

Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Targeted Small Grants Program - Financial Assistance

2019 Request for Assistance (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 14, 2019



United States
Department of
Agriculture



REINVESTMENT
FUND

**HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE
REINVESTMENT FUND: NATIONAL FUND MANAGER FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Targeted Small Grants Program

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: RBS-HFFI-2018

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under CFDA# 10.872.

DATES: Electronic Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 14, 2019. Paper applications time and date stamped before 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 14, 2019 will be accepted until 5pm on February 19, 2019. Please allow sufficient time for delivery. Applications may be mailed or delivered to our office located at: Reinvestment Fund; 1700 Market Street, 19th Floor; Philadelphia, PA 19103 attention: Healthy Food Financing Initiative: Targeted Small Grants Program – Financial Assistance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Too many Americans live in communities without access to fresh, healthy and affordable foods. Residents of these communities suffer from higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases. A growing body of research indicates that when people have local access to fresh foods, they make healthier choices about their diets, have better health outcomes, and benefit from improved local economic development. The goal of the Health Food Financing Initiative is to address this critical issue, by stimulating fresh food retail development in low income and underserved communities across the country.

Established by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill), HFFI is a public-private partnership administered by USDA Rural Development that seeks to improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas. The program seeks to create and preserve quality jobs, and to revitalize low-income communities by providing technical assistance and capital to eligible fresh, healthy food projects in hard to reach, underserved areas. In 2017, Reinvestment Fund was selected as the National Fund Manager (NFM) through a competitive process and has executed a 5-year agreement with USDA.

Reinvestment Fund requests applications for the HFFI Targeted Small Grants Program for Financial Assistance to support projects to improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas, creating and preserving quality jobs, and revitalizing low income communities. A total of \$1.4 million is available for Financial Assistance in this round. An additional \$400,000 is available for Technical Assistance.

This notice identifies the objectives for HFFI projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and instructions needed to apply for an HFFI Financial Assistance grant.

Webinars reviewing this proposal will be held on December 13, 2018 and January 8, 2019 for potential applicants. The webinar will be recorded and posted to the HFFI webpage accessible here: <https://www.investinginfood.com>.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The program is authorized under the Agriculture Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79), Section 4206 - Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI). The program will provide loans and/or grants to eligible entities for preserving, creating, or expanding healthy food availability through retail operators. The HFFI program will utilize public – private engagement, partnerships supporting community economic development efforts, and assist regional, state, and local governments, and food retailers.

The designated “National Fund Manager” (NFM) as described in the statute is a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) that is integral to the successful implementation of HFFI at USDA. The NFM will leverage private capital, provide financial and technical assistance to regional, state and local partnerships, and channel capital to fund eligible projects that will improve access to fresh, healthy foods in underserved rural and urban areas.

Reinvestment Fund is a Community Development Financial Institution, certified by the Department of the Treasury, with 30 years of experience using analytical and financial tools to create anchor institutions that attract investment over the long term and help families lead healthier, more productive lives.

Reinvestment Fund has over a decade of experience bringing equitable access to healthy food to communities across America. Beginning with the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) in 2004, Reinvestment Fund has developed a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to improving the food landscape for low-income people and communities. Since that time, it has provided more than \$300 million in grants and loans to support 180 healthy food projects. Reinvestment Fund also created ReFresh in 2014, a capacity-building initiative that is composed of 19 CDFI partners, who are among the largest national practitioners in healthy food financing.

Since 2009, Reinvestment Fund has collaborated with national food access and advocacy organizations, **The Food Trust** and **PolicyLink**, to raise awareness about the lack of access to fresh and healthy foods in low-income rural and urban communities and to promote the need for a federal program to finance the development of supermarkets, grocery stores, and other fresh food retail in low-income, underserved communities. The three organizations have developed and disseminated compelling research documenting the extent of the problem and have built and maintain a broad coalition of national support among key constituencies (the grocery industry, public health and economic development officials, community development practitioners) to advocate for federal, state and local resources, as well as to educate policymakers on the need to improve access to nutritious foods in low-income, underserved, rural, suburban and urban communities.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of HFFI is to improve access to affordable, healthy foods in urban and rural areas, particularly areas composed predominantly of lower income neighborhoods and communities. Thus far funded through the Health and Human Services' Community Economic Development Program and Treasury's CDFI Fund, HFFI has distributed \$220 million in grants since 2011; allocated millions in New Markets Tax Credits and leveraged resources from foundations, state and local governments. 100 community development organizations are using their HFFI grants to fund a wide range of healthy food projects that are designed to meet locally determined community needs and priorities, including the construction of new and renovated grocery stores, farmers markets, corner stores, food hubs, and urban farms.

