with each of the various budget categories (food procurement, storage, transportation, etc.), costs must be identified with their associated category and each of those costs must be itemized. If you do not have costs in a certain budget category, that category does not need to be included in your budget.

If specific contractors are named in the application as providing more than \$10,000 worth of food, these contractors would need to submit a letter of support for the project.

Please see [Appendix G](#) which includes examples and blank templates available for you to use if helpful.

Annual Project Expenditures

Provide estimated grant project expenditures for each calendar year during the grant period.

- Year 1, summer 2023 to December 2023: (\$) _____
 - » Are you requesting advance funds for Year 1? (Yes/No)
 - » If yes, what percentage of advance funds (up to 50%) are you requesting? (%) _____
- Year 2, January 2024 – September 15, 2024 (if applicable): (\$) _____
 - » Are you requesting advance funds for Year 2? (Yes/No)
 - » If yes, what percentage of advance funds (up to 50%) are you requesting? (%) _____

Budget Narrative

Justify your budget and explain how the stated expenses support the overall project work.

(2,000 characters, including spaces)

- Explain how your planned expenses directly support buying local food, particularly from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers, and distributing it to underserved communities.
- Explain how the costs stated in your budget help you meet the milestones and goals included in your project timeline.

If you would like to request advance funds, please explain your need for upfront funding. (500 characters, including spaces)

LFPA PLUS FUNDS REQUEST

- Would you like to be considered for LFPA Plus funds (beyond the requested amount listed in your application) if the MDA has remaining funds available after initial grant awards are made? Requests for additional funding must be made as a part of your application. (Yes/No)
 - » If yes, how much are you requesting in LFPA Plus funds (up to an additional \$40,000)?
- Would you like to extend your project timeline if given the option? Requests for project extensions may be made either as a part of this application or as an awardee, provided the MDA successfully enrolls in the LFPA Plus program. (Yes/No)
 - » If yes, what is your preferred project end date (on or before September 15, 2025)?

What will these LFPA Plus funds enable you to achieve beyond what you would be able to do with your original MN LFPA request? How would you use these additional funds to target purchases from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers?

(Max 1,000 characters, including spaces)

APPENDIX A

EXPECTED GRANT OUTCOMES

The expected grant outcomes for Minnesota’s LFPA funds are below. The language for these outcomes and indicators was developed by USDA, with the exception of outcome numbers 2b and 4. The estimated numbers for all indicators were supplied by the MDA to USDA following public feedback in spring 2022.

OUTCOME 1: Provide an opportunity for states and tribal organizations to strengthen their local and regional food system and to support local and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers through building and expanding economic opportunities.

| INDICATOR | DESCRIPTION | ESTIMATED DOLLAR | ESTIMATED NUMBER |
|-----------|--|------------------|------------------|
| 1.a. | Total number of local producers/vendors that are expected to participate in the program. | | 140 |
| 1.b. | Of the number in 1.a., the number of producers/vendors that are socially disadvantaged. | | 98 |
| 1.c. | Total dollars expected to be expended to purchase local and regional food through this program. | \$1.95 million | |
| 1.d. | Of the number in 1.c., how many dollars will be expended to purchase food from socially disadvantaged producers/vendors? | \$1.365 million | |

OUTCOME 2: Establish and broaden partnerships with farmers/producers and the food distribution community to ensure distribution of fresh and nutritious foods to underserved communities..

| INDICATOR | DESCRIPTION | ESTIMATED DOLLAR | ESTIMATED NUMBER |
|-----------|--|------------------|------------------|
| 2.a. | Provide an estimate of total number of dollars expected to be expended. | \$1.95 million | |
| 2.b. | Of the numbers in 2.a., provide an estimate of total number of dollars expected to be expended to underserved communities. | \$1,462,500 | |
| 2.c. | Provide an estimate of the number of locations expected to distribute food. | | 30 |
| 2.d. | Of the locations in 2.c., how many do you expect to be to underserved communities? | | 23 |

Outcome 3: Final Report – Program Outcomes

1. Percentage of new marketing opportunities established by purchasing from local and regional farmers/producers, and of those, what percentage will likely be sustained after the funding is expended.
 - a. Goal: 66% of purchases from local and regional farmers/producers will result in new marketing opportunities and 20% of these opportunities will likely be sustained after the funding is expended.
2. Percentage of new marketing opportunities established by purchasing from socially disadvantaged farmers/producers, and of those, what percentage will likely be sustained after the funding is expended.
 - a. Goal: 66% of purchases from socially disadvantaged farmers/producers will result in new marketing opportunities, and 20% will likely be sustained after the funding is expended.
 - b. Goal: 50% of socially disadvantaged farmers have formal agreements established to demonstrate reliable product delivery and financial management.
3. Percentage of purchases distributed beyond current food distribution networks to serve underserved communities, and of those, what percentage will likely be sustained after the funding is expended.
 - a. Goal: 66% of purchases will be distributed beyond current food distribution networks to serve underserved communities, and 20% of purchases for these new distribution networks will likely be sustained after funding is expended.

