



Food Retail Improvement and Development Program: Retailer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals

Applications due by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday, March 10, 2026

01/16/2026

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Food Retail Improvement and Development Grant (FRIDG) Program for the Equipment and Infrastructure Grants. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday March 10, 2026. Information about the program is available on the [FRIDG program](#) webpage.

The program was established by the Minnesota Legislature to offer funding for equipment and infrastructure improvements to grocery stores and small food retailers who sell nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, to underserved communities. The program is authorized under MINN. STAT. 17.1017 and funded through Laws of Minnesota, 2025, Regular Session, Chapter 34, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3(f)(7).

Funding availability

We expect to award approximately \$725,000 through a competitive review process.

The maximum award is \$75,000, and the minimum award is \$5,000 per project. We expect to award 15 to 25 grants, but the final number depends on the size of the awards and will be determined through the proposal review process.

Grants may last up to three years from the contract start date. We expect most grant contract agreements to start in May/June 2026. Grant contract agreements will not be extended.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenses after the grant contract agreement is fully executed (signed by all parties), the grant agreement has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified that they may begin work.

Matching requirement

Applicants must commit at least 25 percent of the total eligible project cost as a cash match. The FRIDG: Retailer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant is a reimbursement grant for up to 75 percent of the project cost, not to exceed \$75,000. 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 eligible project costs. Grant funds awarded by the MDA or another state agency cannot be used as matching funds, but non-forgivable loans from the state may be used as a match. Non-cash, in-kind matches of goods and services are not allowable.

For example, a grantee is working on a project that is expected to cost \$10,000. In total, the grantee would be eligible for \$7,500 from the state and would be responsible for the other \$2,500.

Priorities

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

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

The scoring criteria prioritize:

- Projects that demonstrate positive economic and health impacts on underserved communities.
- Applicants that demonstrate urgency for the project and need for grant funding.
- Projects that increase access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.
- Projects that increase the availability of Minnesota grown or raised foods.

This program aims award funds equitably throughout the state.

Read the full [Project Evaluation Profile](#) for 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 10, 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

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

For help with the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500, or
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with "FRIDG 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's your responsibility 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 Request for Proposals (RFP), as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated. The MDA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.

By submitting an application, 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.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP or preparing the application are the responsibility of the applicant.

How to submit questions

For questions on the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on Tuesday, February 24, 2026**.
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with “FRIDG Grant Question” in the subject line.
- We will post responses to all questions on the [FRIDG Grants Q&A webpage](#).

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 project.
- 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, a unique proposal designed to respond to the RFP. Clearly explain the importance or potential impact of your project.
- Make sure your budget is realistic, includes only eligible items, and is consistent throughout the application. Clearly explain how grant funding would be spent. While quotes are not required, they generally improve your application.
- Review the [Project Evaluation Profile](#) included in this document as it is used to score and compare the grant applications.
- Review the [Definitions](#) section.

Timeline and deadlines

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 RFP posted to the MDA website.

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 4 p.m. CT Deadline to ask grant program questions.

Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 4 p.m. CT Applications due.

March 2026 Phase one of the review process.

April 2026 Phase two of the review process (pre-award risk assessments).

May 2026 Applicants notified of decisions.

May/June 2026 Anticipated start date for projects awarded funding.

Grants may last up to three years from the contract start date. We expect most grant contract agreements to start in May/June 2025. If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenses after the grant contract agreement is fully executed (signed by all parties), the grant agreement has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified that they may begin work.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity. For-profit and not-for-profit grocery stores and small food retailers engaged in the sale of nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, are eligible to apply. The retail location must serve an underserved community, defined as a geographic area or group of people whose food access needs are not met by existing retailers. This includes but is not limited to:

- A low-income and moderate-income area.
- A low income and low access area, commonly referred to as “food deserts”, as determined by the United State Department of Agriculture.
- An area where there is a limited number of grocery stores.
- A group of people with particular needs such as the aging population, people with disabilities, or people with special dietary needs or preferences.