The HFFI Targeted Small Grants Program will fund projects intended to "expand or preserve the availability of staple and perishable foods in underserved areas with low and moderate-income populations by maintaining or increasing the number of retail outlets that offer an assortment of perishable and staple foods in those areas; and accepts or plans to accept benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.)"

HFFI grant awards, through Reinvestment Fund, will allow much needed access to financial resources and expertise necessary to create and expand healthy food availability. Awards will consist of financial assistance and/or technical assistance to overcome higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved areas.

Awards of Financial Assistance under the HFFI program will be made on a competitive basis. Technical Assistance awards will be made on a non-competitive basis.

The USDA defines "staple foods" as "food that is a basic dietary item, which includes bread, flour; fruits; vegetables; and meat;" and defines "perishable food" as "staple food that is fresh, refrigerated, or frozen."

In reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA for Financial Assistance, Reinvestment Fund will give priority to projects and partnerships that are located or aimed at very low-income communities, as defined by the CDFI Fund of the Department of the Treasury (see definition below) and possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- Create or retain quality jobs for low-income residents in the community
- Support regional food systems and locally grown food to the maximum extent possible
- Be accessible by public transit in areas served by public transit
- Involve women- or minority-owned businesses
- Involve a Federally recognized Indian tribe, band, or nation organized as a group or community
- Receive funding from other sources, including other federal agencies

- Be located in, or serve, a rural area

HFFI projects present the opportunity to bring together stakeholders from distinct parts of the retail operating environment and financing sectors to foster understanding of how they might improve access to healthy food across the country. HFFI projects are also intended to support economic growth and revitalization in low income communities through the creation and preservation of quality jobs and improved health and well-being of community residents.

C. Program Area Description

1. Financial Assistance

The HFFI Targeted Small Grant Program will provide critical grant funding to eligible fresh food retailers to overcome the higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved urban, suburban, and rural areas. This flexible program will support innovations in fresh food retail and could assist retailers with a variety of aspects of store development and renovation processes, including predevelopment costs, energy efficiency upgrades, employee training, and security improvements aimed at providing a safe and welcoming shopping environment. For example, the program could also support renovation and expansion of existing stores to enable them to provide more of the healthy foods that communities want and need or to remain financially viable.

All projects must accept, or plan to accept, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. General questions about SNAP and EBT should be directed to USDA FNS's Ask the Expert system at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ask-the-expert>. This system can provide prompt answers for general SNAP inquiries. SNAP eligible food is any food or food products (including seeds and plants that produce eligible food) intended for home preparation and human consumption. The following types of products are ineligible for purchase using SNAP benefits: alcohol, tobacco, hot food, food sold for on-premises consumption, and nonfood items (such as soap, paper, medicine, etc.). Products that carry a "Supplement Facts" label are classified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as supplements and are, therefore, not considered SNAP eligible food. You can read more about the SNAP authorization process and apply for authorization online here <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-apply>. SNAP regulations allow 45 days from receipt of a completed application for a decision to be made.

All applicants for financial assistance must submit a project proposal that includes a method of evaluating the success of the project. Because funded HFFI projects under this RFA for Financial Assistance are likely to be in early stages of development, grantees will be required to submit limited information and data to inform impact assessment, and test potential new strategies and promising new programs to consider in future funding cycles.

2. Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance is also available for selected projects where assistance would help clarify and support the development of a healthy food access project in an underserved area. For the purposes of the HFFI program, Technical Assistance consists of managerial, financial or operational consultation, as well as marketing and feasibility studies. Technical Assistance is expected to address

early stage work where the resources provided would further clarify and support the project. Reinvestment Fund will evaluate requests for Technical Assistance on a non-competitive, rolling basis. For more information, including Key Dates, and to apply for Technical Assistance, please visit the website at www.investinginfood.com or contact:

- Email: info@investinginfood.com
- Address: Reinvestment Fund, 1700 Market Street 19th Floor, Philadelphia 19103 Attn: HFFI
- Phone: 215-574-5862.

