

# Healthy Food Financing Initiative Food Access and Retail Expansion Fund (HFFI FARE Fund)

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**2024 Grants and Technical Assistance Webinar**  
Wednesday, September 18, 2024



# Meet the HFFI Team



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# Healthy Food Financing Initiative

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The purpose of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) is to support food supply chain resiliency, improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas, to create and preserve quality jobs, and to revitalize low-income communities.

# HFFI Goals and Authority

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- The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) was authorized under the Agriculture Act of 2014 and reauthorized in 2018.
- HFFI is a program of USDA Rural Development.
- In 2017, Reinvestment Fund was selected as the National Fund Manager through a competitive process. We implement HFFI and provide financial and technical assistance to eligible healthy food retail partnerships and projects. Reinvestment Fund manages the HFFI program for USDA.
- Funding for this announcement is made available largely through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021.

## HFFI FARE Fund

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Over the next five years, the HFFI FARE Fund will provide \$60 million in loans, grants and technical assistance to food retail and food retail supply chain projects in underserved areas. Assistance from the HFFI FARE Fund helps healthy food retailers and enterprises to overcome higher costs and initial barriers to entry, thus enabling food enterprises to thrive and deliver fresh, healthy, and affordable products.

# 2024 HFFI FARE Fund

- Includes funding for grants, loans, and technical assistance for the 2024-2025 cycle
- At least \$9 million available for implementation grants with awards from \$20,000-\$250,000
- At least \$1.5 million for technical assistance with awards up to \$100,000
- Grants will be one-time investments of capital into a food retail or food enterprise project to address higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved rural and urban areas



# Eligible Applicant Types

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- for-profit businesses
- cooperatively-owned businesses
- tax-exempt nonprofit corporations
- 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\*

\*State, local, and tribal governments are eligible for grants and technical assistance but not for loans currently.

**Individuals are not eligible to apply**

# Eligible Projects

## What we will fund:

- Projects that will contribute to food access through the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods for retail sale in underserved areas
- Projects that will maintain or improve food supply chain resilience
- Projects planning or expanding a food retail business model that will offer an assortment of staple and perishable foods, and will accept SNAP benefits
- Projects planning or expanding food enterprise projects that contribute to the retail food supply chain and downstream retailers, ultimately improving food access through retail sales

# Eligible Projects

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## What we will not fund:

- Agriculture-only projects
- Charitable food
- Nutrition education
- Restaurants
- Consumer packaged goods
- Ongoing operating subsidy
- Research studies
- Loan funds/regranting programs
- Food retail programs & initiatives conducting consulting, TA or educational activities

