

America's Healthy Food Financing Initiative Food Access and Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund

2026 Grant & Technical Assistance Request for Applications (RFA)



**Reinvestment Fund
America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative
Food Access and Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund
2026 Grant and Technical Assistance Request for Applications (RFA)**

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE

America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative Food Access and Retail Expansion Fund (HFFI FARE Fund)

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE

Initial

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER

10.872

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reinvestment Fund, in its capacity as National Fund Manager for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service, requests Grant and Technical Assistance applications for America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative Food Access and Retail Expansion Fund (HFFI FARE Fund) for the 2026 funding cycle.

For this 2026 Grant and Technical Assistance RFA, at least \$5,250,000 is available for planning and implementation Grants and at least \$1,000,000 is available for Technical Assistance. The purpose of HFFI is to support food supply chain resiliency, improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas, create and preserve quality jobs, and revitalize low-income communities by providing financial and technical assistance, either directly or through other partners and intermediaries, to eligible fresh, healthy food retailers and food retail supply chain enterprises to overcome the higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved areas. Eligible applicants for Grants and Technical Assistance include for-profit, nonprofit, and cooperatively owned businesses, institutions of higher education, state and local governments and tribal governments. Applicants must be either Food Retailers or Food Enterprises, as defined in this RFA. Grants are available for both planning stage and implementation ready projects that have a site identified and/or established site control, completed feasibility tasks, and have a timeline for opening. Technical Assistance is available for early-stage planning, predevelopment, and business assistance contractual soft costs.

This notice identifies the objectives for the HFFI FARE Fund, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application requirements and associated instructions needed to apply for an HFFI FARE Fund Grant or Technical Assistance award.

DATES

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

Eligible Funding Inquiries will be invited to submit a full application. Applications must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund’s online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>).

| Grants & Technical Assistance | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Funding Inquiry Form Submission Deadline | 11:59 PM ET on July 31, 2026 |
| Funding Inquiry Eligibility Determination Notification | By September 4, 2026 |
| Application Submission Deadline (if eligible) | 11:59 PM ET on October 30, 2026 |
| Award Notification* | No earlier than January 2027 |

Program staff will be available to answer questions regarding Funding Inquiry and Application submissions until 5 PM ET on the day before each associated deadline above.

*Award notification dates are subject to change due to unexpected delays caused by limited capacity and/or shutdowns/interruptions of the federal government.

HFFI PROGRAM CONTACT:

Anne Misak, Managing Director, Equitable Food Systems

Website: www.investinginfood.com

Email: help@investinginfood.com

Please include your specific question(s) in the body of your message.

Phone: 215-574-5862

WEBINARS

An Informational webinar will be held for potential applicants for each funding opportunity. To register for the webinar, please use the following link:

- **HFFI FARE Fund Grant and TA Overview:** Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 2:30 PM Eastern Time
 - https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dMPQAPeXRwS-v4xGQpSVag

Reinvestment Fund will record and post the webinars, as well as answers to questions asked during the webinars, at <https://www.investinginfood.com/fare-fund>.

SPANISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

As part of our commitment to equitable engagement, Reinvestment Fund will provide Spanish interpretation and translation support for Spanish-speaking applicants during the application process. Resources will also be made available for awarded entities. Please email help@investinginfood.com with any questions.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE AND FILING COMPLAINTS

In accordance with the federal law and U.S. Department of Treasury policy, Grantor is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Any complaint of discrimination against Grantor should be reported and submitted by mail to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20220, (202) 622-1160 (phone), (202) 622-0367 (fax), or by email at crcomplaints@treasury.gov.

To see a list of previous HFFI projects, please visit
<https://www.investinginfood.com/impact/>

REINVESTMENT FUND
America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative
Food Access and Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund
2026 Grant & Technical Assistance Request for Applications (RFA)

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

This program is authorized under the Agriculture Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79), Section 4206 - Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) and reauthorized under the Agriculture Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334), Section 4204. Funding for this announcement is made available in part through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-2, Sec. 1001).

The purpose of HFFI is to improve access to healthy foods in underserved areas, create and preserve quality jobs, support food supply chain resiliency and revitalize low-income communities by providing financial and technical assistance, either directly or through other partners and intermediaries, to eligible fresh, healthy food retailers and enterprises to overcome the higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved areas.