Applicants must:

- Be a food retailer, such for-profit and non-profit grocery stores, corner stores, convenience stores, farmers’ markets, mobile food markets, or retail food outlets operated by an emergency food program or food hub.
- Meet the requirements of the [OGM Policy 08-06: Pre-award Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#).
- Agree with the following conditions for a period of at least five years ([MINN. STAT. 17.1017](#)):
 - Accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
 - Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements established by the commissioner.
 - Promote the hiring, training, and retention of local or regional residents from low- and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color.
 - Allocate at least 30% of retail food space for the sale of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods. This includes fruits and vegetables; low-fat and nonfat dairy; fortified dairy substitute beverages such as soy-based or nut-based dairy substitute beverages; whole grain-rich staple foods; and meats, poultry, fish, seafood, and other proteins consistent with nutrition standards in national guidelines described in the current United States Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Applicants that meet the definition of small food retailer are exempt from this requirement.

MDA employees and their spouses, farms, or businesses principally owned or operated by them are not eligible applicants and are not eligible to receive funds from this grant program.

Collaboration

Eligible applicants may seek feedback from stakeholders in developing proposals. Applicants are encouraged to get letters of support from local businesses, financial partners, and/or community members to demonstrate support for the project and their capacity to complete the project. These are not required but generally improve the application.

Fiscal agent

The MDA recognizes that not all organizations that meet the eligibility criteria for this grant will have the capacity to financially manage the and administer the grant award. In these circumstances, a fiscal agent may apply on behalf of, receive and distribute grant funds to vendors, and support the financial management and administration of the grant award. A fiscal agent must be identified at the time of application and their role must be clearly established and communicated in the proposal.

If the proposal advances to phase two of the review process, both the fiscal agent and the applicant must complete the pre-award risk assessment.

The fiscal agent will be listed as such in the grant contract agreement. While it will primarily be the grantee's responsibility to submit reimbursement requests and provide reports on grant project, the fiscal agent may also need to work with the grantee or directly with the MDA to submit supporting documentation for reimbursement requests and meet grant reporting requirements. Note that the fiscal agent will receive a 1099 from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

Eligible projects and expenses

FRIDG: Retailer Equipment and Infrastructure Grants help grocery stores and small food retailers make physical improvements and purchase equipment to stimulate sales of nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. Eligible projects include the purchase and installation of equipment and the costs incurred to make physical improvements.

Eligible projects will:

- Sustain or increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food (including produce) for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas. This does not include prepared or cooked food intended for immediate consumption.
- Be completed in three years or less.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Retail display coolers and freezers
- Storage coolers and freezers
- Shelving
- Mobile food markets
- Permanent infrastructure at farmers' markets
- Architectural work
- Electrical work
- Building repairs or capital improvement projects
- Costs associated with the delivery and installation of equipment
- Processing equipment for foods not intended for immediate consumption, such as deli meat slicers, vegetable peelers/chopper/dicers, or scales (no more than \$5,000)
- Signage that promotes the business accepting SNAP benefits

If the MDA accepts your proposal, the MDA will reimburse eligible costs included in the MDA-approved project budget. All work must be completed during the effective dates of the contract; invoices must clearly indicate when the item was purchased or when the service was performed. All requests for reimbursement must be documented and submitted to the MDA no later than 30 calendar days after the grant end date.

Ineligible projects and expenses

Note: Food shelves and other organizations that are not selling food are ineligible for this grant unless there is a retail operation as a part of their programming and they can adhere to the program requirements, such as accepting SNAP benefits.

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred prior to the full execution of the grant contract agreement or 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, overhead, or indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project. This includes inventory, staff time, etc.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient).
- Advertising (except signage that promotes the business accepting SNAP benefits), public relations, entertainment, alcohol, and amusement costs.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services.
- 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.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants (e.g., no “double dipping”).
- Service calls for general maintenance (contact us for prior approval of exceptions).
- Land or building purchases.
- Costs of goods or services for personal use of the employees, regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
- Transportation and travel expenses.
- Projects that focus on prepared/cooked foods (food trucks, cooked food carousels, restaurants, cafes, meal deliveries, smoothie/ice cream machines, etc.).
- Personnel costs (e.g., salary, wages, or fringe costs for the owner or employees of the organization).
- Construction or improvements made outside of the state of Minnesota.
- Warranties on equipment.

