



# **Farm to Food Security Grant Program Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Request for Proposal (RFP)**

**Applications due by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

02/19/2026

Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
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# Grant Summary

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## Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications from individuals, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, Tribal governments, government entities, agricultural cooperatives, economic development organizations, and educational institutions for the Fiscal Years (FYs) 2026 and 2027 Farm to Food Security (F2FS) Grant. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Information about the program is available on the [Farm to Food Security Grant Program](#) webpage.

The Minnesota Legislature created the Farm to Food Security Grant Program to purchase food grown and raised in Minnesota and distribute it for free with people facing food insecurity, especially those not served by traditional emergency food systems. This state-funded program, launched in 2025, is based on the former federal Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) grant program but has a new name to set it apart. This new program was established during the 2025 Regular Legislative Session through [Laws of Minnesota, 2025, Regular Session, Chapter 34, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 4\(s\)](#). Additional program details are outlined in Article 3, Sec. 35.

## Funding availability

We expect to award approximately \$1.295 million using a competitive review process. The maximum award is \$100,000, and the minimum is \$20,000.

We expect to award between 15 and 40 grants; however, the final number depends on the size of the awards and will be determined through the proposal review processes.

## Match requirement

Match requirements vary based on the amount requested.

### Grant requests under \$50,000

Grant applicants who request less than \$50,000 are not required to provide any matching funds.

### Grant requests of \$50,000 or more

Grant applicants who request \$50,000 or more must provide a 1:1 match on all funds over \$50,000. For example, if an applicant requests maximum amount of \$100,000, they must provide \$50,000 in matching funds and their total project costs must be at least \$150,000.

You must provide documentation for the total cost of the project to receive the awarded reimbursement amount. Sources of the matching funds can be cash, loans, other grants, or liquid capital assets dedicated to the project. Grant funds awarded by the MDA or another state agency cannot be used as matching funds. Non-cash, in-kind matches of goods and services are not allowable.

## Timeline and deadlines

<b>February 19, 2026</b>	RFP posted on the MDA website.
<b>Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 4 p.m. CT</b>	Deadline to ask grant program questions.
<b>Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 4 p.m. CT</b>	Applications due.
<b>April 2026</b>	Phase one of the review process.
<b>May 2026</b>	Phase two of the review process (pre-award risk assessments).
<b>June-July 2026</b>	Applicants notified of award decisions.
<b>July 2026</b>	Expected project start date.
<b>September 2026</b>	Grantees publicly announced.
<b>June 30, 2028</b>	Latest possible project end date.

We expect most grant contract agreements to start on July 1, 2026. Applicants should anticipate that grant contracts will expire on June 30, 2028 and may not be extended.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the grant has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the state's authorized representative that they may begin work.

## Priorities

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

The Department of Administration Office of Grants Management [OGM] [Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally show how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities. Applicants with projects that are led by, impact, or serve Native American Tribal communities are encouraged to apply.

The scoring criteria of this grant program include priority points for projects that:

- Source 100% of food from Minnesota farmers and producers.
- Source at least 70% of food from farmers with limited land access or limited market access ([MINN. STAT. 17.133, subd. 1](#)). See the [Definitions](#) section for more information.

Additionally, the scoring criteria gives preference to projects that:

- Offer written, purchasing formal agreements or contracts 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.
- Provide technical assistance to support farmers participating in the project (e.g., providing guidance to farmers to improve invoicing and tracking systems to help meet program requirements, providing training on food safety to better serve food security and other wholesale market channels)
- Demonstrate strong connections to individuals whose needs are not met through the traditional emergency food system and include a sound distribution plan to meet the needs of those individuals.
- Plan to purchase a variety of agricultural products, including culturally relevant foods, specialty crops, meat, poultry, and value-added foods.
- Plan to purchase from a variety of producers and sources, including individual producers, emerging farmers, farmers' markets, and food hubs and distributors.

These priorities and the desired impacts/outcomes of grant projects are reflected in the [Project Evaluation Profile](#), which describes the scoring criteria and weight that will be used by reviewers to evaluate your application.

## How to apply

Applications must be received no later than **4 p.m. CT on Tuesday, March 31, 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

- Apply using our [online application system](#).
  - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first. Use this [how-to guide \(PDF\)](#) to help set up your account.
  - Once logged in, select "FY26-27 Farm to Food Security Grant."
  - After you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Contact [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) if you do not receive this email.
- Apply early so there is enough time to get help with the online application system if needed. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500, or
- Email [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) with "Farm to Food Security Grant Online Application Help" in the subject line. We encourage reaching out for help early as we may not be able to assist with last-minute requests.

We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP; these materials will not be considered nor evaluated. The MDA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the requirements of this RFP.

By applying, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.

The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with submitting a response to this RFP.

## How to submit questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on Tuesday, March 24, 2026**.
- Email [MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us) with “Farm to Food Security Grant Question” in the subject line.

The MDA will post responses to program questions on the [Questions and Answers \(Q&A\)](#) section of the Farm to Food Security Grant Program webpage as we receive them.

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

## Application guidelines

- Use plain, easily understood language. Write for reviewers who have general knowledge but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your organization or community.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Although some questions are labeled as optional, we strongly recommend responding to those questions or uploading the appropriate documents.
- Ensure your application is your own, unique proposal designed to respond to the RFP, including letters of support, letters of commitment, and memorandums of understanding.
- Make your budget realistic, include only eligible items, and clearly explain how the money will be spent. Include expenses covered directly by the grant and by any required matching funds.
- Review the Project Evaluation Profile included in this RFP, as it is used to score and compare grant applications.

# Eligibility

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## Eligible applicants

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must:

- Be an individual, nonprofit organization, for-profit business, Tribal government, government entity, agricultural cooperative, economic development organization, or an educational institution.
- Authorized to do business in Minnesota.
- Meet the requirements of the [Pre-award Risk Assessment](#).

Examples of applicants include but are not limited to:

- Local and statewide food access organizations and food shelves
- Farmers markets or cooperatives
- Farmers and food businesses with capacity to distribute food
- Universities, colleges, and other educational institutions
- Hospitals, clinics, or other health organizations
- Municipal or county government entities
- Tribal governments or Tribal entities

Schools, early care providers, and senior care providers are eligible, but should see the [Eligible Food Distribution](#) section, because Farm to Food Security grant funds are not intended to be used to supplement food distributed as part of meal programs reimbursed by the state or federal governments.

MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners are not eligible applicants and are not eligible to receive funds from this grant program. In the application, applicants must also disclose the names and roles of any MDA employees or their spouses/domestic partners who are part of their organization's leadership, board of directors, or governing body.

Applicants should review the [Conflicts of Interest](#) section prior to applying. The selected grantee must agree to these rules as a part of signing their grant contract agreement.

## Eligible projects

Farm to Food Security grants are intended to fund projects that purchase food grown and raised in Minnesota and distribute that food at no cost to Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity. Eligible projects will:

- Purchase foods grown and raised in Minnesota, including whole (unprocessed), minimally processed, and processed items (see [Eligible Food Expenses](#) section).
- Distribute food to Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity.
  - Note: Individuals **cannot** be given 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 (e.g., no mandated training, classes, or services). Any real or perceived obstacles to receiving food at distributions should be avoided (e.g., “pay what you can” or “suggested donation” models).
- Follow all applicable federal, state, Tribal, and local regulations regarding food safety, aggregation, procurement, and licensing; and have a clear system in place to monitor and control food safety risks.
  - Note: Buying and aggregating food from multiple suppliers may require a food handling license from the MDA.
- Be completed before June 30, 2028. Contracts cannot be extended beyond that date.

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- A local food shelf buying food produced by farmers in their county and distributing the food as part of their weekly distribution events.
- A regional hospital establishing a “produce prescription” program to purchase local foods and deliver them to families in need and individuals suffering from chronic illnesses.
- A Tribal government buying traditional foods grown by Tribal members and distributing the foods to elders.
- A farmers’ market implementing a food recovery program to pay farmers for products left at the end of the market and distributing them through a partnership with a local food shelf.

## Eligible food distribution

All food distributions must take place in Minnesota.

Grantees may determine how best to distribute the food according to the needs of their communities. Grantees should have a clear plan for ensuring that food is distributed to individuals and families with need. Eligible distribution locations may include food banks and food shelves (including those that participate in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)), other community-based resources, or through institutions such as schools, early childcare centers, and senior centers.

While grants may distribute food through schools, early care providers, and senior care providers, the food is not intended to be used in or supplement food distributed as part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), or other meal program reimbursed by the state or federal governments. The [MDA AGRI Farm to School and Early Care Grant Programs](#) support Minnesota school districts, early childhood education (ECE) centers, and family child care providers that want to buy and serve Minnesota agricultural products as a supplement to these programs.

## Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses are costs directly related to the project.



## Eligible food expenses

Food funds must be spent on foods grown and raised in Minnesota that will be distributed in Minnesota to individuals whose needs are not met through the traditional emergency food network. Local foods bought via food hubs, distributors, farmers' markets, and aggregators must be grown, raised, or produced in Minnesota. Vendors may not be charged a fee for participating in the program.

Eligible food items include whole (unprocessed), minimally processed, and processed items that meet the following criteria (see Definitions section).

- **Whole (unprocessed) or minimally processed foods** that are at least 80% grown or raised in Minnesota and retain their inherent character according to our definition of “unprocessed or minimally processed foods.” Eligible unprocessed or minimally processed items may include but are not limited to:
  - Fruits
  - Vegetables
  - Herbs
  - Meat, fish, and poultry
  - Dairy (including fluid milk)
  - Eggs
  - Legumes
  - Grains
  - Maple syrup and honey
- **Processed foods** with at least one primary ingredient (excluding water) that is 80% grown or raised in Minnesota. Examples of processed food items include but are not limited to:
  - Hot dogs or sausages
  - Tofu
  - Bread or tortillas
  - Granola
  - Soups or soup mixes
  - Sauces or jams

All foods must maintain source preservation to the extent that the origin of the local product or ingredient is identifiable. **Note: Food items purchased through an intermediary vendor like a distributor, aggregator, food hub, or farmers' market or from a manufacturer of processed foods will need to be approved by MDA grant staff as Minnesota-eligible food purchases.**

To receive reimbursement when buying through an intermediary vendor or from a manufacturer of processed foods, identification of origin farm (farm name and location) must be included on submitted invoices. If the origin farm and location is not included on the invoice, the intermediary vendor or manufacturer of processed foods will need to identify the specific farm(s), and their location(s), to be approved as eligible products or provide a written attestation from vendor that certifies that their product meets product meets the definition of foods grown or raised in Minnesota must be submitted.

Food transportation costs that are part of procuring foods (e.g., to move food from the farm/producer's location to the grantee's location or initial point in the grantee's distribution network), food processing costs, or mark-ups that are normally charged by the vendor or food distributor may be eligible as food costs but are subject to additional review by the MDA for eligibility. In most cases, these costs must be built into food prices or billed on

the same invoice as food costs as separate line items. If you are not certain if a cost is eligible as a food expense, you should check with us first.

### Eligible administrative expenses

Administrative expenses include all costs associated with directly managing the program other than the cost of food. Administrative costs may include expenses related to food storage, food transportation, and supporting expenses allocable to the project. Administrative costs may not exceed 15% of total project costs.

For larger projects that require match (\$50,000 or more), administrative expenses will be reimbursed at the same rate as other costs. For example, a grantee requesting \$30,000 can include up to \$4,500 in administrative expenses in their budget; a grantee requesting the maximum award amount of \$100,000 (total project cost of \$150,000), can include up to \$22,500 in administrative costs in their budget, of which \$15,000 can be reimbursed by the grant funds and \$7,500 must be paid for with cash match.

Administrative costs will be reimbursed on a pro-rata basis to food expenses. This means that throughout the grant period, at least 85% of the funds spent must be used for food, and grantees will not be reimbursed any more than 15% of the total funds spent on administrative costs. If administrative costs exceed 15% of the total spent funds at any point during the grant period, these costs will be recorded, and the remaining amount will be paid on a future reimbursement, once at least 85% of the total funds spent has been used for food expenses.

The eligibility of administrative costs is subject to additional consideration by the MDA and reviewers; when in doubt, you should check with us to see if an administrative cost is eligible.