All Americans deserve access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Research indicates that when people have local access to fresh food, they make healthier choices about their diets, have better health outcomes, and benefit from improved local economic development. Equitable access to healthy food is enabled by a food system where enterprises across the food supply chain can thrive and deliver fresh, healthy, and affordable products. Recent events have revealed how essential grocery stores, food suppliers, and their employees are to communities. The economic impact of the pandemic and inflation has constrained low-income families' ability to afford and access healthy food. The goal of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative is to address this critical issue by investing in Food Retailers and Food Enterprises throughout the food system that contribute to improved fresh food retail access in low-income and underserved communities across the country.

HFFI is administered by a National Fund Manager. In 2017, Reinvestment Fund was selected to serve as the National Fund Manager (NFM) for HFFI at USDA. As the NFM for HFFI, Reinvestment Fund leverages private capital, provides financial and technical assistance to regional, state, and local partnerships, and channels capital to fund eligible projects that will improve access to fresh, healthy foods in underserved rural and urban areas. As the NFM, Reinvestment Fund has awarded [over \\$41 million](#) directly to Food Retail and Food Enterprise projects in 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. Additionally, [over \\$40 million has been awarded](#) to support new and existing regional, state, and local food financing programs through the HFFI Local and Regional Healthy Food Financing Partnerships Program.

Reinvestment Fund is a national mission-driven financial institution that creates opportunities for underserved people and places through partnerships. We marshal the capital, analytics, and expertise necessary to build strong, healthy, and more equitable communities. Headquartered in Philadelphia, Reinvestment Fund has put \$3.2 billion in cumulative lending and investments to work for communities across the country since 1985. 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. Since that time, Reinvestment Fund has provided more than \$587 million in grants and loans to healthy food projects. Reinvestment Fund is also on the Steering Committee for the Food Lenders Network and administers other local and regional food funding programs.

B. Program Description

This Request for Applications (RFA) is for the 2026 HFFI Food Access and Retail Expansion Fund (HFFI FARE Fund) Grant and Technical Assistance funding for the predevelopment, planning, and implementation of eligible projects aiming to increase food access, and strengthen, expand, and innovate within the food retail supply chain. For the 2026 funding cycle, at least \$5,250,000 is available for planning and implementation Grants and at least \$1,000,000 is available for Technical Assistance.

The HFFI FARE Fund supports innovative fresh Food Retail and Food Enterprise business models that seek to improve consumer access to healthy food in underserved areas through food retail. Funding can be used for project development, renovation, and/or expansion. Funding is designed to be one-time investments of capital into projects creating a food retail or food supply chain enterprise business model in order to address higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved rural and urban areas. Planning and implementation Grants should unlock additional sources of capital, catalyze project sustainability, meet financing gaps, and/or enable deeper impact or project reach. Grants are available for both early-stage planning and predevelopment projects and implementation shovel-ready projects that have a site identified and/or established site control, have completed feasibility tasks, and present a reasonable timeline for opening. Technical Assistance (TA) will be available to support specific contractual soft costs for early-stage planning, predevelopment, and business assistance needs where resources would help build local capacity to develop a Food Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise and would clarify or advance an eligible project.

C. Definitions

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

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT: 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.

FOOD ENTERPRISES: Food Enterprises are businesses or organizations along the post-harvest food retail supply chain such as food hubs, food distributors, processors, and manufacturers that directly contribute to the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods at downstream Food Retail Outlets. Food Enterprises do not necessarily involve the direct sale of food to consumers.

FOOD RETAIL: Food retail refers to a Retail Outlet that sells an assortment of Staple and Perishable Foods directly to consumers and accepts benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et seq.).

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE: Food supply chain diversification such that it provides consumers with access to fresh, healthy foods and provides Food Retailers and/or Food Enterprises, and/or producers with more, better, and new market opportunities in favorable market conditions and in order to withstand and recover from disruptions and times of crisis or disaster.

HEALTHY FOOD(S): “Healthy Food(s)” has the same meaning used by the CDFI Fund—nutrient-dense foods and beverages as set forth in the USDA *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, including health-promoting beverages and foods such as vegetables; fruits; whole grains; seafood; eggs; beans, peas, and lentils; unsalted nuts and seeds; fat-free and low-fat dairy products; and lean meats and poultry. These foods should be prepared with

little to no added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and provide essential vitamins and minerals.
(See USDA Dietary Guidelines: <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>)

LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS: Food products that are raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region through systems of interconnected entities, channels, communities, and/or individuals.

LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES: As defined by the CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Low-Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than:

- 1) For Metropolitan Areas, 80 percent of the area median family income; and
- 2) For non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
 - i. 80 percent of the area median family income; or
 - ii. 80 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

MODERATE INCOME COMMUNITIES: As defined by the CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Moderate Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than:

- 1) For Metropolitan Areas, 120 percent of the area median family income; and
- 2) For non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
 - i. 120 percent of the area median family income; or
 - ii. 120 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

NATIONAL FUND 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.

PERISHABLE FOOD: As defined in 7 USC 6953(b)(4), the term “Perishable Food” means a staple food that is fresh, refrigerated, or frozen.

QUALITY JOB: As defined in 7 USC 6953(b)(4), 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.

RETAIL OUTLETS: A food retail outlet that sells an assortment of Staple and Perishable Foods directly to consumers and accepts benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.).

RURAL AREA: The term “Rural Area” means the Rural Business Service’s Rural Area definition as defined in Section 343(a)(13)(A) 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. In clause (2) above, “urbanized area” references “urban area” as designated by the Census Bureau.

STAPLE FOOD: As defined in 7 USC 6953(b)(7), the term “staple food” means food that is a basic dietary item, which includes bread or cereal, flour, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meat.

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).

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 Tract 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 US Territory; or
- 4) Be a Geographic Unit as defined in 12CFR Part 1805.201(b)(3)(ii)(B), which 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.

VERY LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES: As defined by the CDFI Fund under the 2018 CDFI Program, the term “Very-Low Income” means income, adjusted for family size, of not more than:

- 1) For Metropolitan Areas, 50 percent of the area median family income; and
- 2) For non-Metropolitan Areas, the greater of:
 - i. 50 percent of the area median family income; or
 - ii. 50 percent of the statewide non-Metropolitan Area median family income

PART II—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility

The FARE Fund will provide Grants and Technical Assistance to eligible entities to implement a project that will create or expand a business model designed to improve access to an assortment of Staple and Perishable Healthy Foods (defined above) through Food Retail. The program will support projects aiming to strengthen, expand, and innovate along the post-harvest food retail supply chain and that will ultimately contribute to the availability of an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods at SNAP authorized retailers in Underserved Areas. The program can assist a variety of organizations, business models, and capital needs of ventures that process, distribute, aggregate, market, and/or sell healthy, fresh, and affordable foods to underserved communities and markets. Applicants may be a variety of different kinds of organizations or businesses, but applications should demonstrate how funding will support the creation, expansion, or retention of a Food Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise (defined above).

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed project will contribute to food access through the availability of an assortment of both Staple and Perishable Foods for retail sale at SNAP authorized retailers in eligible Underserved Areas.

The FARE Fund seeks to support Food Retail or Food Enterprises within the post-harvest food retail supply chain that meet the eligibility requirements described in this section of the RFA. Examples of HFFI aligned projects include:

- A retailer requests grant funding to cover the cost of a portion of equipment and construction costs for a larger capital project that will build a new grocery store or renovate a portion of an existing store in order to maintain or expand the availability of Staple and Perishable foods at the full-service grocery store in an Underserved Area.
- A community-based nonprofit organization or cooperative requests TA to complete a feasibility study for an alternative or non-traditional retail distribution model, such as a pop-up retail outlet in a low-population community that has limited access to fresh foods.
- An existing retailer requests grant funds to plan and set up a new e-commerce or delivery model that will allow them to expand their business and better reach rural communities not served by a grocery store.
- A food hub that aggregates and distributes produce from local farmers for distribution to retailers requests grant funding to purchase and install equipment that will allow them to expand their produce distribution company to improve and expand food access at a number of SNAP authorized grocery stores selling an assortment of Staple and Perishable Foods in Underserved Areas.

We seek applications from these types of projects and other eligible projects. Eligible uses of funds will vary across Grants and Technical Assistance. Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the eligible uses of funds under the sections for each type of assistance.

Eligible Organizations

- For-profit business enterprises (including a corporation, limited liability company, sole proprietor, public benefit corporation)
- 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

Individuals are not eligible.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration

Applicants are required to maintain an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) throughout the application process and must upload proof of active registration and the applicant entity's UEI with the Funding Inquiry. If an applicant is selected to receive a grant award, SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. Active SAM registration is different from just receiving a UEI number. Make sure you have registered for SAM, not just for an UEI number. **Applicants must have active SAM Registration at the point of Funding Inquiry submission to be considered eligible. If a Funding Inquiry is submitted without active SAM Registration, the submission will be determined to be ineligible and declined.**

Organizations can register with SAM at <https://sam.gov/SAM/>. SAM is an official website of the U.S. government. There is no cost to use SAM. For more information and assistance with using SAM, please review the HELP page at: <https://sam.gov/content/help> and/or contact SAM directly. Reinvestment Fund cannot answer any questions about SAM registration.