USDA Food Research Atlas Low Income Low Access Census Tract

OR

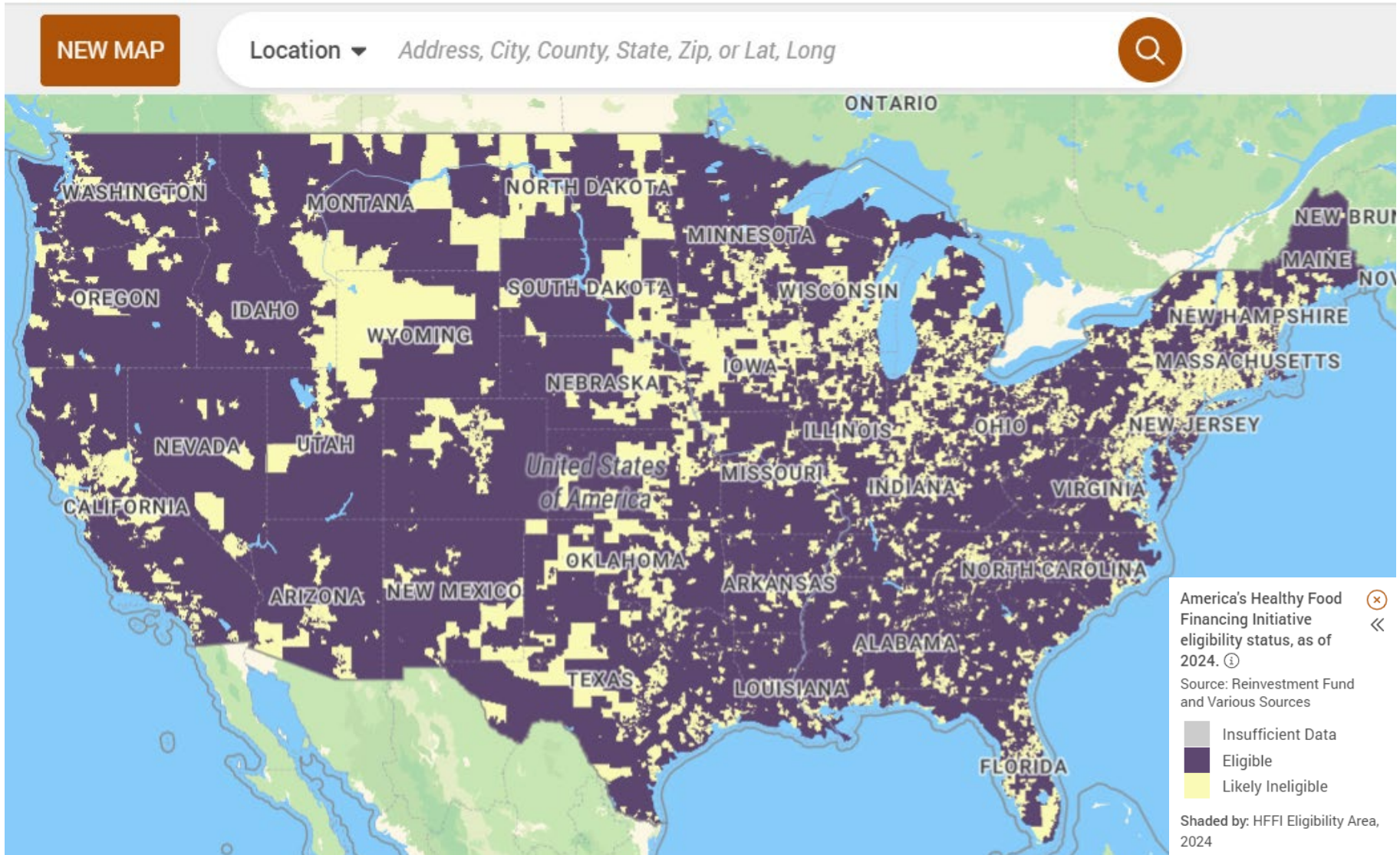
Census tract adjacent to USDA Food Research Atlas Low Income Low Access Census Tract with a median family income less than or equal to 120 percent of the applicable area median

OR

Geographic unit determined to have limited access to supermarkets or grocery stores by a methodology that has been adopted for use by another government or philanthropic healthy food initiative

# Eligible Locations & Mapping Tool

[www.investinginfood.com/eligibility](http://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility)



# Application Process

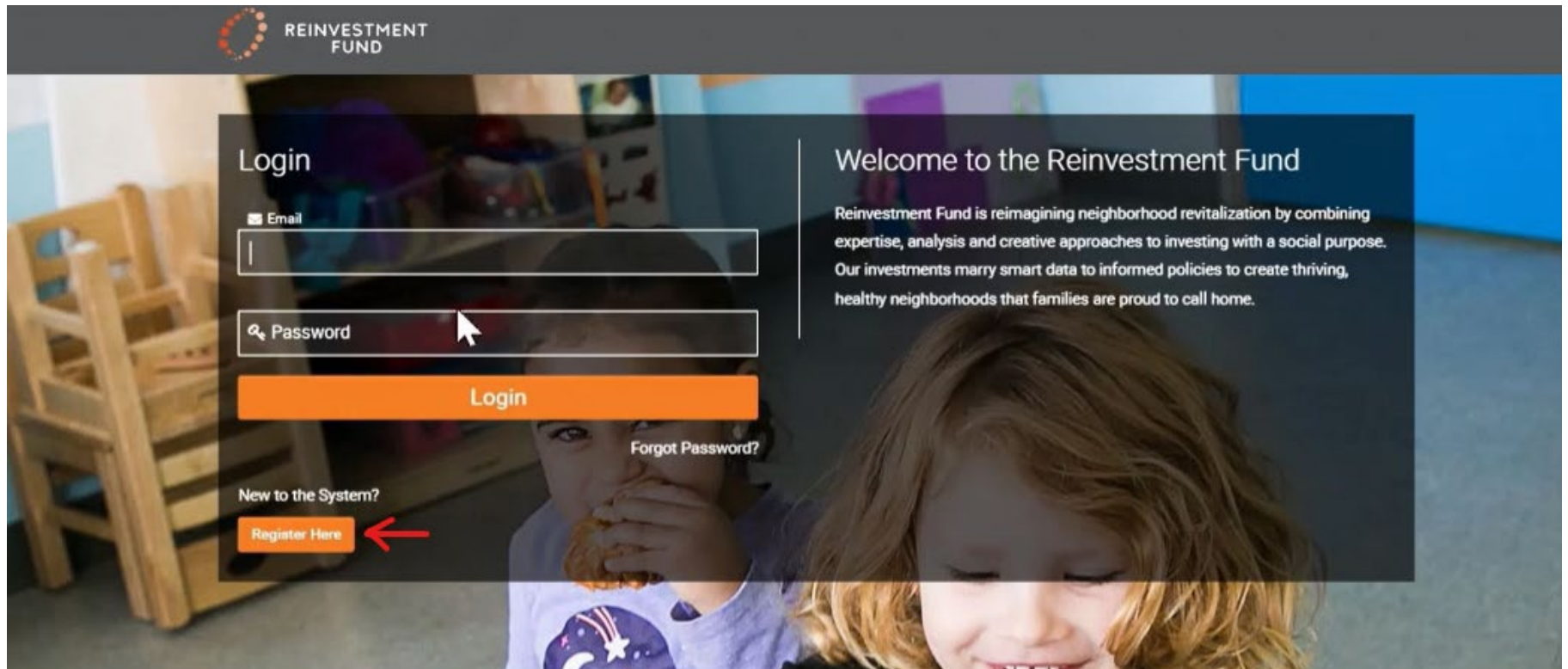
Funding Inquiries must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>) by the dates in the chart below.