Outcome 4: Minnesota Program Specific Outcomes

| INDICATOR | DESCRIPTION | ESTIMATED DOLLAR | ESTIMATED NUMBER |
|-----------|--|------------------|------------------|
| 4.a. | Awardees can easily submit reports in a timely and efficient way including their assessment of additional infrastructure needs. | | 170 |
| 4.b. | Quantitative and qualitative data that demonstrates the effectiveness, and shares lessons learned on the process of public engagement. | | 60 |

APPENDIX B

PROJECT EXAMPLES

These examples are intended to help spark ideas about potential projects. They do not address all eligible scenarios. These examples illustrate different ways in which a lead applicant can work with other people or organizations. They also show who may be considered a partner depending on the role(s) they are serving in the project. A partner is a person or organization with whom there is close cooperation in the management of the project. In contrast, a collaborator is a person or organization who will help to carry out the project, but who is not involved in managing the project.

Example 1

An individual farm applies and proposes to work with a healthcare clinic to distribute food. The clinic is a partner as they will be in regular communication with the farmer regarding their food needs, the project budget, and how they will most effectively distribute the food (e.g., desired products, quantities, packaging, delivery schedule) at their drop-in location and during home health visits.

Example 2

A food shelf applies and proposes to act as a distribution site. The food shelf will source from multiple farmers. Some of those farmer suppliers are included as partners in the application because they are helping to recruit additional farmers to the project and making decisions about how the foods will be sourced and transported. Other farmers are collaborators supplying food, rather than partners, and are not named as part of the application.

Example 3

Five farmers propose to work together as partners to aggregate product and distribute boxes of aggregated product to underserved individuals in their community through weekly drop-offs. One farm acts as the lead applicant. The other farmers are partners since they will serve roles related to project promotions, aggregation, and distribution, in addition to supplying food.

Example 4

A school applies and proposes to distribute food through an on-site food shelf and a take-home backpack program. They will source food from farmers that sell to the school's Farm to School program. The school proposes to work with a nonprofit organization, considered a partner on this project, to develop and implement the food distribution services. The farmers supplying the food are considered collaborators in this example.

Example 5

A farmers' market applies and proposes to purchase food from its weekly market vendors. The farmers' market will work with a social services organization, which will manage the food pick-ups, storage, and distribution as part of its programming. This social services organization is considered a partner on this project. The farmers' market vendors are considered collaborators.

Example 6

A hunger relief organization applies and proposes to work with various food shelves as a fiscal sponsor. The food shelves act as partners on this project and will source food from farmers in their respective communities and act as distribution sites. Some of the farmers are also included as partners on this project because they are actively managing food storage and transportation between suppliers.

Example 7

An economic development organization applies to work with a farm technical assistance provider as a partner. When farmers within the technical assistance provider's network have an unplanned surplus of food, the technical assistance provider will help connect the farmer or transport the surplus product to the nearest food shelf that has capacity. The farmers and food shelves are considered collaborators because they are not directly managing any aspects of the project in this example.

APPENDIX C

This appendix is also [available in Google Docs](#).

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Lead applicants must provide a letter of support from each partner named in the application. The letter(s) must acknowledge the partner's relationship to the applicant and affirm that the partner understands their proposed role in the management of the project.

Socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers may be involved in projects as either partners or collaborators. If a project does not involve one or more **partners** who identify as a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer, an additional letter of support will be required. This letter must be from a socially disadvantaged and emerging farmer and acknowledge their intent to supply food as part of the proposed project.

Additional letters of support beyond those requested in the RFA will not be considered or evaluated.

PARTNER LETTER – OPTIONAL TEMPLATE

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [Grant applicant's name],

I am writing to express [Name of letter writer's organization/business/entity]'s support for [Grant lead applicant's name]'s proposed MN Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program project, titled "[Name of grant project]". My [Organization/business/entity] is happy to be an active partner on this project, because of our work in [Background on the organization/business/entity illustrating connections to the grant project work].

[Brief description of the grant project, main deliverables, and the project's relation to the LFPA program goals to procure food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers and distribute that food to underserved communities.] As a partner on this project, we anticipate managing [Aspect(s) of project work such as: engagement, outreach, financial oversight or sponsorship, storage, transportation, farmer networking] with [Name of additional partner(s)].