Partners and Collaborators

Applicants are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements.

Eligible Projects

To be eligible for funding from the HFFI FARE Fund, applicants must describe a project that creates or expands a food Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise that fulfills the following criteria:

1. Plans to expand or preserve the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods in Underserved Areas (defined in Part I) with low- and moderate-income populations (defined in Part I);
 - a. For Food Retail or Food Enterprise projects involving direct-to-consumer sales through SNAP authorized Retail Outlets, the proposed business model must sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable Foods, including at least three of the following Staple Food Categories: (a) fruits or vegetables; (b) meat, poultry, or fish; (c) dairy products; (d) breads or cereals
 - b. For Food Enterprise projects that do not involve direct-to-consumer retail sales, the proposed business model must distribute Staple and/or Perishable foods to SNAP authorized Retail Outlets located in Underserved Areas that sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable Foods. Food Enterprise projects that will only involve one or a few kinds of Staple foods in their business model will need to describe how increased access to those food items will meet an existing unmet need of the community at existing SNAP authorized food retailers.
2. Will accept benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.) once the funded business model is in operation if the project involves direct-to-consumer retail sales; and
3. Plans to maintain and improve Food Supply Chain Resilience.

Examples of previous HFFI projects are available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/impact/>.

Staple and Perishable Foods

As defined in Part I of this RFA, Staple Foods means unprepared basic dietary items including breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, and dairy products. Staple foods are generally considered to be basic items of food that make up a significant portion of an individual's diet and are usually prepared at home and consumed as a major component of a meal. Staple foods do not include fresh, frozen, or heated prepared foods. Staple foods also do not include accessory food products which are generally considered to be food items consumed as snacks or desserts, as well as food items that complement or supplement meals, such as most beverages and spices. Perishable Foods mean Staple Foods that are fresh, refrigerated, or frozen. More information about Staple and Perishable Foods is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/staple-foods>.

Based on the eligible Staple Foods categories named above, applicants must demonstrate that their proposed project will expand or preserve the availability of an assortment of both Staple and Perishable Foods in Underserved Areas, either through the direct retail sale of Staple and Perishable Foods to consumers, or through a post-harvest food retail supply chain enterprise (Food Enterprise) that will directly contribute to the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods by distribution to SNAP authorized Retail Outlets in eligible underserved areas.

To be considered eligible, projects involving business models that participate in direct-to-consumer retail sales must offer a substantial assortment of Staple and Perishable foods for consumer sale, including at least three of the following Staple Food Categories: (a) fruits or vegetables; (b) meat, poultry, or fish; (c) dairy products; (d) breads or cereals.

Food Enterprise projects that will only involve one or a few kinds of Staple Foods in their business model will need to describe how increased access to those food items will meet an existing unmet need of the community at existing SNAP authorized food retailers. Food Enterprise projects must speak to the product mix and estimated quantities of Staple and Perishable Foods that would be distributed to downstream SNAP authorized Retail Outlets as a result of the proposed HFFI project. **Applicants that do not provide adequate information regarding the assortment of Staple and Perishable foods to be sold and/or distributed may be declined for eligibility for the HFFI FARE Fund.**

Eligible Locations

In order to be eligible for this program, applicants must propose a project operating in the United States of America or a US Territory that will:

1. create or expand a SNAP authorized Retail Outlet model that will sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods directly to consumers in an Underserved Area; and/or
2. create or expand a nonretail Food Enterprise that will directly contribute to the availability of Staple and Perishable foods at downstream SNAP authorized retailers that will sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods in an Underserved Area.

For projects involving 1, applicants will be required to provide location information for the Retail Outlet. For projects involving 2, applicants will need to provide the location of both the Food Enterprise and the addresses of the SNAP authorized Retail Outlets that the business model will distribute to. For projects involving both 1 & 2, applicants must provide the location information for the Retail Outlet, the Food Enterprise, and the addresses of the SNAP authorized Retail Outlets that the Food Enterprise will distribute to.