Examples of types of eligible costs and activities are listed in the table below:

Eligible expense areas	Types of eligible costs	Example Activities
Food storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food storage contracts</li><li>• Materials and supplies directly related to food storage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renting space at a local food hub or community center for storage or packing of food for the Farm to Food Security project</li><li>• Boxes to support distribution of products (this does not include boxes used in production)</li></ul>
Food transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transportation costs for food that are not built into food prices or included on food invoices</li><li>• Food distribution contracts</li><li>• Travel costs associated with food transportation</li><li>• Rental costs of transportation-related equipment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contracting with a trucking company to move food from a farm to a food drop location</li><li>• Delivery expenses charged by a farmer on a separate invoice than food costs (e.g., a monthly flat rate to deliver all food purchases)</li><li>• Mileage expenses related to food transportation</li><li>• Truck or van rental for food transportation</li></ul>

Eligible expense areas	Types of eligible costs	Example Activities
Supporting expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel and fringe that can be tied directly to work on your project</li> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Technical assistance providers</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time for the lead applicant organization to make purchases from farmers, coordinate with distribution sites, and compile grant reporting</li> <li>• Renting event space to host a mid-project check-in with participating farmers</li> <li>• Mileage for staff to drive to community meetings to promote Farm to Food Security grant project food distribution events</li> <li>• Contracting a technical assistance provider to deliver a workshop about on-farm food safety with participating farmers</li> </ul>

## Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever occurs later, or those incurred after the grant contract agreement expires.
- Expenses paid for with cash.
- Gift cards or vouchers; gas cards; and other forms of pre-paid cards, vouchers, or compensation.
- General operating costs, overhead, or indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project); administrative costs are eligible but may not exceed 15% of the total grant award and must be directly tied to the project.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient).
- General organizational advertising (other than advertising, marketing, and outreach to promote services offered as part of the grant project), public relations, entertainment, alcohol, and amusement costs.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to follow federal, state, local, or Tribal nation laws and regulations, including parking and traffic violations.
- Fundraising.
- Lobbyists and political contributions.
- Late payment fees, finance charges, bad debts, fees for legal services, or contingency funds.
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state. Contact us for exceptions.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants (e.g., no “double dipping”).
- Purchases of foods or other items and services from staff, board members, farms owned/operated by staff or board members, or other individuals with whom they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. (See Conflicts of Interest section for exceptions).
- Purchases of foods or other items or services from MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners.

- Agricultural production or input costs, such as seeds, starter plants, crop insurance, implements and tools, or garden equipment.
- Produce grown in K-12 school gardens.
- Food items that are not at least 80% grown, raised, or produced in Minnesota, including foods grown in a bordering state and sourced through a Minnesota farmers' market, food hub, or distributor and that do not meet source preservation requirements described in the [Eligible Food Expenses](#) section.
- Processed food products that do not contain a primary ingredient that is at least 80% grown or raised in Minnesota and whose production technique is outside the scope of the required source preservation.
- Food and goods and services from individuals, businesses, or other organizations who have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. See the Conflicts of Interest section for more information.
- Pre-made, prepared meals (although you may use the food purchased as part of your project to prepare meals for food recipients).
- Processed foods produced by a registered cottage food producers, because these foods do not currently meet the food business licensing requirements for food distributions as part of this program.
- Business license and registration costs.
- Expenses associated with educational sessions (e.g. cooking demos) for food recipients.
- Farm tours for the purpose of relationship development between farmers and food recipients.
- Food distributed through schools, early care organizations, or family daycares as part of federal meal programs.

# Application Review Policies and Practices

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## Review process

Funding will be awarded through a competitive process. During the first phase of the review process, MDA staff and external reviewers from relevant organizations, communities, and industries will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria and weight in the Project Evaluation Profile.

Reviewers and staff will meet and discuss the proposals and then recommend projects for whole or partial funding to the Commissioner of Agriculture, who reviews the recommendations and makes the award decisions. Reviewers, staff, and the Commissioner may consider geographic distribution, services to prioritized populations, and as well as the applicant's history as a state grantee, including performance on previous grants, compliance with state rules and regulations, and capacity to perform the work. The MDA reserves the right to offer partial awards based on an assessment of the proposal, the pool of applicants, funding availability, or overall objectives of the grant program.

The timeline for the review process is listed in the [Timeline and Deadlines](#) section.

## Pre-award risk assessment

During the second phase of the review process, applicants that have been advanced from the first phase of review will be contacted by MDA staff to submit any additional documentation required for the pre-award risk assessment.

The MDA is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants ([MINN. STAT. 16B.981, Subd.2-5](#), [OGM Policy 08-02: Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#), and [OGM Policy 08-06: Pre-award Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#)).

All applicants' capacity to perform work related to the grant will be evaluated as part of their response to this RFP. Applicants being considered for an award may also be required to submit additional documents, such as financial reports, descriptions of internal controls, disclosure of conflicts of interest, and information about the performance on previous state grants, prior to being approved by MDA for an award. The award amount the applicant is under consideration for, and the applicant type will determine what additional documentation needs to be submitted.

## Applicants being considered for an award of less than \$50,000

Applicants being considered for an award of less than \$50,000 or less will submit the following:

- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that your entity is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State and registered with the Attorney General's office and is current on its annual reporting requirements, if required for your organization ([MINN.STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#)).

## Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater

Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater will be required to submit additional documents for review and analysis.

Nonprofit organizations will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project. This may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- A copy of your organization's two most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ with the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, then you must submit the following information:
  - Proof of your organization's tax-exempt status.
  - Board-reviewed financial statements for the two most recent business years, or for new organizations, actual financial statements for the periods that are available and pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period.
  - Documentation of your organization's internal controls.
- The two most recent certified financial audits if required to complete one ([MINN.STAT. 309.53, Subd. 3](#)) (if the organization has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement).
- Certification that you or your entity has not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that your organization is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State and registered with the Attorney General's office and is current on its annual reporting requirements, if required for your organization ([MINN.STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#)).
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

For-profit businesses will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project. This may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- A copy of the business' two most recent years of federal and state tax returns. If the business has not been in business long enough to have a tax return, then you must submit alternative documents, including documentation of internal controls.
- Financial statements including annual balance sheets, income statements, and statements of cashflows, for the two most recent years. If the business has not been in existence long enough, financial statements for the periods that are available and/or pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period can be accepted.
- Certification that you or your entity has not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that the business is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Certification that the business is not under bankruptcy proceedings and disclosure of any liens on assets.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Municipalities, political subdivisions, and individuals will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project; this may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

If the MDA determines that the applicant has substantial risks that inhibit its ability to perform the required duties under the grant contract agreement, then the MDA may either request more information for the purpose of satisfying the concerns, develop a risk mitigation plan to protect the interests of the state, or not award the grant.

## **Award notice**

The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. Applicants may request a summary of reviewer comments.