Application Review Process

Review process

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

Reviewers and staff will meet and discuss the proposal and then recommend 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 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, in accordance with [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, or 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 must submit the following:

- A description of your in 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.
- Documentation that it is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Documentation that it is registered with the Attorney General's office and is current on its annual reporting requirements, if applicable 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 by the MDA as part of the required pre-award risk assessment.

Nonprofit organizations must submit the following:

- A description of your in 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, or audit, with the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Forms 990 or Forms 990-EZ, then they must submit the following information:
 - Proof of its 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 its internal controls
- The two most recent certified financial audits if required to complete one (if the organization has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement). ([MINN.STAT. 309.53, subd. 3](#))
- Certification that you or your entity have not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that it is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Documentation that it is registered with the Attorney General's office and current on its annual reporting requirements, if applicable 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 been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years.

For-profit businesses must submit the following:

- A description of your in 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 they 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 have 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 been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years.

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

- A description of your in 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 been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years.

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](#) and [Policy 08-01: Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making \(PDF\)](#)).

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 in question or disclosed, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to, revising the grant work plan or grantee duties to mitigate the risk, requesting the grant applicant to submit an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under 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 (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information) 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, 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

Grant award 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.

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 of the terms in the grant contract agreement have been met. Annual reports are needed to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grant program and to comply with statutory requirements. Annual reports will be sent out in the fall of 2026-2028.

At minimum, annual reports will include questions about leveraged funding; amounts of sales via SNAP; retail square footage; sales of fresh fruits and vegetables; and job creation. Dollar amounts of sales via SNAP may be requested directly from implementing agencies. A progress report is required with each reimbursement request which will summarize the progress of the project and include any changes to the expected timeline or budget.

The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements throughout the grant. Grant payments will not be made on grants with past-due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

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 is a public record. 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 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 and may include review and discussion of financial and program information (sometimes called “desk audits”).

The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one invoice on grants of \$25,000 or more. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide cost documentation showing proof of purchase and payment, such as invoices, expense receipts, employee timesheets, cleared checks, bank or credit card statements, and any other supporting documents requested by the MDA.

Payments

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and 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 proof for each expense: proof of purchase (e.g., invoices, itemized receipts, etc.) and proof of payment (e.g., cleared checks, credit card statements, bank statements, etc.). 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. Additional details can be found in the [MDA Reimbursement Guide \(PDF\)](#).

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 30 calendar days after the grant end date.

The MDA may, at its discretion, hold back the final 10% of each grant award until the grantee demonstrates completion of their objectives described in their proposal, including completion of reporting, unless otherwise approved by the MDA. The MDA may request that grantees who have not completed the objectives described in their proposal at the completion of the performance period return any grant funds.

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 assure 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 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 \(SAM.gov\)](#)).

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 State granting agency, 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, receipt, and 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, 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 policy

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

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

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

Voter registration requirement

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 grantees 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

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Background and Program Goals

FRIDG Background and Program Goals

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

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

AGRI Background and Program Goals

The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries ([MINN. STAT. 41A.12](#)). AGRI has made significant economic impacts by increasing productivity, improving efficiency, and assisting in the development of agricultural products.

Definitions

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

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

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

Mobile food market: A self-contained for-profit or cooperative retail grocery operation located in a movable new or renovated truck, bus, or other vehicle that is used to store, prepare, display, and sell primarily meat, fish, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dry groceries, and dairy products and may also be used to sell a nominal supply of cooking utensils and equipment and other household products and sundries.

