



Good Food Access Program Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposals

Applications due by 4 p.m. on March 28, 2024

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

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant. The grant offers funding for equipment and physical improvements to grocery stores and small food retailers who sell nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, in low-income and moderate-income areas.

Funding availability

We expect to award approximately \$935,000 between two GFAP grant programs: Equipment and Physical Improvement Grants and Technical Assistance (TA) Grants. We expect to award approximately \$735,000 for Equipment and Physical Improvement projects and approximately \$200,000 for TA projects.

The maximum Equipment Grant request is \$75,000, and the minimum request is \$5,000. We anticipate that we will award 15 to 25 grants, but the final number depends on the size of the awards.

Priorities

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

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

This grant program will prioritize projects that demonstrate positive economic and health impacts on underserved communities, including creation and retention of jobs for local or regional residents from low-income and moderate-income areas that reflect the area demographics, including communities of color.

How to apply

- Apply for the GFAP Equipment Grant using our [online application system](#).
 - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first.
 - Once you're logged in, select Good Food Access Program Equipment and Physical Improvement.
- Applications are due by **4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Thursday, March 28, 2024**.
 - We will not accept late applications.
 - Apply early so that there is enough time to get help with the online application system if you need it. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.
 - We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure that we receive your application before the deadline.

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.
- Review the [Project Evaluation Profile](#) included in this document as it is used to score and compare the grant applications.

Tips for applicants

- Clearly explain the importance or potential impact of your project.
- Make sure your budget is realistic and includes only eligible items. Include a detailed budget that clearly explains how the money will be spent. More detail is better than less.
- Include just one or two clear objectives rather than trying to accomplish too much. Simple projects with one or two clear objectives tend to work better.

Timeline and deadlines

Thursday, March 21, 2024, 4 p.m. CT.....Deadline to ask grant program questions.

Thursday, March 28, 2024, 4 p.m. CT.....Applications due.

Thursday, May 9, 2024.....Applicants notified of decisions; grant agreement negotiations begin.

Thursday, June 6, 2024.....Anticipated project start date (after the grant contract is fully signed).

Questions

For questions on the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. Central Time, Thursday, March 21, 2024**.
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with “GFAP Equipment Grant” in the subject line.

Note: 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.

For help with the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500, or
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with “GFAP Equipment” in the subject line.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible applicants

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. Applicants must be in or serve a census tract designated as a food desert or must serve a substantial subpopulation, such as the elderly or disabled or those in a low- or moderate-income census tract, who have low supermarket access.

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

Applicants must:

- Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:
 - No back taxes owed.
 - No defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the last seven years.
 - Acceptable performance on past MDA grants.
 - Compliant with current state regulations, or this project will support the organization becoming compliant.

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

Retailers receiving equipment or making physical improvements under this request for proposals (RFP) must agree with the following conditions for a period of at least five years:

- 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-income and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color; and
- 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.

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.

Collaboration

Organizations may apply on behalf of and act as fiscal agents of other organizations that meet the eligible applicant criteria. If you are using a fiscal agent, contact the MDA for further instructions.

Eligible areas

Projects must be in or serve a census tract designated as a food desert or must serve a substantial subpopulation, such as the elderly or disabled or those in a low- or moderate-income census tract, who have low supermarket access. Follow these steps to determine if your project is in an eligible area:

- Visit the U.S. Census Bureau [TIGER web viewer](https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerweb) (tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerweb).
- Type in the address where the project will be occurring.
- On the upper left side of the screen, click the icon labeled “Layers” and select the box labeled “Census Tracts and Blocks”.
- On the map, locate the census tract (CT) and number for the project location.

Once you have the CT number, go to the [GFAP Eligible Areas](#) webpage. Go to your county, and then locate your CT number in the census tract column. If your census tract is included on this list, your location is eligible based on its designation as either a food desert or a low- or moderate-income area.

If your census tract is not on the GFAP Eligible Areas list, check the [GFAP Ineligible Areas](#) webpage. If your location is on the GFAP Ineligible Areas list, we recommend checking surrounding census tracts for eligibility. Projects may qualify if they can reasonably justify how they serve residents of eligible areas.

Please contact us if you need help locating census tracts.