## **Conflicts of interest**

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 2-3](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01: Grants Conflict of Interest \(PDF\)](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to give 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, revising the grant work plan, amending the grantee duties in the grant contract agreement to mitigate the conflict of interest, requesting the grant applicant to submit a conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Grantees may generally not purchase foods or other items and services from staff, board members, farms owned/operated by staff or board members, or other individuals with whom they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. If grantees want to consider any of these individuals/organizations when making purchases, they must submit a conflict-of-interest disclosure and mitigation plan to the MDA for pre-approval. The plan must address how any conflicts of interest will be mitigated, including a plan for selecting vendors that includes meaningful involvement from non-board/staff members.

Grantees may not purchase foods or other items or services from MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners.

## Privacy notice and data classification

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

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

Per Minnesota's statute on grants ([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 proposal responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including trade secret information as described below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information) will generally 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 statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.



All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff ([MINN STAT 270C.65, subd. 3](#)), a 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 of Minnesota, to federal and state tax agencies, and to 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 a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

# Requirements for Grant Recipients

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## Grant contract agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement with the MDA. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [OGM Forms and FAQs webpage](#). The MDA reserves the right to adjust these templates.

Upon approval of an application and before beginning work on the grant project and incurring any grant expenses, the applicant selected for a grant award must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form and register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is correct.
- If required, submit other documentation and certifications within 15 calendar days of award notification.
- Read and sign a grant contract agreement within 30 calendar days of being sent to the grantee. Failure to sign the contract within 30 calendar days may result in the award being rescinded.

You cannot begin work on grant activities or incur any grant expenses until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and you have been notified by the State's Authorized Representative that work may start. A fully executed grant contract agreement is one that has been signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later. You must comply with the conditions and of the grant contract agreement, and you will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the grantee duties and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Some changes may become necessary during your project. Changes that alter the scope, objectives, outcomes, key personnel or staff time devoted to the project, work plan, or budget may require approval from the MDA and may require an amendment to the grant contract agreement.

## Accountability and reporting

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all the terms in the grant contract agreement have been met. A final report may also be required at the completion of the project and additional information about the long-term impact may also be collected for up to three years after the grant period.

At minimum, progress reports will include information about amounts and types of food distributed, the amounts used for administrative costs, progress on any goals or measurable outcomes specified in the grant contract agreement, and analysis of the grantee's success in meeting the purpose of the grant.

The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements throughout the grant.

Failure to regularly report, respond to surveys, and promptly respond to information requests may impact the grantee's ability to secure future funding from the MDA or other state agencies.

Information submitted in any report or survey will be classified as public data. If the grantee considers any information in the report to be trade secret, the grantee may request that the trade secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label that information. The MDA will notify the grantee if a public records request is made for the information claimed as protected by the grantee.

## Monitoring

The MDA monitors grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame, to collect data on outcomes, determine if financial procedures are followed accurately and appropriately, and/or verify purchases made with grant funds. The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one payment on grants of \$25,000 or more and will require the submission and review of cost documentation showing proof of purchase and payment described in the [Payments](#) section. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA.

The MDA performs at least one monitoring visit for all grantees with awards of \$25,000 or more before approving final payment. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA. Monitoring visits are typically done in-person at the project site but may also be done via phone or video conferencing (sometimes called “desk audits”) and may include review and discussion of financial and program information.

## Payments

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and be tied to documented progress on the approved project. The MDA will review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date, and the latest grant progress report before approving payment.

Typically, reimbursement requests will need to include two types of cost documentation for each expense: proof of purchase (e.g., invoices, itemized receipts, payroll reports or timesheets) and proof of payment (e.g., cleared checks, bank and credit card statements, paystubs). Ineligible items and their cost must be clearly delineated in the proof of purchase. The MDA will review the submitted documents, and any additional documentation requested by the grant administrator must be submitted by the grantee before the MDA provides the reimbursement. The MDA will generally not reimburse expenses paid for in cash. Contact the MDA for exceptions. Additional details can be found in the [MDA Reimbursement Guide \(PDF\)](#).

Matching contributions will require the same cost documentation as other expenses being reimbursed by grant funds.

Grant payments will not be made on grants with past-due progress reports or if required documentation related to the invoice or financial reconciliation is missing, unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the MDA no later than 60 calendar days after the grant end date.

Grant payments may be used to fulfill federal and state tax liabilities or may be withheld until the grantee has paid any tax liabilities (MINN. STAT. 270C.65, subd. 3, and other applicable laws).

## Contract and bidding requirements

All grantees must follow the State's bidding requirements when buying supplies or services based on their entity type and the size of the purchase.

### Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities, including businesses, nonprofits, and individuals, must use these guidelines:

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must use a formal notice and bidding process.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to ensure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
  - [Office of State Procurement – Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged, and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
  - [Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business \(MCUB\) Program Directory](#)
  - [Central Certification \(CERT\) Directory](#)
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees, if applicable, engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- Notwithstanding the above, the MDA may waive bidding process requirements when:
  - Vendors included in the response to a competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
  - It is determined there is only one reasonably able and available source for such materials or services and that the grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government (see [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#)).

## Political subdivisions or municipalities

Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law ([MINN. STAT. 471.345](#)).
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees for the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- Municipalities and any subrecipients/subcontractors must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government (See [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#)) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

## Grantee website and publicity

All grant projects must publicly credit the MDA funding in all public communications, presentations, and printed materials and include that information on the grantee's website. Additionally, grantees with a website must clearly post on their website the names and contact information for the grantee's leadership and the employee(s) or other person(s) who directly manages and oversees the grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee (the authorized representative) ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#)).

## Audits and record retention

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 commissioner of administration, the MDA, the state auditor, the attorney general, and the legislative auditor as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)). This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Grantees are responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to their grants. Grantees should maintain a project file containing copies of all invoices, payroll records, receipts, proofs of payment, reimbursement requests, important correspondence with the MDA, progress reports, and any other documents associated with the project. Upon request by the State, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of the records saved in their project file.

## Affirmative action and non-discrimination

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

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

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

## Voter registration

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

## Grantee evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the performance of all grantees. The evaluation will include the purpose of the grant; the amount provided to the grantee; information about the grantee's timeliness, quality, and overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant; if the grant was terminated; and any concerns with grantee's use of State funds. Evaluations of grantee performance for grant contract agreements of \$25,000 or more must be provided by the MDA to the Minnesota Department of Administration ([MINN.STAT. 16B.98, subd. 12](#)). Evaluations are considered public data ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)).