Changes in HFFI Grantee Primary Point of Contact

HFFI grantees are required to inform Reinvestment Fund regarding any changes in their HFFI grant project's primary point(s) of contact. HFFI grantees are also strongly encouraged to inform HFFI points of contact of changes to other primary grantee points of contact in a timely fashion.

Current HFFI points of contact at Reinvestment Fund are Molly Hartman, Donna Leuchten Nuccio and Amanda High. Updates to these HFFI points of contact will be provided to all grantees in a timely fashion as necessary.

Grantee Noncompliance with Program Policy

Grantees are expected to comply with all policies and requirements laid out in this RFA document as well as any policies or requirements further clarified in Q&As, memoranda, or other relevant HFFI Reinvestment Fund documents, and all applicable Federal Laws. If any grantee fails to comply with HFFI policies or requirements, then Reinvestment Fund will notify that grantee of the issue and establish a timeline for corrective action. If the grantee fails to take required corrective action within the established timeline, then Reinvestment Fund will immediately suspend that grantee's access to grant funds. The general timeline for such corrective action is 30 calendar days, although the timeline may be extended or shortened depending on the nature and extent of the issue at hand at the discretion of Reinvestment Fund.

In cases in which grant funds have been spent on unallowable expenses or otherwise misallocated, Reinvestment Fund will require that the grantee repay the full amount of grant funds that have been misallocated.

If a grantee engages in a pattern of noncompliant actions, then Reinvestment Fund will consider rescission of the HFFI grant award in its entirety. Additionally, a history of noncompliance with HFFI or any other federal grant policies and requirements will be considered during the grant application evaluation process.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The total amount of all current available funding is \$1,800,000. The funds will be awarded as grants for financial or technical assistance. There is no commitment by Reinvestment Fund to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

B. Length of Project Periods

Projects can be non-construction or construction projects. Non-construction projects will have one 12-month project and budget period. Projects that involve construction may have a project and budget period up to 24 months.

C. Eligible Uses

All Financial Assistance awards will be made on the merit of the proposed project, with budgets considered only after the merits of the project have been determined. Reinvestment Fund reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants. In general, grants will fall in the range of \$25,000 - \$250,000.

The following eligible uses may include, but are not limited to:

- Predevelopment costs such as: market studies, feasibilities studies, financial modeling, appraisals, consumer/customer surveys, cooperative governance support, architectural plans, environmental assessments, energy audit, succession planning, financial and development consultants;
- Machinery and Equipment purchases;
- Inventory;
- Purchase of delivery vehicle to provide increased healthy food access in an underserved community;
- Purchase of existing business assets (and/or capital assets) to retain healthy food access in a community;
- Investments in technology including new POS systems, online ordering capacity and accounting or back office software;
- Non-revenue generating, one-time project costs such as employee training.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by for-profit organizations (including a corporation, limited liability company, sole proprietor, public benefit corporation), and nonprofit organizations (including institutions of higher education; state and local governments and governmental agencies, authorities, commissions and food policy councils; tribal governments and tribal governmental agencies, authorities, and food policy councils) and partnerships. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude Reinvestment Fund from making an award.

Specifically, eligible organizations or partnerships may include: a food retail store operator, a food cooperative; a mobile market operator; a food hub; a partnership organized to improve access to fresh, healthy foods and provide financial and technical assistance to eligible projects (such as a state-based HFFI program); a CDFI that makes resources available to retail organizations; a farmers' market. All applicants must confirm in their application that they meet the defined eligibility requirements.

1. Eligible Applicants MUST:

Plan to execute a project that expands or preserves the availability of staple and perishable food; and will accept benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.);

or,

Constitute a partnership organized to improve access to fresh, healthy foods and provides financial and/or technical assistance to eligible projects.

AND:

Demonstrate the intent and ability to serve under-served communities.