	GRANTS	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
STEP 1: FUNDING INQUIRY FORM	Round 1: October 14, 2024 Round 2: March 3, 2025 Round 3: August 4, 2025	Rolling deadline
STEP 2: APPLICATION	Round 1: December 12, 2024 Round 2: May 1, 2025 Round 3: October 2, 2025	If invited, due 45 days after invitation is sent

There will be three grant rounds in this funding cycle. Grant applications will be reviewed and scored approximately every six months. All deadlines and award announcement dates are listed in the RFA.

# SmartSimple – Online Application Portal

Applications will be submitted through Reinvestment Fund's SmartSimple grants portal [www.reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com](http://www.reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com)

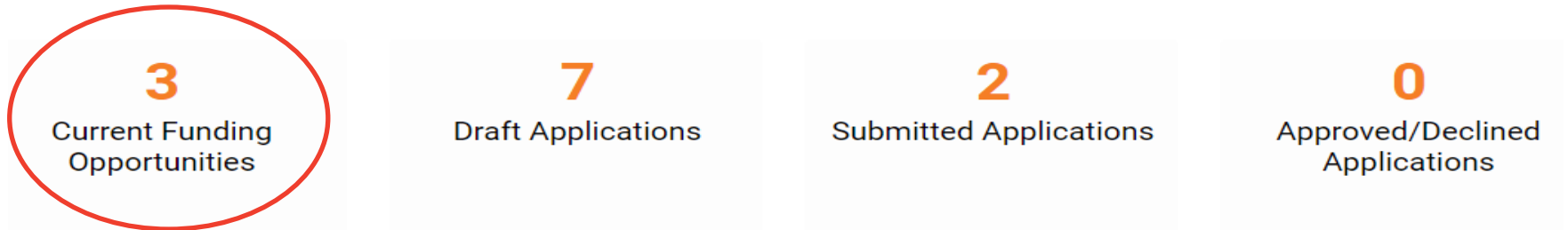


The screenshot shows the Reinvestment Fund SmartSimple login portal. At the top left is the Reinvestment Fund logo. The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left is a 'Login' form with an 'Email' input field, a 'Password' input field with a magnifying glass icon, an orange 'Login' button, a 'Forgot Password?' link, and a 'New to the System?' section with a 'Register Here' button. A red arrow points to the 'Register Here' button. On the right is a 'Welcome to the Reinvestment Fund' message with a paragraph of text: 'Reinvestment Fund is reimagining neighborhood revitalization by combining expertise, analysis and creative approaches to investing with a social purpose. Our investments marry smart data to informed policies to create thriving, healthy neighborhoods that families are proud to call home.'

# SmartSimple – Online Application Portal

Applications will be submitted through Reinvestment Fund’s SmartSimple grants portal [www.reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com](http://www.reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com)

## Welcome Kahfii King - Funding Opportunities & Applications



## Current Funding Opportunities

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### Opportunity Details

### Description

HFFI Food Access & Retail Expansion Fund

Deadline: 2024-10-14 23:59

[Submit HFFI FARE Fund Inquiry Form](#)

The HFFI Food Access and Retail Expansion Fund (HFFI FARE Fund) will provide loans, grants and technical assistance to eligible projects serving underserved areas through healthy food retail. Funding is designed to be a one-time investment of capital into predevelopment or implementation activities that will support the development and success of a sustainable business model.