Eligible projects and expenses

GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement 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.

Projects must:

- Increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food (including produce) for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date (estimated to be around June 2024).
- Be completed in three years or less. Contracts cannot be extended beyond three years.

Project examples

- Retail display coolers and freezers
- Storage coolers and freezers
- Shelving
- Mobile food trucks
- Permanent infrastructure at farmers’ markets
- Architectural work
- Costs associated with the installation of equipment

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.

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- General operating and overhead costs
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, legal costs, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for deciding whether travel is out of state.
- Amusement, diversion, or social activity costs
- Donated or volunteer (in-kind) services. While these may be given to an applicant by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor, the value of these services is not an eligible cost.
- Construction or improvements made outside of the state of Minnesota

Matching funds

Applicants are not required to provide matching funds to the grant award. Up to 100% of the total project cost may be covered by the grant, with a minimum grant award of \$2,500 and a maximum grant award of \$75,000.

Application Review Policies

Review process

A review committee, composed of MDA staff and external reviewers, evaluates all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Project Evaluation Profile. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The commissioner of agriculture reviews the committee recommendations and makes the award decisions. Both the review committee and commissioner may consider geographic distribution, services to prioritized populations, applicant's history as a state grantee, and capacity to perform the work.

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 [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making, 2022 \(Word\)](#)).

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 applicant or grantee will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under 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 application responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will 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

Pre-award risk assessment

During the 2023 legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature adopted new grant administration provisions (Laws of Minnesota 2023, chapter 62, article 7, section 11). The MDA reserves the right to adjust these pre-award financial review requirements as implementation details are being determined.

If the MDA determines that the awardee 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.

Applicants will be required to comply with [Policy 08-06: Policy on Pre-Award Risk Assessment for Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#), and will be asked to submit documents relevant to their entity.

Nonprofit organizations

All nonprofit organizations applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award of \$50,000 and higher.

To comply with Policy 08-06, applicants may be asked to submit the following documents:

- A copy of the nonprofit's most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ with the Internal Revenue Service. If the nonprofit has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, then they must submit the following information:
 - Proof of its tax-exempt status
 - Most recent board-reviewed financial statements
 - Documentation of its internal controls
- Most recent certified financial audit if required to complete one under Section 309.53, Subd. 3.
- Confirmation that it is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Confirmation that it is registered with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, unless otherwise exempt.
- Confirmation that none of its current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Nonprofit grantees that are not in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State and appropriately registered with the Attorney General's Office are not eligible to receive grant contract agreements unless approved by the MDA.

For-profit businesses

All for-profit businesses selected for a grant award of \$50,000 must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant contract agreement.

To comply with Policy 08-06, applicants may be asked to submit the following documents:

- A copy of the business' most recent federal and state tax returns. If the business has not been in business long enough to have a tax return, then they must submit current financial statements and documentation of internal controls.
- Confirmation that the business entity is not under bankruptcy proceedings or have any liens on assets.
- Confirmation that the business is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Confirmation that none of its current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

All for-profit businesses selected for a grant award over \$100,000 must submit either a [Form REV 185i \(PDF\)](#) or [Form REV185b \(PDF\)](#) at the time of grant award notification. These forms give the Minnesota Department of Revenue permission to inform the MDA if the grantee owes any back taxes.

Political sub-divisions

All political sub-divisions selected for a grant award must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant contract agreement.

To comply with Policy 08-06, applicants must confirm that none of its current public officials, board members, or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Accountability and reporting

Follow-up surveys are needed to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grant program and to comply with statutory requirements. Grantees are required to complete annual follow-up surveys for up to five years after they have received their award. Annual reports will be sent out in the fall and will be due in November 2024, 2025, and 2026.

At minimum, surveys will include questions about leveraged funding, amounts of sales via SNAP and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC), retail square footage, sales of fresh fruits and vegetables, and job creation. Dollar amounts of sales via SNAP and WIC may be requested directly from implementing agencies.

The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project.

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

Grant award agreement and payments

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

Upon approval of an application and before beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving reimbursements, the applicant must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is still correct, and
- Submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification, and
- Submit documentation to meet the pre-award financial review requirements.
- Sign a grant contract agreement showing their intention to complete the proposed tasks. The agreement also authorizes the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. This agreement must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties. Grant contracts will have an expected end date of June 1, 2027, and cannot be extended.