AND possess at least one of the following characteristics:

- Create or retain quality jobs for low-income residents in the community
- Support regional food systems and locally grown food to the maximum extent possible
- Be accessible by public transit in areas served by public transit
- Involve women- or minority – or tribal - owned businesses
- Receive funding from other sources, including other federal agencies
- Be located in, or serve, a rural area

2. Eligible Partnership Applicants MUST meet eligibility criteria above and fulfill ALL of the following requirements:

- Organized to improve access to healthy food:
- Expand or preserve the availability of staple foods by maintaining or increasing the number of retail outlets in underserved and low or moderate-income areas;
- Demonstrate ability to provide grants, loans or technical assistance to eligible projects and evaluate progress;
- Engage local partners from across sectors (public sector, industry representatives, CDFIs community and business development organizations, food access organizations, food policy councils) in promoting or delivering HFFI financial and technical resources;
- Demonstrate ability to leverage Federal HFFI resources locally;
- Be a collaboration between the public sector and one or more private entities, such as private businesses, foundations and funders' collaboratives, community development financial institutions, community development organizations, food policy councils, food systems and food access organizations.

3. Partners and Collaborators

Applicants for HFFI grants are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, non-profit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities) and/or other appropriate professionals; community-based organizations; local government entities; Promise Zone lead applicant/organization or implementation partners for the purposes of providing additional resources and strengthening under- resourced communities. *Only the applicant must meet the requirements specified above for grant eligibility.* Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements.

B. DUNS Number and System for Award Management Eligibility Requirements

All applicants must have a DUNS Number ([http:// fedgov. dnb.com /webform](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform)) and an active registration on the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant should be made, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Reinvestment Fund is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, Reinvestment Fund:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no requirement of matching contributions or cost sharing on a dollar-for-dollar basis for awarded funds. However, a clear and cogent description of other sources of cash or in-kind contributions, including any third-party in-kind contributions fairly evaluated, including facilities, equipment, or services that will contribute to the project's success is expected to provide context for the proposed project(s).

Additional funding may come from State government, local government, or private sources. HFFI grant awards may not be used to match.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Content and Form of Application Submission

The application should not exceed 10 pages of written text, double-spaced, in 12 pt font; and may include up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applicants may submit applications as PDFs or Microsoft Word and/or Excel documents. Attachments, including required documentation and supplemental information, may be included in the same PDF package or attached as separate files.

1. Title Page (does not count toward the 10 page limit)

Please include:

- Point of contact (name, address, email, telephone number)
- Project or Partnership Title
- Short project description (1-2 sentences)
- Proposed Project location(s)
- Amount requested
- Length of project
- Submission Date and signature of applicant
- Legal Status of applicant entity
- DUNS number of applying entity: DUNS number may be obtained at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

2. Project Summary (approx. 1 pp)

The summary must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served. The summary should include the relevance of the project to the goals of the HFFI grant program.

3. Project Narrative (approx. 7 pp)

(a) The Community to be Involved in the Project and the Needs to be Addressed

Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food economy, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served and how the community might benefit from the proposed project. Applications should describe the local food retail environment, capabilities and assets, such as those identified in a community food assessment or a food retail market study and involvement of low-income communities in the context of project activities and operations.

Most relevant is an explanation of why the applicant and/or partnership selected the

activities proposed in the application. Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed.

(b) Organization Ownership and Qualifications of Applicant

Please share the type of organization (for profit or not-for-profit) and the ownership or management structure. Resumes of the key leadership positions should be attached and will not count toward the total page limit of the application. Discuss relevant project partners including major supply and wholesale relationships.

The application must demonstrate the organization, its staff, and its project partners have sufficient and relevant experience and success in developing and operating a business(es) similar to that to be conducted under the proposed project. Note particular facets of the organizational model, operational model, or business proposed that are innovative and/or have the potential to be scaled. Proposals should demonstrate community linkages and coalitions wherever appropriate.

Letters from the key organizations involved in the project, acknowledging their support and contributions, may be provided as applicable. A limited number of additional support letters – such as those from farmers or partner organizations, where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement. These support letters will not count toward the total page limit of the application.

(c) Timeline, Project Goals and Intended Outcomes

Discuss the overall timeline for your project with proposed dates for key milestones including site control, due diligence period, construction timeline and project completion.

List the goals and intended outcomes of the project, and how they contribute to the primary goal of the HFFI grant program. Outcomes should describe specific changes or results that will occur as a result of the project and that will constitute “success.” Outcomes should describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people, e.g., employees, residents, participants, will benefit.