## Right of Cancellation

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This RFP does not obligate the MDA to award any grant(s). The State reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in the best interest of the program, agency, or the State of Minnesota. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this RFP or pay for information solicited or obtained.

# Definitions

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## Limited land access

**Limited land access** ([MINN. STAT. 17.133, subd. 1](#)) is a designation given to a farmer who:

- Does not own farmland, AND
- Leases or rents land, EITHER:
  - With a three-year-or-shorter term agreement from a person who is not related to the individual or the individual's spouse by blood or marriage (a direct family member, as defined below), OR
  - From an incubator farm.

## Direct family member

**Direct family members** include siblings, spouses, parents, grandparents, children, and other lineal descendants/ascendants of the individual or the individual's spouse (section 267(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code). Aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins are not considered direct family.

## Limited market access

**Limited market access** is a designation given to a farmer who sells less than \$100,000 of their farm products per year (MINN. STAT. 17.133, subd. 1).

## Local

For this grant, **local** means grown or raised in the state of Minnesota.

## Foods grown or raised in Minnesota

Food is defined as **grown or raised in Minnesota** if at least 80% of the products (e.g., produce, meat, grains) were produced (i.e., grown or raised) in the state of Minnesota.

## Specialty crops

The MDA uses the [USDA definition of specialty crops](#), which includes fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, culinary herbs and spices, and horticulture (such as maple syrup and honey).

## Whole (unprocessed) or minimally processed foods

The following methods are allowable for foods to be considered **unprocessed or minimally processed**: cooling; refrigerating; freezing; size adjustments made by peeling, slicing, dicing, cutting, chopping, shucking, and grinding; forming ground products into patties without any additives or fillers; drying or dehydration; washing; packaging (such as placing eggs in cartons), vacuum packing, and bagging (such as placing vegetables in bags or combining two or more types of vegetables or fruits in a single package); the addition of ascorbic acid or other preservatives to prevent oxidation of produce; butchering livestock and poultry; and cleaning fish.

## Processed foods

**Processed foods** are foods that are changed from their original state beyond the methods defined as whole or minimally processed. For this grant, eligible processed foods must be made with at least one primary ingredient (excluding water) that is 80% grown or raised in Minnesota. To receive reimbursement for processed food items, a written attestation from the vendor that certifies that their product meets this definition must be submitted.

## Source preservation

**Source preservation** means that the origin of the food item is identifiable through delivery. To receive reimbursement when buying through an intermediary vendor like a distributor, aggregator, food hub, farmers' market, or from a manufacturer of processed foods, identification of origin farm (farm name and location) must be included on submitted invoices. If the origin farm and location is not included on the invoice, the intermediary vendor or manufacturer of processed foods will need to identify the specific farm(s), and their location(s), to be approved as eligible products—or they must provide a written attestation that certifies that their product meets the definition of foods grown or raised in Minnesota.



# Project Evaluation Profile

Evaluation criteria	Maximum score
<b>Organizational capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant demonstrates the capacity to successfully implement and sustain the project.</li> <li>Applicant has strong internal controls, including the ability to separate Farm to Food Security grant project costs from other organizational expenses.</li> </ul>	15
<b>Community engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant shows community engagement, involvement, and support for the project, such as through local, regional, or statewide partnerships</li> </ul>	5
<b>Food procurement and farmer identification and assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant demonstrates sufficient experience procuring local foods, including directly from farmers or through food aggregators and distributors.</li> <li>Applicant has a realistic plan for identifying farmers/vendors, establishing fair and competitive prices, and mitigating any conflicts of interest.</li> <li>Applicant has plans to offer written, formal purchasing agreements or contracts to farmers and/or provide technical assistance to support farmers.</li> </ul>	15
<b>Food distribution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant demonstrates sufficient experience distributing foods grown or raised in Minnesota.</li> <li>Applicant has a clear and comprehensive plan for distributing the foods to Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity.</li> <li>Applicant demonstrates strong connections to individuals whose needs are not met through the traditional emergency food system and has a sound distribution plan to meet the needs of those individuals.</li> </ul>	15
<b>Food safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant has a clear system in place to monitor and control food safety risks.</li> </ul>	5
<b>Letter(s) of support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant includes strong letter(s) of support from farmers/food producers, food hubs/distributors (if applicable), collaborators, and community partners.</li> </ul>	10

Evaluation criteria	Maximum score
<b>Work plan and timeline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work plan is thorough and realistic.</li> <li>• Work plan includes a timeline broken down by estimated dates/months, key activities, and responsible party/individuals for each activity.</li> <li>• Project creates opportunities to develop lasting relationships, long-term market opportunities, and food distribution networks that can be sustained beyond the grant period.</li> </ul>	10
<b>Budget and match</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget clearly details all project costs.</li> <li>• Food budget includes plans to purchase a variety of agricultural products, including culturally relevant foods, specialty crops, meat, poultry, and value-added foods.</li> <li>• Food budget includes plans to purchase from a variety of producers and sources, including individual producers, emerging farmers, farmers' markets, and food hubs.</li> <li>• Administrative budget is reasonable, provides detailed costs, describes how the applicant arrived at the budget estimates, and justifies why costs in each budget category are necessary.</li> <li>• Budget clearly explains source and amount of cash match.</li> </ul>	15
<b>Priority areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to and a clear and realistic plan to source 100% of food from Minnesota farmers and producers (up to 5 points).</li> <li>• Applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to and a clear and realistic plan to source least 70% of food from farmers with limited land access or limited market access (see Definitions section) (5 points).</li> </ul>	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

# Application Questions

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## Contact information

### Type of applicant

Indicate the type of applicant that is applying:

- Individual
- Nonprofit organization
- For-profit organization
- City/county/state government entity
- Tribal nation or government entity
- Other: Please describe.

### Applicant information

- Applicant name
- Applicant mailing address (Example: PO Box 1, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- Applicant physical address (Example: 123 Smith Street, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- Applicant telephone number
- Applicant email
- Applicant website (if applicable)
- Applicant's county
- Applicant's Minnesota State House District (use the [District Finder](#) if you don't know your district.)
- Other Minnesota State House Districts served by the project (if applicable)

### Primary contact

If awarded a grant, the person who will be responsible for leading the project. This may be the same as the contact information listed above:

- Primary contact name (first and last name)
- Primary contact title
- Primary contact telephone number
- Primary contact email
- Primary contact mailing address

### Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person that is legally authorized to and will sign the grant contract agreement for this organization. This may be the same as the contact information listed above:

- Authorized representative name (first and last name)
- Authorized representative title
- Authorized representative telephone number
- Authorized representative email
- Authorized representative mailing address

## Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements. You must respond “True” to all the statements to be eligible to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for some of these statements.