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

Underserved Community: as a geographic area or group of people whose food access needs are not met by existing retailers. This includes but is not limited to:

- A low-income and moderate-income area
- A low income and low access area, commonly referred to as "food deserts" as determined by the United State Department of Agriculture An area where there is a limited number of grocery stores
- A group of people with particular needs such as the aging population, people with disabilities, or people with special dietary needs or preferences, or as otherwise defined by the commissioner

Project Evaluation Profile

FRIDG: Retail Equipment and Infrastructure evaluation criteria	Maximum score
Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project meaningfully serves an underserved community as defined in the RFP. 	Yes/No
Grant request and business or organization overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant clearly describes their project and resulting objectives. Objectives align with the purpose of the FRIDG program. Applicant provides a clear description of their business or organization. Applicant has experience implementing a project of comparable scale or has sufficient partners committed to assisting the project. Business or organization demonstrates capacity to offer affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. Applicant is authorized to accept SNAP benefits or demonstrates they have a sound plan to do so. Applicant demonstrates an investment to move forward, build capacity, sustain the project, create community impact, or be competitive after the end of the grant project. 	20
Work plan and timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plan is thorough and realistic. All required deliverables will be completed by May 2028. A detailed description of each step of the grant project is provided with estimated dates. 	20
Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget table and narrative are consistent. Budget narrative clearly details all project costs and sources of funds for necessary costs above the grant request. Budget narrative clearly explains investments (including the required cash match), made into the project by the business or organization or partners. Budget is cost-effective and appropriate amounts are backed by quotes or other sources. 	20
Community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant demonstrates community engagement in and support for the project. Applicant includes strong letter(s) of support. 	10
Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates that the project will have positive economic and health impacts on underserved communities. (5 points) Applicant demonstrates urgency for the project and need for grant funding. (5 points) Project increases access to nutritious foods. (5 points) Project increases access to culturally appropriate foods. (5 points) Applicant demonstrates commitment to increasing access to Minnesota grown/raised foods (10 points). 	30
Total	100

Application Questions

Contact information

Applicant information

- Business or organization name
- Business or organization mailing address (Example: PO Box 1, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- Business or organization physical address (Example: 123 Smith Street, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- County (where the retailer is located for this project)
- Business or organization website (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 address
- Primary contact mailing address

Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person that will sign the grant contract agreement for this organization. This may be the same as the primary contact listed above:

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

Fiscal agent

If awarded a grant, will you be utilizing a fiscal agent? (Yes or No)

If yes, provide the following information of the authorized representative for the fiscal agent that will be responsible for signing any resulting grant contract agreements:

- Fiscal agent organization name
- Fiscal agent mailing address
- Fiscal agent website
- Fiscal agent authorized representative name (first and last name)
- Fiscal agent authorized representative title
- Fiscal agent authorized representative telephone number
- Fiscal agent authorized representative email 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 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 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, or this project will support the organization becoming compliant. (True or False)
- The applicant is not an MDA employee, spouse of an employee, or a business owned by one of them. (True or False).

Organization eligibility

- Is your organization a for-profit business, nonprofit organization, or some other type of entity?
 - For-profit business
 - Nonprofit organization
 - Another type of entity
- If you selected for-profit business: the applicant is not under bankruptcy proceedings and, if required as part of the pre-award risk assessment, will disclose any lines on assets as part of the pre-award risk assessment. (True or False)
- If you selected nonprofit organization: The applicant is registered and has an active status with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office 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)

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 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 and understand 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 describe 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.
- The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the effective start date of the grant contract agreement. I attest that work has not started on the proposed project and we will not before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later. (Yes or No)

Do you agree to comply with the following conditions for a period of at least five years? If applying on behalf of eligible applicants, you must agree to these requirements for each eligible applicant.

- Accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. (Yes or No)
- Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements established by the commissioner. (Yes or No)
- Promote the hiring, training, and retention of local or regional residents from low- and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color. (Yes or No)
- Allocate at least 30% of retail food space for the sale of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods. This includes fruits and vegetables; low-fat and nonfat dairy; fortified dairy substitute beverages such as soy-based or nut-based dairy substitute beverages; whole grain-rich staple foods; and meats, poultry, fish, seafood, and other proteins consistent with nutrition standards in national guidelines described in the current United States Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Applicants that meet the definition of small food retailer are exempt from this requirement. (Yes or Not Applicable)

Are you interested in working with a FRIDG technical assistance provider? If you answer yes, we will share your contact information with them. (Yes or No)

Location eligibility

Each location where equipment is installed, or physical improvements are made must serve an underserved community which is defined as a geographic area or group of people whose food access needs are not met by existing retailers. Underserved communities include but are not limited to:

- A low-income and moderate-income area
- A low income and low access area, commonly referred to as “food deserts”, as determined by the United State Department of Agriculture An area where there is a limited number of grocery stores
- A group of people with particular needs such as the aging population, people with disabilities, or people with special dietary needs or preferences, or as otherwise defined by the commissioner
- Using local data (for your county, city, zip code, or census tract), describe how your project serves an underserved community. Describe the current food retail options and the barriers that residents face in accessing nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. Utilize reputable data sources, such as: [U.S. Census Bureau](#); [USDA Food Access Research Atlas: Low Income and Low Access Atlas](#); [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s PLACES: Local Data for Better Health](#); [Minnesota Department of Health’s Public Health Data Access: Poverty in MN counties](#) or [Poverty in MN neighborhoods](#); [Minnesota Poverty Map](#) from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities; local community health assessments, etc., to demonstrate the need of those you serve. (1,000 characters, including spaces).

Previous grants

- Have you previously received a grant/s, from any source, for this project or a similar project? (Yes/No)
 - If yes, briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including date(s) and amount(s) awarded. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Have you previously submitted a FRIDG: Equipment and Infrastructure Grant, formerly known as the Good Food Access Program Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant and were not awarded funding?
 - If yes, describe when you previously applied and the project you were applying for? (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Have you previously 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
- Describe your project including the equipment you are purchasing or the work that will be completed as a result of your project. (1,200 characters, including spaces)
- What do you hope to accomplish with project? List one to three main goals that the equipment or infrastructure changes will lead to (i.e. increase retail shelf space, increase Minnesota grown or raised products, reduce energy costs, reduce repair costs, etc.). (1,200 characters, including spaces)
- Total project costs eligible for grant funding/reimbursement.

- Total grant request (up to 75% of the total eligible project cost). Maximum: \$75,000; minimum: \$5,000.
- Total cash match (at least 25% of the total eligible project cost).
- Expected project completion date
 - Contracts may last three years from start date, with an approximate end date of May 2029.
 - All items and services must be paid for by the end date of the contract.
 - You will have up to 30 days after your contract end date to submit for reimbursement.

Business or organization overview

- Select the option that best describes your business. See the [definitions](#) page of the RFP for more information.
 - Grocery store
 - Corner store
 - Convenience store
 - Farmers' market
 - Mobile food market
 - Retail food outlet operated by an emergency food program or food hub
 - Other "small food retailer" (please specify):
- Describe your retail store and how this project fits with the goals for the store's future (include product and/or services you offer, the relationship with the community, and how this project will allow the store to remain competitive and create community impact, etc.). (2,000 characters, including spaces)
- How long has this store been in operation?
- How long have the current owners owned the store?
- Describe the capacity of your business or organization to implement the project. Include information such as years of experience in retail, years at each location, your history of performing the work that would be funded by the grant or similar work, other experience in the food business, community support, organizational strengths, and any other information to demonstrate your organization's ability to execute your project. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Describe the capacity of your business or organization to provide nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate foods to consumers. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Are you currently authorized to accept SNAP benefits? (Yes or No)
 - If no, to be eligible for grant reimbursement, you must be authorized to accept SNAP benefits. Describe your plan to apply for SNAP authorization and ability to finance your project until you are authorized to accept SNAP benefits and eligible for grant reimbursement. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Your most recently completed fiscal year's gross revenue was:
 - We were not in business.
 - Less than \$50,000
 - \$50,000 to \$750,000
 - More than \$750,000
- How many square feet of retail space do you anticipate gaining as a result of this project?
- Upload one to five photos of your current, or planned, retail space, showing the area that will be improved. This may include photos of the store itself or diagrams to show the store layout and proposed improvements.