(d) Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment is a critical component of the HFFI grant program. HFFI seeks to determine and lift up best practices, and the relative effectiveness of various project and programmatic initiatives that increase access to healthy, fresh foods. Recognizing that HFFI projects are likely to vary substantially in scale and maturity, and that grantees are likely to vary considerably in capacity and expertise, Reinvestment Fund will seek to support the impact assessment efforts of grantees helping create appropriate and measurable impact indicators.

Grantees will be expected to facilitate access to or provide documentation of project impact(s), operations, costs, and outcomes; and also to facilitate occasional site visits and interviews with project staff, partners and program participants.

Examples of project level metrics and indicators include:

- Leveraged Capital – the dollar amount of other capital supporting the project.
- Square Footage Created – the amount of retail space created or preserved in support of fresh food access.
- Jobs Created/Saved – the number of full and part time jobs created or saved
- Total Sales Revenue – the annual amount of sales revenue
- Estimated percentage of low-income and minority residents likely to be served by the project.
- Number and volume of SNAP transactions (per site/per year)
- Whether the project(s) accepts other nutrition assistance program benefits, beyond SNAP.

HFFI grantees will required to periodically provide Reinvestment Fund with pre-established project data (appropriate to the particular project) to ensure impact tracking. Grantees may choose at their discretion to collect information beyond the agreed upon project data.

Proposals should discuss any opportunities and challenges with the impact assessment requirements and how they will be addressed. Proposals should also describe any previous process, outcome, and impact assessment experience with SNAP participants or other related food programs. Applicants must demonstrate their interest in, and willingness to, work with Reinvestment Fund in assessing the impact of their projects.

(e) Sustainability

To demonstrate that the proposed assistance would facilitate implementation of a sustainable project that does not require ongoing operating subsidy, the applicant is requested to submit 5-year projections for the retail operations. Please include detail concerning how you arrived at the assumptions (sales projections, gross margins, operating expense) used and the associated justification.

Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the grant period and discuss how an infusion of HFFI funds will be sufficient for the proposed project. Projects may identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project. Applicants should provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a management business plan, to demonstrate that it is likely to become successful in meeting HFFI grant program objectives. Business plan outlines or any other documentation of evidence for sustainability should be no more than five pages and should be included as an appendix.

4. Project Sources and Uses and Grant Budget and Budget Narrative (approx. 2 pp)

(a) Project Sources and Uses:

Please provide a complete list of sources of capital for your project and corresponding budget/uses. Please indicate the status of the sources (secured, application pending, not yet secured). The sources and uses should balance and a strategy to fill any gaps in funding should be discussed in the narrative.

(b) Budget: Basic Cost Categories

Please provide a complete budget for your grant request, including the following items as applicable:

Contracts/Soft Costs: Specify contract services, such as architectural fees, consultants' fees, and trainings.

Equipment: List all purchases for items with a life span of one year or more for all purchases above \$5,000 per each item acquired. Examples of such purchases are equipment, automobiles, real property (land and fixtures such as portable/unaffixed refrigeration, kitchen, and storage equipment, furniture, Point of Sale (POS) or computers, copy/fax machines, telephones, and software.)

Materials/Supplies: Include short-lived items, such as paper, envelopes, pens and pencils, CDs, and staples, etc.

Capital Expenses: Include the purchase and/or construction and renovation of land, buildings, and accompanying fixtures.

Other Costs: as applicable.

(c) Budget Narrative

Please provide detail concerning how you arrived at the budget figures and the associated justification.

B. Other Submission Requirements

1. Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

- Articles of incorporation, bylaws, or other official documents demonstrating that the legal status of the applicant.
- Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status.

C. Funding Restrictions

1. Multiple Submissions

The HFFI grant program will only accept one application per prospective organization or partnership.