- The applicant is not suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. (True or False)
- The applicant is registered and in good standing with the Minnesota of the Secretary of State (SOS) or is not required to maintain a registration with the SOS. You can verify that you are registered and in good standing by searching for your entity’s name on the [SOS website](#).) (True or False)
- The applicant’s current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity or to determine how those funds are used. (True or False)
- The applicant does not owe the State of Minnesota any back taxes and has not defaulted on any State of Minnesota backed financing in the last seven years. (True or False)
- The applicant is compliant with current state and federal regulations. (True or False)
- The applicant is not an MDA employee, spouse or domestic partner of an MDA employee, or a farm or business principally owned by one of them. (True or False)
- Does the applicant’s leadership, board of directors, or governing body include any MDA employees or their spouses/domestic partners, or is the applicant a State of Minnesota employee, spouse or domestic partner of a State of Minnesota employee, or a farm or business principally owned by one of them? (Yes or No)
  - If yes, list their name(s) and role(s) in the applicant’s organization.

## Organization eligibility

- Is the applicant a for-profit business, nonprofit organization, or some other type of entity?
  - Nonprofit organization
  - For-profit business
  - Another type of entity, such as an individual, local unit of government, or Tribal government
- If you selected nonprofit organization: The applicant is registered with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office and is current on its annual reporting requirements or is exempt from the registration requirement. See [MINN. STAT. 309.515](#) for more information on registration exemptions. You can verify that you are registered and have an active status by searching for your entity’s name on the [Attorney General’s Office website](#).) (True or False)
- If you selected for-profit business: The applicant is not under bankruptcy proceedings. (True or False)
- If you selected for-profit business: The applicant will disclose liens on assets, if required as part of the pre-award risk assessment. (True or False)

## Attestations

Attest to the following statements. You must respond “Yes” to all the statements to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for some of these statements.

- I attest that I have the authority to apply for this grant. (Yes or No)
- I attest that all information supplied in this application is true, correct, and reliable to the best of my knowledge. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me and my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. (Yes or No)
- I attest that the supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for its review. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the submission of additional documents, as described in the RFP, may be required as part of the pre-award risk assessment if my project is recommended for phase two of the review process. (Yes or No)
- I attest that work has not started on the proposed project, and we will not begin work before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reaches its start date, whichever is later. The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the effective start date of the grant contract agreement. (Yes or No)

## Previous State of Minnesota grants

- Have you been awarded any grant from the State of Minnesota in the past five years? (Yes or No)
  - If yes, provide the details of the award amount(s), the duties, and the outcomes of the grant(s). (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Project summary

### Grant request

- Project name (Include the name of your farm or organization in the title.)
- Total project cost (Grant + match)
- Total grant request (Maximum of \$100,000, minimum \$25,000)
- Total matching amount (A 1:1 match is required on all grant funds over \$50,000.)
- Expected project start date
  - Must be after the grant contract agreement is executed (signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later). You may not incur any project expenses before your grant contract agreement is executed.
  - Award notification will be in May, and grant contract agreements will be signed by end of June.

- Expected project end date
  - Contracts will end on June 30, 2028.
  - All items and services must be purchased by the end date of the contract and be paid in full before requesting reimbursement.
  - You will have up to 60 days after your contract end date to submit for a reimbursement.

## **Project description**

Provide a brief description of your project that includes the name of the applicant organization or individual, how you plan to use the funds to purchase food grown and raised in Minnesota, and the geographic areas where the food will be distributed. Limit your description to three sentences. This project description may be shared with the public through press releases, the MDA website, legislative reports, and other publications. (500 characters, including spaces)

Example: The ABC Economic Development Organization will purchase local produce and meat from five to seven farmers in their county. Additional value-added foods will be purchased from three local food businesses in the county. Through a collaborative partnership with XYZ Community League, food will be distributed at weekly distributions from July to October at community centers in three cities in the region.

## **Organizational capacity**

### **Organization/applicant summary**

Provide a summary of your organization that describes your mission and goals, the services you provide, the ownership (if applicable) and leadership of your organization, and your organizational structure. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### **Performance capacity**

Describe your capacity to perform the kind of work that would be funded by the grant or similar work, including your history of performing this kind of work. Describe how your current staffing and project team (including differentiating between W-2 employees and 1099 contractors, if applicable), organizational structure, current and past budget, and/or partners/collaborators will contribute to your capacity to carry out the proposed activities and effectively complete your project. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### **Internal controls and procedures**

Describe your financial management system, including tracking grant expenditures, implementing segregation of duties, tracking and reporting staff time to specific projects, and approving payroll and timecards. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

### **Co-mingling**

If foods purchased with Farm to Food Security grant funds will be co-mingled with other foods (i.e., at purchase, in transportation or storage, or at the point of distribution), explain how expenses for the foods purchased with your grant funds will be separated from other food purchases, storage, and distribution costs. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Existing work

Is food procurement and/or distribution an existing part of your work? (Yes or No)

- If yes, describe how your proposal will expand or increase your existing programs. Include specifics such as increased number of farm business suppliers, diversification of products purchased, and/or changes to your distribution locations. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- If no, describe how your proposal fits into your organization's existing mission, overall scope of work, or represents an intentional change in mission/work. Also include any training, technical assistance, or new skills you will need to attain to effectively execute this project. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Impact on Minnesota agriculture, outcomes, and local support

### Community identification

Explain your definition of community for the purpose of this project. Is it geographic, cultural, etc.? How will this project support distribution of food that is produced within the community to members of the community? (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Community involvement

Describe steps your project is taking to intentionally involve the community in designing and carrying out your project. Include discussion of the following, as applicable. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

- How was this project proposal developed? Who was involved in decision making for the application, and how do they represent the identified community?
- How were or will farmers participate in the design of the program?
- How does the proposal address collaboratively identified needs of farmers and the identified community?

