



Info Session: MN Local Food Purchase Assistance Program

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Agenda

- Welcome
- Privacy notice
- Program background
- Request for Proposals (RFP) overview
- Application and submission instructions
- Application evaluation
- Questions

Privacy notice

- Please be aware that the MDA is recording this session and plans to keep a copy of the recording for approximately two months.
- Under state law, the recording of this public session will be available to anyone who asks to see it. It will also be posted on the MDA website.



General session overview

- Staff introductions
- Presenting the highlights from the Request for Proposals
- Questions
 - Put questions in the chat as they come up during the presentation
 - Open Q&A after staff presentation
 - Will do our best! All Q&A will be posted to the website
 - Questions can be submitted through 9:00 a.m. Central Time on May 13, 2024

Program background

- MN Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) funding made possible by a cooperative agreement from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
- Application available to states, tribal nations, and territories in spring 2022
- Developed MDA's application to USDA following conversations with the MDA Emerging Farmers Working Group and public input sessions
- Proposed that funding be available through a grant program for the public



Program implementation history

- Initial call for proposals released spring 2023
- \$3.53 million awarded; list of grantees available on our website
- Current call for proposals is Round 2

Grant program purpose

- Fund projects that:
 - Buy local food, primarily from socially disadvantaged farmers
 - Distribute food **at no cost** to underserved communities throughout the state
- A majority of grant funding is dedicated to food procurement costs so that food can then be provided at no cost to the end users



Priorities

- Local food procurement from socially disadvantaged farmers
 - This includes: farmers of color; American Indian or Alaskan Native farmers; women; farmers with disabilities; and LGBTQIA+ farmers. Full definition in RFP (page 10).
- Collaboration within communities around the state and distributing food in the same community as it was grown
- Novel food sourcing and distribution outside of the traditional emergency food/hunger relief structures
- Consideration given to the range of awarded projects to ensure that overall distribution of funding impacts different geographic areas across Minnesota

Funding availability

- Approximately \$3.1 million available this funding cycle
- Projects can run through September 14, 2025
- Maximum award \$125,000; minimum award \$20,000



Timelines and deadlines

Event	Date and Time
Questions due	May 13, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.
Online application system & budget template technical assistance cut-off	May 20, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
Applications due	May 20, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.
Applications notified, grant agreement negotiations begin	June 25, 2024 (estimated)
Final contract end date	September 14, 2025

Eligibility

- Funding is issued in the form of federal subawards.
 - Grantees and projects must comply with all applicable federal and state regulations related to grants, including aspects of the Code of Federal Regulations and the USDA AMS Grants Division Terms and Conditions
 - Must have financial management systems in place to keep federal grant funds separate from other grant funds, and account for grant expenditures
- Eligible entities: 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
- Additional requirements for applicant:
 - Legal business entity must be located in Minnesota
 - Have or be in the process of getting a Unique Entity ID from the federal System for Award Management
 - Validates your legal business name and address as an organization or individual
 - Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota

See page 4 of the RFP



Eligible projects

Requirements include:

- Sourcing at least 70% of food from within the geographic boundaries of Minnesota
 - Food may be unprocessed or minimally processed. Includes fruit, vegetables, seafood, dairy, grains, legumes, wild harvested foods, poultry, and certain cuts of meat.
- Sourcing at least 70% of food from socially disadvantaged farmers
- Distributing food at no cost to communities in MN, at least 75% of which must be underserved
- Have involved others in the project planning and proposal development
- Offering written, formal agreements to farmers participating in the project
- If proposing to fund an existing effort, increasing or expanding those activities

See pages 4 - 5 of the RFP



Working with others

- Project planning and proposal development
 - Lead applicant must have engaged others in the planning of their project
 - Examples: farmers, businesses, organizations, food recipients
 - At least one socially disadvantaged farmer must be involved in the project planning
 - Evaluation component for the application: sharing of power during the project planning, and if/how the project meets collaboratively identified needs

See page 5 of the RFP



Budgets and execution of awarded projects

- Work with others and power sharing may look different compared to project planning
- Two types of financial relationships within federal grants
 - Contractors: for buying of goods and services
 - Subrecipients: when delegating project management
- Have option to work with a subrecipient(s), but not a requirement. Projects can be conducted entirely with contractors as applicable.



See pages 5- 6 of the RFP and the Code of Federal Regulations

Letters of Support

- Project planning
 - Letters required from others involved. At least one letter must be from a socially disadvantaged farmer involved (unless the lead applicant identifies as a socially disadvantaged farmer and otherwise indicates that in the application).
- Farmers/food suppliers:
 - Letter(s) required from any farmer/food supplier (e.g. a food hub) that is proposed in the budget to supply \$10,000 or more of eligible food products.
- Subrecipients:
 - Letters required from any proposed subrecipient (IF subrecipients are being proposed).

Budget categories

Category	Budget constraints
Food Procurement	Minimum 65% of total budget
Food Storage	N/A
Food Transportation	N/A
Supporting Expenses	Maximum 15% of total budget

- All costs must be
 - reasonable, necessary, justifiable, and directly related to the project (except for the indirect cost rate, if applicable)
 - allowable as described in section 8.0 of the [USDA AMS Grants Division Terms and Conditions](#)

See page 7 of the RFP

Food procurement

Budget Category	Budget Constraints	Types of Expenses	Example Activities
Food Procurement	Minimum 65.00% of total budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food procurement contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Buying eligible food products from farmers, food hubs, etc.