# SmartSimple – Funding Inquiry

## 2024-6697 HFFI Food Access & Retail Expansion Fund

PDF View

- SUMMARY
- APPLICANT INFORMATION
- INQUIRY FORM ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS**
- INQUIRY FORM FUNDING REQUEST



Please complete the eligibility screening questions below:

- \* Which of the below best describes your project?
  - My project creates or expands a food retail business
  - My project creates or expands a food retail supply chain business
  - My project creates or expands both a food retail and a food retail supply chain business
  - My project does not involve the creation or expansion of a food retail or food retail supply chain business

\* My food retail project will create or expand a food retail business model that will sell an assortment of Staple and Perishable foods once operating.

- Yes  No

\* My food retail project will create or expand a food retail business model that will accept SNAP once operating.

- Yes  No

\* My project will ultimately increase the availability of staple and perishable foods for sale at a SNAP eligible retailer in eligible Underserved Areas.

Please use the results of the eligibility map available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility/> to search your project's location.

- Yes  No

\* If the project involves food retail, describe the assortment of Staple and Perishable foods that will be sold. If the project involves a food retail supply chain enterprise that will not involve retail sales directly to consumers, describe how the project will ultimately support retail supply chains by increasing the sale of an assortment of Staple and Perishable Foods at SNAP eligible food retailers.

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- Save Draft
- Submit

# Funding Inquiry Requirements

## Applicant Requirements

- Legal entity name and contact information
- Applicant verification information including, the documentation of the legal status of the organization, your UEI number, and indication of active SAM Registration
- Project address or a brief description of proposed site location if there is no address, upload of eligibility map results or evidence of eligibility based on geographic location if the map is uncertain

## Funding Inquiry Requirements

- Eligibility screening
- Type of project and whether it is a new business model or expansion of an existing business model
- Project stage
- Project description
- Community served and need
- Organization background
- Funding request
- Type of assistance needed

**Only one Funding Inquiry will be accepted per entity.  
Projects can only apply for each type of assistance  
once in a 12-month period.**

# Implementation Grants

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# Eligible Uses of Funds – Implementation Grants

## What we will fund:

Funds can be used for hard and soft costs including:

- Some predevelopment activities such as appraisals, architectural or design assistance, or other contractual or consulting uses
- Brick and mortar facility development, machinery and equipment,
- Technology and software,
- and other one-time soft costs such as community engagement, staff training, and marketing and merchandising needs

**Remember! Eligible uses of funds may vary slightly based on the type of assistance you are applying for and the stage of your project.**

# Application Requirements – Implementation Grants

## Application Narrative

- Organization Overview & Background
- Population, Community, and/or Market Served
- Project Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes
- Need for and Use of Funds
- Project Impacts
- Priorities (optional, but recommended)
- Project Timeline

## Budget (up to \$250,000)

- Break down by cost categories
- Explanation of requested uses

## Attachments

- Operating Projections (required)
- Sources and Uses (optional)
- Letters of support (optional)

Full applications are invitation only.

Only one application per type of assistance will be accepted per organization or project in a 12-month period.

# Review Process – Implementation Grants

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- Only invited to complete if determined to meet program eligibility
- Eligible applications will be scored by reviewers based on the criteria in the RFA (65 total points)(18 priority points)
- These criteria include:
  - A. Applicant Qualifications(0 to 10 points)
  - B. Stakeholder Involvement (0 to 10 Points)
  - C. Food Access Goals (0 to 15 Points)
  - D. Project and/or Business Model (0 to 15 Points)
  - E. Data Capacity (0 to 5 Points)
  - F. Budget (0 to 5 Points)
  - G. Timeline (0 to 5 points)

# Review Process – Implementation Grants

- Up to 18 additional Priority Points will be given to projects with business models that:
  - A. Projects that are in Very Low-Income Communities (as defined earlier in this RFA).
  - B. Projects that will create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community.
  - C. Projects that support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent possible.
  - D. Projects that are accessible by public transit (in areas that are served by public transit).
  - E. Will involve women-owned or controlled businesses
  - F. Will involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses Projects in Rural Areas (as defined earlier in this RFA).
  - G. Applicants who are applying for financial assistance as part of a larger project and have secured funding from other sources, including other federal agencies. Matching contributions or cost-sharing is not required for awarded funds. However, the ability of an applicant to demonstrate that a grant award will serve to leverage other sources of capital, including other local, state, or federal government resources, private sources of equity or debt, will be considered.
  - H. Projects in communities that have been underserved by HFFI investment, including other national, state, and/or local HFFI programs.
  - I. Projects also applying for a loan under the HFFI FARE Fund and who need the grant to make the project viable.