### Food procurement

Explain how you will source and purchase foods grown and raised in Minnesota. In your response, you should include responses to the following questions. (3,000 characters, including spaces)

- How did or will you identify Minnesota farmers/vendors, including farmers with limited land access or limited market access, if applicable?
- Are you working with or planning to work with any food aggregators/distributors/food hubs?
- What steps have you taken or will you take to ensure that any conflicts of interest between your organization and vendors are mitigated?
- How have or will you set prices with farmers/vendors? For example, offering contracts, issuing requests for bids, or purchasing surplus product.
- If you have already identified the farms you'll work with, how have you determined that you have established fair and competitive prices?
- If you haven't already identified the farms you'll work with, how will you establish fair and competitive prices?

## Farmer identification and assistance

How many Minnesota farmers and producers do you plan to work with in the project (include your own if you are a farmer)?

- Of the total number of farmers, how many are farmers with limited land access or limited market access as defined by [Minnesota Statutes, section 17.133, subdivision 1](#)? (See Definitions section.)

What percentage of the foods purchased for your project do you plan to source from Minnesota farmers or producers?

What percentage of the foods do you plan to purchase for this project do you plan to source from farmers with limited land access or limited market access (see Definitions section)?

Do you plan to offer written, formal purchasing agreements or contracts to farmers participating in the project? (Yes or No)

- If yes, provide details about your plans to offer formal agreements or contracts. Include information about how you will establish commitments with participating farmers to purchase specific items and quantities during a particular timeframe, how agreements or contracts will be negotiated, and the terms of the agreements or contracts. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Do you plan to offer technical assistance to support farmers participating in the project? (Yes or No)

- If yes, describe the type of technical assistance that will be provided, your plan for engaging farmers in this assistance, and why farmers need or will benefit from the assistance (1,000 characters, including spaces)

## Food distribution

Explain how food will be distributed. In your response, you should include responses to the following questions. (3,000 characters, including spaces)

- How will food be distributed?
- Where will food be distributed?
- What steps will you take to ensure that food distribution is targeted towards Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity?
- What connections do you have to individuals whose needs are not met through the traditional emergency food system? How does your distribution plan go beyond the traditional emergency food/hunger relief distribution structures to meet the needs of those individuals?
- What partners, if any, will you engage in your work? If you are partnering with other organizations, you are encouraged to upload letters of support from them below.

## Food safety

Describe how you and others involved in your project plan to monitor, control, and address food safety risks 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, plans, certifications, or systems that you have in place. (1,000 characters, including spaces)



## Letters of support and commitment

Upload any letters of support or commitment. Letters can be typed on letterhead, hand-written, or sent by email to the applicant. If you have multiple letters, you should combine them into one document before uploading them.

- You must include at least one letter of support from a farmer/food producer who will benefit from this grant award. We encourage you to seek letters from each local producer you plan to source from during your project.
- If you plan to buy foods grown or raised in Minnesota via a food hub or distributor, you must include a letter from the food hub or distributor identifying those farms and farmers.
- If you are not distributing the food directly to individuals, you must submit a letter of support from at least one organization that will be distributing the food to individuals.
- You must submit a letter of commitment from all collaborators formally involved in the project. You may also provide letters of support from partners that are not part of the formal partnership as part of the application, but who support the application and can speak to the benefits of the project in your community.

## Workplan and timeline

Complete the following table with milestones for your project that lists, at a minimum, a timeline broken down by estimated dates/months, description of tasks or key activities, and responsible party/individuals for each activity. The timeline will be used to monitor high level progress of projects and should include discrete, measurable goals. Tasks and key activities should relate to overall Farm to Food Security Grant Program goals to purchase foods grown and raised in Minnesota and distribute them at no cost to Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity. The party/individual responsible column must include the roles and responsibilities of any formal collaborators applicable.

Example:

Timeframe	Description of task or key activity	Responsible party/individuals
August 2026	Confirm anticipated product availability with farmers for season one food procurement and establish purchase agreements	Executive director
September 2026	Begin season one food procurement and distribution	Program manager

If there is not enough space in the table provided in the application, you may upload a work plan as an Excel or Word file as long as you use the same format as the example above.

## Sustainability

What opportunities will this project create for developing long-term, sustained 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? (2,000 characters, including spaces)

## Budget and match

Complete the following budget tables and justifications. If you are selected for a grant, most of this section will become a part of your grant contract agreement. In each table, only fill in the number of rows you need for your budget. You do not need to fill all rows. Your budget should:

- Clearly detail all project costs,
- Be reasonable and describe how you arrived at the budget estimates,
- Justify why costs in each budget category are necessary, and
- Explain the source and amount of cash match.

**Important: Fill out all budget tables with total project costs. The Anticipated Total Cost column in each budget table should include the total amount for the line item, including both the portion that will be reimbursed by grant funds, as well as the portion that will be paid with cash match.**

Optional: You may upload estimates/quotes provided by third parties or vendors to show how you arrived at the budget estimates. If you have multiple estimates/quotes to upload, merge them into a single file before uploading.

## Food budget table

Complete the following table to detail how you expect to use your food funds and any required match. Use the dropdown category in the first column to help organize your food budget. Categories include: fruits; vegetables; herbs; meat, fish, and poultry; dairy; grains, and other (eggs, legumes, maple syrup, honey, and other Minnesota-eligible processed items). Not all categories will apply to all projects.

Example:

Category	Anticipated item(s)	Anticipated farm(s) or business(es)	Timeframe (list months)	Anticipated total cost
Fruits	Raspberries, apples	AppleBerry Farm, Hometown Apple Orchard, Friendly Farmers' Collective	July 2026 – Aug 2026	\$4,500
Vegetables	Carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, winter squash	Farmer Boni D. Greenthumb, Friendly Farmers' Collective	June 2026 – Dec 2026	\$13,000
Herbs	Parsley and cilantro	Farmers' Market Food Hub	July 2026 – Aug 2026	\$800
Meat, Fish, and Poultry	Ground turkey, turkey hot dogs	Thao's Turkey Farm	Dec 2026 – March 2027	\$6,500
Dairy	Cheese, butter	Greater Minnesota Dairy Cooperative, Champs Creamery	Oct 2026 – March 2027	\$9,000
Grains	Whole wheat flour	Rolling Hills Flour Mill	Dec 2026 – March 2027	\$3,000
Other	Honey and jam	Sweet Bee's Farm	March 2026 – Oct 2026	\$450
<b>Anticipated total costs:</b>	-	-	-	<b>\$37,250.00</b>

### Food budget justification (optional)

Provide additional information or justifications for the costs in your planned food budget. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Food budget upload (optional)

Upload estimates/quotes provided by third parties or vendors to show how you arrived at the food budget estimates. If you have multiple estimates/quotes to upload, merge them into a single file before uploading.