Food storage

Budget Category	Budget Constraints	Types of Expenses	Example Activities
Food Storage	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food storage contracts• Materials and supplies directly related to food storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renting space at a local food hub or community center for storage or packing of food• Boxes to support distribution of products (this does not include boxes used in production)

- Must be attributable as a direct expense and during the time period when storage of LFPA-funded foods is actually taking place.
- Overhead expenses (i.e. facilities and administrative costs) should be included as part of an indirect rate, if at all.

Food transportation

Budget Category	Budget Constraints	Types of Expenses	Example Activities
Food Transportation	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food distribution contracts• Travel costs associated with food transportation• Rental costs of transportation-related equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contracting with a trucking company to move food from a farm to a food drop location• Delivery expenses charged by a farmer as a separate line item than food costs• Mileage expenses related to food transportation• Vehicle rental for food transportation

Supporting expenses

Budget Category	Budget Constraints	Types of Expenses	Example Activities
Supporting Expenses	Maximum 15% of total budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel – includes salary and wages for lead applicant staff Travel – includes lodging, parking, mileage, etc. for lead applicant staff Subawards to subrecipients for other services (not directly related to food procurement, food storage, or food transportation) Other – materials, supplies, equipment rentals, printing, other contractual expenses, etc. Indirect Expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time for the lead applicant organization to make arrangements with farmers / distribution sites, and compile grant reporting Renting event space to host a mid-project check-in with participating farmers Mileage for staff to drive to community meetings to promote LFPA food distribution events

- *See pages 7 – 8 of the RFP*
- *Required budget template in Appendix C*

Ineligible expenses

- Acquisition costs of general purpose equipment or lease agreements (i.e. lease-to-own or rent-to-own)
- Production costs
 - Examples: food safety certifications, training, seed, crop insurance, general purpose development or training
- Foods considered “fully processed”. Includes, but not limited to:
 - Bacon, ham/ham hocks, kimchi, jam, tortillas, breads, prepared meals
- Live animals
- Expenses associated with educational sessions (e.g. cooking demos) for food recipients
- Farm tours conducted for purpose of relationship development between farmers and food recipients
- Business license and registration costs

See page 9 of the RFP



Payments

- Payments will be made to grantees as reimbursements on a quarterly basis
 - Grantees submit reimbursement requests as a part of the quarterly grant reporting
 - Should be prepared to submit proof of purchase and proof of payment for all expenses
- Applicants must indicate in the application if they are requesting advance funds
 - Applicants can request up to 50% of their yearly project budget to be issued via advances
 - The MDA reserves the right to not honor requests for advance payments. Applicants must have an operating and financial history in order to be assessed for advance payments.

See pages 16-17 of the RFP

Grant reporting and project evaluation

- Grantees required to submit quarterly reports on data and expenses and assist in year-end data verification
 - Reports will include details about the farmers providing food, and where food is being distributed
- Additional project evaluation will help the MDA demonstrate the impact of these funds
 - Grantees will participate in an evaluation cohort that meets three times

See pages 11-12 of the RFP

Additional requirements for grant recipients

- Pre-award risk assessment
 - Includes review of applicant's financial documentation
- Monitoring visits
- Additional administrative requirements

See pages 15-17 of the RFP

Connections directory

- Looking for others to work with?
- Advertise your services or needs through an [online directory form](#)
- [Responses](#) are publicly viewable and automatically updated



Application and submission instructions

- Applications due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on May 20, 2024
 - Preferred to be submitted online
- Instructions and TA available for online application system, through 5:00 p.m. on the application deadline
- Online system allows you to save and come back to your application later
- Character limits are automatically enforced and include spaces
- Applicants will receive an automated confirmation email after submitting an application

Application sections

The application asks for:

- Contact information
- Eligibility confirmation
- Project overview
 - Grant request and project description
- Project narrative. Short and long form questions about:
 - Relationships and context – existing work, community, building and sharing power, long-term sustainability, letters of support
 - Food waste prevention
 - Food safety



Application sections continued

- Outcomes
 - Metrics regarding impacted farm businesses and communities receiving food
- Project plan
 - Work plan timeline
 - Budget
- Advances (if requesting)

See pages 21 – 25 of the RFP

Application tools

- Required template provided for budget – Appendix C
 - Google Sheets and Excel versions available
- Optional templates available via Google Docs for:
 - Letters of support – Appendix B. Project planning and socially disadvantaged farmer support template; socially disadvantaged farmer supplier template.
 - Work plan – Appendix E. Submitted work plans that use other formatting must have the elements included on the MDA template.

Proposal review and selection process

- Competitive application process
- Review committee will score all applications submitted by May 20, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.
- MDA Commissioner reviews committee recommendations and is responsible for final award recommendations. Recommended applicants are subject to approval by the USDA.
- Decision making process may include:
 - Review committee scores
 - Level of inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers
 - Rural/urban and other geographic distribution
 - Services to prioritized populations
 - Applicant's history as a state grantee (including status as a current LFPA grantee)
 - Capacity to perform the work

Evaluation criteria

- Numerical scoring system used
 - Previous LFPA grantee status – yes (0 points), no (15 points)
- Other questions tiered by high/medium/low scores
 - Relationships and context - six questions, up to 36 points total
 - Outcomes – four questions, up to 24 points total
 - Food waste prevention – one question, up to 5 points total
 - Food safety – one question, up to 5 points total
 - Work plan – one questions, up to 5 points total
 - Budget – one question, up to 10 points total

Total max points of 100

See pages 18 – 20 of the RFP

Questions?

Please put your name or question in the chat

MN Local Food Purchase Assistance Program

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