[Statement of commitment from the supporting organization/business/entity.]

(If applicable) As an emerging or socially disadvantaged farmer, this project will support my [Farm/business/family] by allowing me to [Outcomes such as: produce food for my community/expand my markets/trial new products/establish new relationships, etc.].

This project directly complements the work [Name of lead applicant organization/business/entity] is doing with MN communities, and [Name of letter writer's organization/business/entity] strongly supports this proposal. This work will strengthen local and regional food procurement, build new connections between suppliers and those in need of food, and support community collaboration throughout the state.

Respectfully,

SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED AND EMERGING FARMER LETTER – OPTIONAL TEMPLATE

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [Grant applicant's name],

I am writing to express [Name of letter writer's farm name, or personal name if no farm name]'s support for [Grant applicant's name]'s proposed MN Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program project, titled "[Name of grant project]". My [Farm/organization/business/entity] is happy to be a collaborator on this project and support this work by providing food to [Grant applicant] for further distribution to underserved populations.

[Brief description of the grant project, main deliverables, and the project's relation to the LFPA program goals to procure food from socially disadvantaged and emerging farmers and distribute that food to underserved communities.]

I look forward to [Growing/raising] and supplying [Types of food products] over [Time period] for this project. As an emerging or socially disadvantaged farmer, this project will support my [Farm/business/family] by allowing me to [Outcomes such as: produce food for my community/expand my markets/trial new products/establish new relationships, etc.].

Respectfully,

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ALLOWED EXPENSES

| TABLE 1: Expense examples | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Category/Expense Type and Purpose | Budget Constraints | Activities |
| Procurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenses for food Food procurement contracts | Minimum 61% of total budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buying eligible food products such as ground meat, honey, vegetables, milk, grains from farmers, food hubs, etc. |
| Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food storage contracts | NA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding produce at a local food hub before distribution Paying rent to a community center for use of their controlled access walk-in cooler for storage of meat and milk |
| Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food distribution contracts | NA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating with a local farm for delivery to a food shelf Contracting with a trucking company to move frozen chicken from a farm to a food drop location |
| Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel, to off-set cost of managing grant award including budgeting, work planning, reporting, and technical assistance Travel costs Materials and supplies Consultant services | Maximum 9% of total budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with farms to set up purchase agreements, process invoices, coordinate delivery of food, and collect data for the quarterly report Process paperwork for the grant, including the quarterly template report and invoices Participate in the awardee cohort for project evaluation Communicate with distribution sites about the logistics of food delivery and collecting data for quarterly reporting Mileage for staff participating in awardee cohort for project evaluation Boxes to support distribution of products (this does not include boxes used in production) |
| Engagement and Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel, to build relationships within a community to strengthen ability to purchase from socially disadvantaged farmers and distribute to underserved communities, promote LFPA project, and/or contribute to long-term community food system development Travel costs Other | Maximum 8% of total budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet farmers to talk about their interests and what they would need to successfully sell food to you Plan and host a community meeting (including space rental) to get feedback on how food should be distributed to best meet the needs of your community Share the impact of your project with a community audience such as your local economic development center Mileage for staff to attend a community meeting to promote your project Printing and publication costs for materials designed to share about the impact of your project |

CLARIFICATION OF ALLOWABLE EXPENSE AREAS

Personnel

Includes personnel services in proportion to the amount of time or effort an employee devotes to the grant-supported project.

- Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits incurred under formally established practices of the organization must be consistently applied, reasonable for the service rendered, and supported with adequate documentation.
- Personnel costs may be considered an administration or an engagement and outreach expense, but cannot be considered a transportation, storage, or procurement expense. As an example, if staff are spending time transporting product, that time should be considered an administration related expense. Costs associated with the actual transportation, e.g., gas or mileage, should be considered a transportation expense.

Consultant services and contractual costs

Includes professional and consultant services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant that is in a particular profession or with a special skill. Also included in this category are contractual expenses associated with purchasing goods. These expenses are procured through a contract.

- Compensation for contractor or consultant services should be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace. Contractor and consultant rates must not exceed \$82.65 per hour (not including other allowable expenses such as travel).
- Procurement standards for goods and services – grantees must use their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the requirements conform to applicable federal law and the standards found in 2 CFR 200.317-326.
- Any subcontract must be a written agreement between the grantee and the third party. The contract must, as appropriate, state the activities to be performed; the time schedule, the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor, including those required by 2 CFR 200.326 and other terms and conditions of the grant (these may be incorporated by reference); the maximum amount of money for which the grantee may become liable to the third party under the agreement; and the cost principles to be used in determining allowable costs in the cast of cost-type contracts.