### Administrative budget summary

This table is an overview of how grant funds will be spent. The total estimated cost should be no more than 15% of your total project costs. The category totals in the summary table should match the totals in each individual category table following it.

Budget category	Anticipated total cost
Personnel – salaries and wages	\$
Personnel – fringe benefits	\$
Travel	\$
Equipment and supplies	\$
Contractual	\$
Other	\$
<b>Total administrative costs</b>	<b>\$</b>

### Administrative budget upload (optional)

Upload estimates/quotes provided by third parties or vendors to show how you arrived at the administrative budget estimates. If you have multiple estimates/quotes to upload, merge them into a single file before uploading.

### Administrative budget categories

In the budget table for each category, you will be able to include up to 10 lines. You are not required to use every line.

#### Personnel

Personnel expenses are salaries, wages, and fringe benefits for the number of hours or proportion of time an employee devotes to the grant-supported project or program. Under the formally established policies of the organization, salaries, wages, and fringe benefits must be consistently applied, reasonable for the services rendered, and supported with adequate documentation, such as timesheets or payroll reports.

#### Personnel – salaries and wages

List salary and wage costs for people employed by your organization whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to this project's activities.

Employee name	Employee title	Level of effort (# of hours or % of full-time equivalents [FTE])	Anticipated total cost
-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	\$
<b>Personnel subtotal</b>	-	-	<b>\$</b>

### Personnel justification

By name/title, describe the tasks or key activities each person will complete, and approximately when they will occur. Explain how the organization will sustain the staff necessary to manage the organization long-term after the end of the contract period. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Personnel – fringe benefits

List fringe benefit rates (e.g., workers comp costs, insurance benefits, retirement benefits), in percentages, for each of the employees listed in the personnel budget and total grant funds requested for each employee's fringe costs.

Employee name	Employee title	Fringe benefits rate (%)	Anticipated total cost
-	-	%	\$
-	-	%	\$
-	-	%	\$
<b>Fringe benefits subtotal</b>	-	-	<b>\$</b>

### Travel

List costs for trips or grouping of trips that will be needed to conduct this project.

Travel and subsistence expenses may not exceed the amounts allowed in Chapter 15 of the current [Commissioner's Plan](#), published by the commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget.

Trip destination and description	Type of expense (e.g., truck rental, mileage, hotel)	Unit of measure and number/cost per unit (e.g., 5 nights @ \$120/night or 1 flight \$500/ticket)	Number of travelers claiming expense	Anticipated total cost
-	-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	-	\$
-	-	-	-	\$
<b>Travel subtotal</b>	-	-	-	<b>\$</b>

### Travel justification

For each trip listed, describe the purpose of each trip is necessary to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Include approximate date(s) of travel for each trip. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

## Equipment and supplies

List costs for necessary equipment and supplies that will be purchased or rented under the grant. Equipment and supplies are materials, supplies, tools, parts, technology, or equipment that are necessary for the completion of your project. Examples of eligible equipment and supplies are boxes to support distribution of products or an expandable roller conveyor to assist in packing boxes.

General-purpose equipment is generally not an eligible cost unless it is specifically and directly tied (allocable) to the activities of your grant project. The eligibility of general-purpose equipment is subject to additional consideration by MDA and reviewers. General purpose equipment means equipment that is not limited to grant-funded activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, telephone networks, computers and information technology systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles. Renting general-purpose equipment necessary for your project may be allowable when purchase is not.

Equipment and supplies item description	Rental or purchase	Cost per unit	Number of units	Anticipated total cost
-	-	\$	-	\$
-	-	\$	-	\$
-	-	\$	-	\$
<b>Equipment and supplies subtotal</b>	-	-	-	\$

## Equipment and supplies justification

Describe the purpose of the equipment supplies listed in the table above and how it is necessary for the completion of the project. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

## Contractual/consultant

List costs for work on the project that will be performed by individuals or organizations other than the applicant (e.g., consultants, contractors, partner organizations).

Contractual/consultant services are those performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant that is in a particular profession or with a special skill. These services are paid for through a subcontract.

- Compensation for contractor or consultant services should be reasonable and consistent with that paid for similar services in the marketplace.
- 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 timeline to perform the stated activities and provide specific deliverables; the policies and requirements that apply to the contractor; the maximum amount of money for which the grantee is obligated to pay the third party under the agreement; and the cost principles to be used in determining allowable costs in the case of cost-type contracts.

Contractor/consultant name or organization	Hourly rate or flat rate (e.g., \$45/hour or \$400 food safety training)	Anticipated total cost
-	\$	\$
-	\$	\$
-	\$	\$
<b>Contractual/consultant subtotal</b>	-	\$

### Contractual/consultant justification

For each contractual line item listed in your contractual budget, describe how it is necessary to your project and how it will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. You must also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include an estimated timeline for when the contractual work will be performed. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Other

List any costs not covered in any of the previous budget categories.

Other costs may include meetings and conferences; communications; rental expenses; outreach costs; and participant support costs, including stipends to participants that complete a project survey or take part in a focus group. Meeting meals cannot be associated with entertainment nor included in a per diem travel cost.

Other item description	Cost per unit	Number of units	Anticipated total cost
-	\$	-	\$
-	\$	-	\$
-	\$	-	\$
Other subtotal	-	-	\$

### Other justification

Describe the purpose of each item listed above and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s). For meals, the costs must be reasonable and a justification must be included to show that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose difficult conditions on the meeting participants. (2,000 characters, including spaces).

### Matching funds

Are you requesting more than \$50,000 in grant funds? (Yes or No)

- If yes, describe the amount(s) and source(s) of your required cash match (see the [Match Requirement](#) section for eligible sources of cash matching funds). (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Are any portions of your project being paid for by another grant or other restricted funding? (Yes or No)

- If yes, explain the other source of funds and what parts of the project are being paid for by that funding. (1,000 characters, including spaces).

If necessary, how would you supplement the 15% administrative cost allowance to cover additional costs that may be associated with purchasing and distributing food? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

### Reimbursement acknowledgement

I understand that all payments on this grant project will be made on a reimbursement basis based on the terms outlined in the [Payments](#) section of the RFP. (Yes or No)