2. Recruitment Activities

All HFFI grantees may and are encouraged to promote or advertise grant projects using any media, including television, radio, and billboards. Regardless of format, however, promotional activities funded with HFFI funds:

- a. must present factual statements intended to inform, not to persuade,
- b. may include locational information about retail outlets (i.e., the address of the retail food store participating in the grantee's project),
- c. may also specify that retailer outlet accepts SNAP (this includes appropriate logo use as outlined at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP- Logo-Guidance.pdf>,

Under no circumstances should HFFI grantees engage in any activities intended to persuade or recruit individuals to apply for SNAP benefits. The use of HFFI funds to employ personnel tasked with enrolling individuals in SNAP is strictly prohibited. Allowable promotional activities must be limited to factual statements and HFFI grantees should generally avoid emotional appeals in their promotional activities.

3. Non-supplantation

Grants shall be used to supplement, not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for expenditure. Grant funds must be used to fund new projects, or expand or enhance existing projects. They may not be used to replace State or local funds that would, in the absence of Federal aid, be available or forthcoming for incentive programs.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Applications will be evaluated using a two-part process. First, an initial screening for eligibility and administrative requirements. Second, a review panel consisting of industry experts will assess and recommend projects for funding to Reinvestment Fund.

Reinvestment Fund reserves the right to negotiate with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will evaluate applications submitted in response to this RFA and score them based on the selection factors noted below. All applications will be ranked on a nationwide basis, based on the total points scored.

1. Objectives and Need for Assistance (10 points)

How well the project aligns with and advances HFFI grant program priorities, which are to increase and improve access to healthy fresh food in low income communities.

2. Priority Project Attributes (10 points)

The extent to which the project has more than one of the following attributes or is a partnership aimed at:

- Create or retain quality jobs for low-income residents in the community
- Support regional food systems and locally grown food to the maximum extent possible
- Allows access by public transit in areas served by public transit
- Supports women, minority, and tribal - owned businesses
- Is located in or serves a Rural Area
- Supports an existing SNAP retailer

3. Project Viability (10 points)

Demonstrates that the proposed assistance would facilitate implementation of a sustainable project that does not require ongoing operating subsidy.

4. Need for Assistance (20 points)

The extent to which the project application demonstrates implementation risk but for the proposed financial assistance.

5. Business Model (20 points)

The extent to which the proposed project presents, or is targeted to, innovative business models with the potential to scale.

6. Project Reach (20 Points)

The project's relevance to and capability to reach populations that have been underserved by Federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative programs, such as most rural and native communities.

7. Impact and Evaluation (10 points)

Presents a plan to assess project impact through the collection of data and other mechanisms such as: number of households served (mobile market), % of revenue coming from SNAP, number of locally hired employees, quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables sold/monthly, % of locally sourced products.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the evaluation process, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, Reinvestment Fund will make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but must start within 90 days of the award. All funds granted by HFFI under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, terms and conditions of the award, and/or applicable federal regulations.

B. Award Notice

Successful applicants will be notified through an award document that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, and the total project period for which support is contemplated, and will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR 200.210](#). The award document will be transmitted via postal mail or email. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply, compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations as provided in *2 CFR, Part 200, Title 2, Grants and Agreements, particularly Subtitle B – D, in addition to Federal Agency Regulations for Grants and Agreements, 400-499 (USDA) specifically*. https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=abb93340139a80138e436251e5d6d897&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2tab_02.tpl

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. The output and reporting requirements will be included in the award terms and conditions. If there are any program or award-specific terms, those will be identified in the award. Sample forms are available at www.grants.gov.

PART VII—NFM CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

HFFI Program Contacts:

Molly Hartman, Program Director, Healthy Food Financing Initiative
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PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Budget or Project Plans

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from Reinvestment Fund for the following program or budget-related reasons:

- Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring prior written approval).
- Change in a key person specified in the application or award.
- The disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved project director or principal investigator.

B. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT is a collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, so as to inform change actions to make the community more food secure.

PARTNERSHIP – As defined in Section 4206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the term 'partnership' means a regional, State, or local public-private partnership that is organized to improve access to fresh, healthy foods and provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects.

PERISHABLE FOOD – As defined in Section 4206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the term 'perishable food' means a staple food that is fresh, refrigerated, or frozen.

STAPLE FOOD – As defined in Section 4206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the term 'staple food' means food that is a basic dietary item, which includes bread, flour; fruits; vegetables; and meat.

QUALITY JOB – As defined in Section 4206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the term 'quality job'

means a job that provides wages and other benefits comparable to, or better than, similar positions in existing businesses of similar size in similar local economies.