Materials and supplies

Purchased materials and supplies must be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Computing devices, if the acquisition cost is less than \$5,000 and is essential and allocable to the performance of the grant project, are allowable.

Equipment

The definition of equipment includes tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equal or exceeds \$5,000 per unit.

- Only lease or rental of general-purpose equipment is allowable, and the agreement must end at the end of the grant cycle. General purpose equipment means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples includes office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
- Website development, mobile apps, etc., that are not considered to be information technology systems, but rather social media applications, are allowable.
- Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR 200.313.

Travel costs

Includes domestic airfare, lodging, meals, mileage, parking, etc. if these costs are necessary for grant activities.

- Grantees must follow their formal organizational policy to limit these costs, as long as the travel policies are in accordance with 2 CFR 200.474 or 48 CFR subpart 31.2 as applicable. If a grantee does not have formal travel policies or is a for-profit entity, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) issued by the General Service Administration, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. In the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares.

Other

Includes, but is not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publications costs, data collection, and participant support costs including stipends or gift cards to participants that complete a project survey or take part in a focus group.

- These costs need to be reasonable and justifiable, and some need prior approval (inclusion in the application).
- Meeting meals cannot be associated with entertainment and not included in a per diem travel cost.
- Publication costs are the costs of printing and publishing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and soft copy publications relating to the project.

Reimbursement Process

If awarded a grant, you will learn how to submit for reimbursement of your expenses. A general overview of the reimbursement process is available in the [MDA Reimbursement Guide](#). We are sharing this guide for general applicant awareness. MN Local Food Purchase Assistance grantees will have a specific template for submitting reimbursements.

APPENDIX E: Quarterly report example

This appendix is [available in Excel](#).

APPENDIX G

This appendix is also [available in Excel](#) and [Google Docs](#).

BUDGET EXAMPLE AND OPTIONAL TEMPLATE

Example

The following example is intended to assist in planning your budget. The first table shows an overall budget that meets the maximum and minimum requirements where applicable. The second table shows an itemized budget with costs in each category.

In this example, the grant project involves buying directly from farmers and distributing food through local community partners over the course of one year. This is intended to be an example, only, and does not include all budget items needed to complete a project.

| CATEGORY | RESTRICTION | TOTAL COST ESTIMATES | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Procurement | 61% minimum | \$8,125.00 | 81 |
| Food Storage | None | \$120.00 | 1 |
| Food Transportation | None | \$130 | 1 |
| Administration | 9% maximum | \$875 | 9 |
| Engagement and Outreach | 8% maximum | \$800 | 8 |
| TOTAL | | \$10,050.00 | 100 |

| CATEGORY | QTY | COST PER UNIT | UNIT MEASURE | TOTAL COST ESTIMATE | |
|--|------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Food Procurement | | | | | |
| Food purchase- Farm A | 2500 | \$3.25 | heads | \$8,125 | Farm A owner |
| Food Storage | | | | | |
| Warehouse space | 12 | \$10.00 | days | \$120 | Organization A |
| Food Transportation | | | | | |
| Mileage for food distribution | 200 | \$.65 | miles | \$130 | Organization A owner |
| Administration | | | | | |
| Staff time on paperwork processing | 35 | \$25.00 | hours | \$875 | Applicant organization |
| Outreach and Engagement | | | | | |
| Host community meeting about food distribution locations | 2 | \$400 | hours | \$800 | Community Center |
| Total cost | | | | \$10,050 | |

OPTIONAL BUDGET TEMPLATE

The following blank Microsoft Word template is available for use if helpful. An Excel version is also available which includes formulas to track that your budget meets the maximum and minimum requirements in each spending category. Applicants may use their own template and formatting to submit a budget if preferred; these are optional.

If you have costs associated with each of the various budget categories (food procurement, storage, transportation, etc.), costs must be identified with their associated category and each of these costs must be itemized. If you do not have costs in a certain budget category, that category does not need to be included.

| CATEGORY | RESTRICTION | TOTAL COST ESTIMATES | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Procurement | 61% minimum | \$ | |
| Food Storage | None | \$ | |
| Food Transportation | None | \$ | |
| Administration | 9% maximum | \$ | |
| Engagement and Outreach | 8% maximum | \$ | |
| TOTAL | | \$ | |

| CATEGORY | QTY | COST PER UNIT | UNIT MEASURE | TOTAL COST ESTIMATE | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------------|--------------|---------------------|--|
| Food Procurement | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Food Storage | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Food Transportation | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Administration | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Outreach and Engagement | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Total cost | | | | | |

- Quantity can be an identified number of items, number of pounds, number of staff hours, etc.
- Cost per unit could be a dollar amount per pound, per bunch, per item, or dollar amount per staff hour, etc.