The top 25% of applications will be further evaluated by the HFFI Review Panel of internal and external experts who will determine a consensus ranking of applications that will take into account the application score, project type, geographic diversity (including urban and rural), program diversity, and ability to advance the HFFI goals.

# Federal Award Requirements – Implementation Grants

- If awarded, the performance for grants is up to 12 months if no construction and up to 24 months with construction.
- Grantees will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports semi-annually during the project period and, as applicable, after grant closeout.
- This is a federal grant award & grantees must remain in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, etc.
- Some of those include:
  - Federal Financial Management and Internal Controls Requirements
  - Program Income
  - Procurement and Property Standards
  - Cost Principles
  - Audits
  - Record Retention and Access

# Technical Assistance

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# Eligible Uses of Funds – Technical Assistance

## What we will fund:

Funds can be used for soft costs including:

- Business, feasibility, and operations planning/development activities such as feasibility studies, financial analysis, business/strategic planning, development of proformas and business financials
- Construction predevelopment such as site location analysis, appraisals, architectural or design assistance, or soft costs that indirectly support acquisition or land preparation such as legal support, environmental assessment, and permitting
- and other one-time soft costs such as community engagement, staff training, and marketing and merchandising needs

**Remember! Eligible uses of funds may vary slightly based on the type of assistance you are applying for and the stage of your project.**

# Application Requirements – Technical Assistance

## Application Narrative

- Project Parameters
- Project locations
- Project Summary
- Organization Overview & Background
- Population, Community, and/or Market Served
- Community Engagement & Involvement
- Use of Funds & Project Objectives

- Project Outcomes
- Capital Access & Project Sustainability
- Project Timeline
- Priorities (optional, but recommended)

## Budget (up to \$100,000)

- Break down by cost categories
- Explanation of requested uses

## Attachments

- Sources and Uses (optional)
- Letters of support (optional)

Full applications are invitation only.

Only one application per type of assistance will be accepted per organization or project in a 12-month period.

# Review – Technical Assistance

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- Applications for technical assistance will be reviewed on a rolling basis by program staff
- Application determinations will be made on a merit-based, non-competitive basis
- Projects will still need to meet basic HFFI FARE Fund eligibility requirements and meet the goals of the HFFI program
- Applications will be reviewed for demonstrated need of the proposed project, relevance of the proposed activities, and strength of the proposed outcomes of the activities to be completed

# Award Administration – Technical Assistance

- If selected, applicants may receive their award one of two ways:
  1. Non-financial assistance provided by recommended specialists within the Reinvestment Fund network. If the project is selected for an award, Reinvestment Fund will directly contract with the provider who will conduct approved contractual services up to a 12-month period.
  2. Financial assistance provided directly to the applicant to manage the technical assistance project with a provider of their choice to conduct approved TA services up to a 12-month period. In this scenario, the TA recipient will be subject to the outlined federal regulations in the RFA.
- All technical assistance projects will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports after the completion of their TA project.

# What's Next?

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- Final webinar about applying for a loan. No registration is required.
- Sessions will cover:
  - Application requirements
  - Review process and what will make a successful project
  - Federal award requirements
- **Loan Overview:** 3:00 PM Eastern Time on Wednesday, September 25, 2024
  - <https://bit.ly/hffi-farefund-loans>



**The 2024 HFFI FARE Fund is now accepting applications.**

**To download the full RFA and apply online visit:**  
**[www.investinginfood.com/fare-fund](http://www.investinginfood.com/fare-fund)**

**Round 1 Funding Inquiries for grants are due  
Monday, October 14, 2024 @ 11:59 PM ET**

*Reinvestment Fund staff will be available to  
answer questions regarding Round 1 until  
Friday, October 11, 2024.*

## Contact Us

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Program RFA & Info:  
[www.investinginfood.com/  
fare-fund](http://www.investinginfood.com/fare-fund)

Email:  
[help@investinginfood.com](mailto:help@investinginfood.com)