Advance funds

Grantees can request an advanced payment of up to 50% of their total award amount or \$25,000, whichever is less at the start of the grant contract agreement. You must indicate in the budget section of the application if you are requesting advance funds. Advance funds will not be awarded to organizations with other open MDA grant agreements. These requests will be reviewed as a part of the grant contract agreement negotiation process. The MDA reserves the right to not honor requests for initial advanced payments or subsequent advances. Advance funds must be reconciled within one year of the start of the grant contract. Any cash advance that violates the terms of the grant agreement or does not adequately support the approved project will need to be repaid.

All other grant funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. To receive grant payments, grantees must provide proof that grant project work has been done by submitting details of each purchase on receipts or invoices, and proof that the vendors have been paid.

Annual progress reports are required to be submitted during the duration of the project. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Site visits and financial reconciliations

The grant agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The MDA will perform a monitoring visit for all grantees with awards of \$25,000 or more before a final payment is approved; grantees with awards of \$250,000 or more will receive annual monitoring visits. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA.

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

Bidding requirements

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

Publicity

All projects funded must publicly credit the Good Food Access Program and the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Program, including on the grantee's website when practical.

Affirmative action and non-discrimination policy

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

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

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

Audits of project

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the MDA, the Department of Administration, and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)).

The grantee is responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to the grant. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Voter registration requirement

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

GFAP Background and Program Goals

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

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

Definitions

Retailer definitions

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

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

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

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

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

Project Evaluation Profile

GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement evaluation criteria	Maximum score
Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is in or meaningfully serves an eligible area as detailed in the RFP. 	Y/N
Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business or organization demonstrates capacity to implement the proposed project. Project demonstrates a viable plan for long-term sustainability, including the ability to increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, for undeserved communities in low-income and moderate-income areas. 	20
Investments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project investments (monetary and non-monetary) are detailed. Project demonstrates an investment of public support to move forward, build capacity, create community impact, or be competitive. 	10
Work plan Work plan demonstrates the capacity to successfully implement the project and thoroughly considers the steps necessary to complete the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plan is thorough and realistic. All required deliverables will be completed by June 2027. A detailed description of each step of the grant project, including estimated dates, is provided. Applicant has experience implementing a project of comparable scale, or has sufficient partners committed to assisting the project. 	25
Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget table and narrative are consistent. Budget narrative clearly details all project costs. Budget narrative clearly explains investments, monetary and non-monetary. Budget is cost-effective and appropriate amounts are backed by quotes or other sources. 	20
Minnesota agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates commitment to increasing sales from Minnesota agricultural producers. 	5
Community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates community engagement in and support for the project. Demonstrates commitment to participate in state and local initiatives to educate consumers on nutrition and promote healthy eating and healthy weight. 	10
Project impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates that the project will have positive economic and health impacts on underserved communities, including creation and retention of jobs for local or regional residents from low-income and moderate-income areas that reflect the area demographics, including communities of color. 	10
Total	100

Application Questions

Contact information

Applicant information

- Business or organization name
- Point of contact name
- Point of contact mailing address
- Point of contact telephone
- Point of contact email

Authorized representative

- If awarded a grant, is the person authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the business or organization the same as the Point of Contact person listed above? (Yes/No)
- If no, please provide the following Authorized Representative information for signing any resulting grant contract agreement:
 - Name
 - Title
 - Telephone
 - Email

Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements apply to you and your business/organization.

- The business/organization 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)
- The business/organization is compliant with current state regulations or this project will help the organization become compliant. (True)
- The business/organization is in Minnesota or authorized to conduct business in Minnesota. (True)
- The business/organization is a Minnesota grocery store or small food retailer engaged in the sale of nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. (True)
- No one involved in the project or the application for the grant is an employee or spouse of an employee of the MDA. (True)
- I attest that I have the authority to apply on behalf of the business/organization and no other application is being submitted from this organization. (Yes)
- I attest that none of the organization's current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. (Yes)

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 make these requirements of each eligible applicant before a subaward is made.

- Accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. (Yes)
- Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements established by the commissioner. (Yes)
- Promote the hiring, training, and retention of local or regional residents from low-income and moderate-income areas that reflect area demographics, including communities of color. (Yes)
- 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/Not Applicable)

May the MDA share your contact information and a summary of your proposal with program partners and technical assistance providers if your proposal is not funded? Funded proposals are automatically considered public information. If there are any parts of your proposal that you would not like shared, you must indicate the specific content that is a trade secret. (Yes/No)

Are you interested in receiving GFAP technical assistance support if awarded grant funds? (Yes/No)

Location eligibility

Each location where equipment is installed or physical improvements are made must be in a food desert or in a low- or moderate-income area with a substantial subpopulation that has low supermarket access. (Refer to the eligible areas section of the RFP for details on determining if the project is in a food desert or serves residents of a low-income or moderate-income area.) Is the retailer located in a food desert? (Yes/No)

If no, explain how the retailer serves a low- or moderate-income census tract that includes a substantial population of residents with low supermarket access and explain how the project will target residents with limited access. (1,200 characters, including spaces)

What census tracts are impacted by this project? Include the name of the county where the census tract is located.

Previous grants

Have you previously received any grants from any source for similar projects? (Yes/No)

Have you previously received a GFAP TA or Equipment Grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture? (Yes/No)

If yes to either of the above questions, briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including date(s), amount(s) awarded, and funding source(s). (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project summary

Grant request

- Project name.
- Total grant request. Maximum of \$75,000, minimum \$5,000.
- Total project cost.
- Expected project end date.
 - Contracts may last a full three years from start date.
 - You will have up to two months after your contract end date to submit for a reimbursement.
 - All items and services must be paid for by the end date of the contract.

Project description

Provide a brief description of your project and goals to be accomplished. The summary of this proposed project must be suitable for dissemination to the public. (1,200 characters, including spaces)

Business or organization overview

Most recently completed fiscal year's gross revenue was:

- The retailer was not in business
- Less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$750,000
- More than \$750,000

Current square footage of food retail space.

Estimated square footage of food retail space after project completion.

Type of entity

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 the capacity of your business or organization to implement the project. Include information such as years of experience in retail, years at each location, 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 capability of your business or organization to provide nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate foods to consumers. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Investments

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). If contributing a cash match to the project, indicate the source of the funding. (2,400 characters, including spaces)

Work plan

Complete the following table. You should include the steps that you will take to successfully complete your project. For example, you might include target dates for requesting quotes, installing and testing equipment, and full launch of the equipment. Not all areas will apply to all projects. You may add additional lines or pages as necessary. The online application will have a table for you to download and re-attach to your application.

Timeframe	Description of task or action item	Person responsible
Example: July 2024	Order cooler	Store owner

Budget

Budget table

Complete the following table. You may add additional lines or pages as necessary. The online application will have a table for you to download and re-attach to your application.

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total amount	Source of estimate
Example: Walk-in cooler	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	Restaurants.com

Budget narrative

Respond to the following prompts. (3,000 characters, including spaces)

- Detail how the funds will be used and justify each expense listed in the budget table.
- Explain sources of funds for any ongoing maintenance of equipment.
- Describe the necessity for grant funding to complete this project.
- The MDA normally does not provide cash advances for grant projects. However, if you are a retailer who is already authorized to accept SNAP and would like to receive up to 50% or \$25,000 (whichever is less) of the total award as an advance, please justify the need for upfront funding. Note that any cash advance that violates the terms of the grant contract agreement or is not adequately used to support the approved project will need to be repaid.

Expected outcomes

Complete the following table. We recommend that you review sales records. If your retail operation was not in business prior to the grant project, you may enter zeros in the first column.

Sales of...	2023	2024 (Expected)	2025 (Expected)
Fresh fruits and vegetables	\$	\$	\$
Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables	\$	\$	\$
Minnesota-grown fruits and vegetables	\$	\$	\$

How will the proposed project lead to continued or increased sales of Minnesota-grown and -raised foods?
(2,400 characters, including spaces)

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 sub-awardees.

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 institution or other organization that will be used for the balance of the funding.