For projects involving 1, Retail Outlets must accept SNAP and be physically located in and sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods to eligible Underserved Areas. For projects involving 2, post-harvest food retail supply chain enterprises do not need to be physically located in Underserved Areas but must distribute to SNAP authorized Food Retailers in eligible Underserved Areas. **Applicants that do not provide adequate location information may be declined for eligibility for the HFFI FARE Fund.**

Projects in Underserved Urban and Rural Areas, that also meet the other program requirements, are eligible. 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 be:

- In 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;
- OR in a Census tract adjacent to 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; and which has a median family income less than or equal to 120 percent of the applicable Area Median Family Income;
- OR is a US Territory;
- OR in a Geographic Unit as defined in 12CFR Part 1805.201(b)(3)(ii)(B), which meets the criteria as having low access to supermarkets or grocery stores through a methodology that has been adopted for use by another government or philanthropic healthy food initiative.

More information, including data and maps to help determine if a proposed location is eligible, is available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility/>. If you are unsure if a location is eligible, or have questions about location eligibility, please contact us. Contact information can be found on page 3 of this RFA.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

To be considered eligible, projects involving direct-to-consumer retail sales must accept benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 USC 2011 et. Seq.) once the funded business model is operating. General questions about SNAP and EBT should be directed to Ask USDA via <https://ask.usda.gov/s/contactsupport>. This system can provide prompt answers for general SNAP inquiries. You can read more about the SNAP authorization process and apply for authorization online at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/apply-to-accept>. SNAP regulations allow 45 days from receipt of a completed application for a decision to be made.

Previous America’s HFFI FARE Fund Awardees

Organizations and projects that received an HFFI FARE Fund Implementation Grant through the 2024-2025 RFA will not be eligible for grant awards through this 2026 RFA. Organizations and projects that received an HFFI FARE Fund Implementation Grant through the 2024-2025 RFA may apply for Technical Assistance funding.

Cost Sharing or Matching

HFFI does not require matching or cost sharing for awarded funds. However, applicants may have other sources of funding for an overall proposed project and should describe other sources of funding. Additional funding may come from State government, local government, or private sources. HFFI grant awards may not be used as match for other federal awards.

B. Priority Areas

Priority will be given to projects planning business models that:

- Will be located in/or serve Very Low-Income Communities (as defined earlier in this RFA)
- Will create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community
- Will support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent possible
- Will be accessible by public transit (in areas that are served by public transit)
- Will involve women-owned or controlled businesses
- Will involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses
- Will be located in/or serve Rural Areas (as defined earlier in this RFA)
- Will be located in communities that have been underserved by HFFI investment, including other national, state, and/or local HFFI programs
- Organizations and projects that have not been previously funded through America's HFFI program

C. Project Considerations

We encourage the submission of applications that demonstrate:

- **Sustainability:** Project applications that request assistance to facilitate the implementation of an economically sustainable project, i.e. not primarily dependent on uncommitted sources of revenue, after the grant period is over.
- **Community Involvement:** Project applications with diverse and relevant partnerships and collaborations where the project design and operation plan reflects the inclusion of stakeholder communities and targeted beneficiaries.
- **Innovation:** Project applications that aim to test, scale, and/or demonstrate new, emerging, outside the box, creative and/or alternative approaches to addressing food retail access challenges.
- **Replicability:** Project applications that include approaches to preserving or expanding access to food retail that might be replicated or scaled in other communities.
- **Project Readiness:** Project applications that demonstrate a well-thought out, planned project that is supported by committed funding sources other than those applied for under this RFA and is ready for implementation but for the requested assistance.
- **Unlocking Capital & Capacity Access:** Project applications where requested funds would enable the applicant to access additional sources of capital or capacity to fund their project, including debt financing and/or other sources of public or private capital.

D. Ineligible Projects and Use of Funds

HFFI program funds cannot be used to support activities related to the below categories. Inquiry Form and application submissions primarily focused on these activities will not be considered eligible or funded:

- **Agriculture:** HFFI funds cannot be used for pre-harvest agricultural production, including food production, gardening, farming, ranching, hydroponics, aquaponics, vertical farms, or other agricultural activities.
- **Institutional Sales:** HFFI funds cannot support supply chain projects that will primarily involve the distribution and sale of food to institutional buyers such as restaurants, schools, charitable organizations, or hospitals. Eligible supply chain projects must primarily involve post-harvest retail distribution activities where Staple and Perishable foods will ultimately be distributed by the proposed business model to downstream SNAP authorized retailers in eligible underserved areas.