Work plan and timeline

Complete the following table. You should include the steps you will take to complete your project. For example, you might include target dates for requesting quotes, installing and testing equipment, and full launch of the equipment.

Example:

Timeframe	Description of task or action item	Person responsible
July 2026	Order cooler	Store owner
August 2026	Update electrical system	Electrician
September 2026	Install cooler	Contractor

Optional: 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 in the same format as above.

Budget

Budget table

Complete the following table. Processing equipment is limited to \$5,000 per proposal.

Example:

Item	Quantity	Total cost	Total eligible cost	Source of estimate
Reach-in merchandisers	4	\$65,000	\$65,000	Restaurants.com
Electrical updates	N/A	\$5,000	\$5,000	ABC Electrical
Meat slicer	1	\$7,500	\$5,000	123 Kitchen Supplier
Totals	--	\$77,500	\$75,000	--

Optional: If there's not enough space provided, you may upload a budget as an Excel or Word file in the same format as above.

- Upload estimates/quotes provided by third parties or vendors. If there are not enough upload areas provided, you may merge them into a single file before uploading. Do not attach estimates/quotes in lieu of providing a budget table in the format specified above or in place of the budget narrative required below.

Budget narrative

- Respond to the following prompts. (2,000 characters, including spaces)
 - Detail how the funds will be used and justify each expense listed in the budget table.
 - Describe how you will fund or finance the expenses until grant reimbursements are made.
 - Explain sources of funds for any ongoing maintenance of equipment.
 - Describe the necessity for grant funding to complete this project.
 - If requesting processing equipment, explain how you have already, or plan to, work with the appropriate authorities to ensure food safety and licensing requirements.
- Describe your organization's investments (monetary or non-monetary) into the project. If working with partners on the project, you may also include information about their investments (monetary or non-monetary). (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Describe how the required cash match will be funded or financed. If the cost of the project exceeds your grant request, indicate how the remaining portion of the project will be funded or financed. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Community engagement

- Describe any outreach you have done with your community or intended customers that demonstrates support for the project. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

If you are utilizing a fiscal agent, upload a letter of support or letter of partnership from your fiscal agent.

Optional: Upload other letters of support. Letters of support are not required for most applications but are strongly recommended. The letters will help you demonstrate support for your project and may boost your application's evaluation score. Applications submitted on behalf of one or more other organizations must include letters from any intended subrecipients. If there are not enough upload areas provided, you may merge them into a single file before uploading.

Other supporters could include:

- Community-based organizations or units of local government engaged in healthy eating activities
- Local producers or distributors of foods sold
- Financial institutions or other organizations that will be used for the balance of the funding

Priorities

- Describe how your project will positively impact the economic and health status of your community. Include details around jobs created/retained for local or regional residents from low- and moderate-income areas that reflect the area demographics, including Indigenous communities and communities of color. (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- If applicable, explain how this project increases access to culturally appropriate food? (1,000 characters, including spaces)
- Explain why it is important to complete this project now and the need for grant funding to do so. (500 characters, including spaces).

Minnesota agriculture

How will the proposed project sustain or increase sales of Minnesota-grown and -raised foods? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

What additional foods will you be able to offer as a result of this project? (select all that apply)

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Meat, Fish, Poultry
- Dairy Products
- Other (eggs, legumes, grains, maple syrup, honey, etc.). Please specify. (100 characters, including spaces)

What additional foods that are specifically Minnesota-grown or -raised will you be able to offer as a result of this project? (select all that apply)

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Meat, Fish, Poultry
- Dairy Products
- Other (eggs, legumes, grains, maple syrup, honey, etc.). Please specify. (100 characters, including spaces)