HEALTHY FOODS: The term “healthy foods” will have the same meaning as used by the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund – nutrient-dense foods and beverages as set forth in the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 including whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy foods, lean meats and poultry (fresh, refrigerated, frozen or canned). Healthy Foods should have low or no added sugars, and be low-sodium, reduced sodium, or no-salt-added. (See *USDA Dietary Guidelines*: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/dietary-guidelines>).

UNDERSERVED AREAS: The term “underserved areas” will have the same meaning as “underserved communities,” which based on Section 6015 of the 2008 Farm Bill means a community (including an urban or rural community and an Indian tribal community) that has (I) limited access to affordable, healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, in grocery retail stores or farmer-to-consumer direct markets; and (II) a high rate of hunger or food insecurity or a high poverty rate. For the purpose of satisfying the project requirements for the Initiative an underserved area must either: 1) be a Census tract determined to be a Low-Income and Low-Supermarket-Access Census Tract by the United States Department of Agriculture in its Food Access Research Atlas; 2) be a Census tract adjacent to a Census tract determined to be a Low-Income and Low-Supermarket-Access Census Tracts by the United States Department of Agriculture in its Food Access Research Atlas; which has a median family income less than or equal to 120 percent of the applicable Area Median Family Income; or 3) be a Geographic Unit as defined in 12CFR Part 1805.201(b)(3)(ii)(B), which— individually meets at least one of the criteria in 12CFR Part 1805.201(b)(3)(ii)(D), and meets the criteria as having low access to supermarket or grocery store through a methodology that has been adopted for use by another government or philanthropic healthy food initiative.

LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES – As defined by Treasury’s CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Low-Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than:
Metropolitan Areas, 80 percent of the area median family income; and
Non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
80 percent of the area median family income; or
80 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

MODERATE INCOME COMMUNITIES – As defined by Treasury’s CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Moderate Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than: 3
Metropolitan Areas, 120 percent of the area median family income; and
Non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
120 percent of the area median family income; or
120 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

VERY LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES – As defined by Treasury’s CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Very Low Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than:
Metropolitan Areas, 50-79 percent of the area median family income; and
Non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
50 percent of the area median family income; or

50 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

NATIONAL FUNDS MANAGER (NFM) – Per 7 U.S.C. § 6954(b)(3): “The term ‘national fund manager’ means a community development financial institution that is –
(A) in existence on the date of enactment of this section; and
(B) certified by the Community Development Financial Institution Fund of the Department of Treasury to manage the Initiative for purposes of:
(i) raising private capital;
(ii) providing financial and technical assistance to partnerships; and
(iii) funding eligible projects to attract fresh, healthy food retailers to underserved areas, in accordance with this section.”

AWARD - The Federal financial assistance that a non-Federal entity receives directly from a Federal awarding agency or indirectly from a pass-through entity.

AWARDEE (RECIPIENT) – An eligible entity that receives grant funds directly from an awarding Federal Agency for award distribution, either directly or indirectly for an eligible project.

SUB-AWARD (SUB-RECIPIENT) -An award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

PASS-THROUGH ENTITY – A non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal program.

RURAL AREA – The term ‘rural area’ means the Rural Business Service’s Rural Area definition as outlined in Section 343(a)(13)(A)(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act which states: any area other than: (1) A city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (2) any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

RETAIL OUTLETS – A retail outlet that accepts benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.).

CAPITAL ASSET - Capital assets means tangible or intangible assets used in operations having a useful life of more than one year which are capitalized in accordance with GAAP. Capital assets include:
(a) Land, buildings (facilities), equipment, and intellectual property (including software) whether acquired by purchase, construction, manufacture, lease-purchase, exchange, or through capital leases; and
(b) Additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life (not ordinary repairs and maintenance).

REAL PROPERTY – Refer to 2 CFR, Part 200, 200.311 for requirements for grant funds used for the acquisition of real property; (title, use, disposition, and/or transfer).

EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY TRUST RELATIONSHIP, AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES – Refer to 2 CFR Part 200, Section 200.313 for equipment, Section 200.316 for Property Trust Relationship guidance, and 200.439 for Capital Expenditures for title, use, disposition and/or transfer.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) means the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 *et seq*).