- **Charitable Food:** HFFI funds cannot support charitable food projects where food is given for free, such as food pantries, food banks, meals programs, and food donations.
- **Nutrition Education:** HFFI funds cannot support educational programs such as those about nutrition, culinary skills, or the food system.
- **Prepared Foods, Beverages, & Snacks:** HFFI funds cannot support projects that are primarily focused on the sale of prepared hot, cold, or frozen meals, beverages, or snacks, including those provided in a restaurant or takeaway setting to consumers.
- **Institutional Kitchens and Entrepreneur Incubators:** HFFI funds will not support projects primarily focused on the creation or expansion of stand-alone kitchens. Projects involving kitchens may be considered eligible if the operations of the kitchen are a necessary component of the larger food retail or post-harvest food retail supply chain business model that will increase the availability of Staple and Perishable foods in underserved areas. For example, an application to support the creation of a commercial kitchen and deli in a cooperative grocery store that will allow the store to continue operating sustainably may be considered eligible, if the project meets other eligibility criteria.
- **Consumer Packaged Goods:** HFFI funds will not support the startup, operation, or expansion of enterprises that produce only one or only a few consumer-packaged goods, such as health food items (e.g. granola bars, soup, etc.) for sale at a retail location.
- **Research:** Projects that are primarily a research study will not be eligible. Projects that include data gathering for the purpose of implementing or planning a business model (i.e. Community Food Assessment or market research to support early planning of a Food Retailer) are allowed.
- **Regranting and Lending Activities:** Applicants seeking funding to start, operate, or expand regranting or lending programs to improve Healthy Food access will not be considered eligible for the FARE Fund.
- **Food Retail Programs and Initiatives:** Applicants seeking funding to administer programs and initiatives that are primarily consulting, technical assistance services, educational services, or other activities that are focused on supporting or coordinating Food Retailers or Food Enterprises will not be considered eligible.
- **Motor Vehicles:** HFFI funds may not be used for the acquisition/purchase of vehicles for operations of a business. Funds may be used for vehicle rentals necessary for travel to specific project planning and implementation related activities. Expenses related to pilot or operational activities may not be more than 25% of the total requested budget.
- **Multiple Locations and Business Models:** Funds may not be used to fund activities for multiple locations of related or unrelated individual business models. HFFI FARE Fund may award eligible projects proposing the expansion or creation of a distinct business model that will serve a specific community. Awards may be used to fund activities at multiple locations, if all the locations are tied to the distinct business model that will serve a specific geographic community. For example, a grocery store that has multiple locations across a state where sales for each of the stores are independent, would not be considered eligible if the Funding Inquiry form proposes to use grant funds to purchase equipment at all three locations that are located in and serving three different geographies and communities. In comparison, a mobile market that will serve multiple zip codes within a county could be considered eligible if the sales will be through a single operator and Point of Sale system.

Awards will be made on the merits of the proposed project, with budget line-item eligibility considered only after the merits of the project have been determined. Reinvestment Fund reserves the right to negotiate final budgets, including disallowing ineligible costs, with successful applicants.

PART III—APPLICATION PROCESS

The HFFI Food Access and Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund will have a two-phased application process for each funding opportunity (Grant or Technical Assistance).

We will host an informational webinar to provide potential applicants with an overview of the RFA, Grant application, and Technical Assistance application processes, to provide information on how to navigate the online submission process, and to answer questions about the program.

To register for the webinar, please use the following link:

- **HFFI FARE Fund Grant and TA Overview:** Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 2:30 PM Eastern Time
 - https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dMPQAPeXRwS-v4xGQpSVag

Reinvestment Fund will post a recording of the webinar, as well as answers to questions asked during the webinar, at www.investinginfood.com. If there are questions about the Funding Inquiry form before or after the webinar, please contact us. Contact information is on Page 3 of this RFA.

A. Phase 1: Funding Inquiry Form

Submission of a Funding Inquiry form is the first step in the application process and is required for all applicants to express interest in all funding from the HFFI FARE Fund. The HFFI FARE Fund will only accept one Funding Inquiry per entity per RFA. Additional Funding Inquiry submissions after the initial submission will not be reviewed and will be withdrawn from the 2026 Grants and Technical Assistance funding cycle. In the case that an entity submits a Funding Inquiry that is determined to be ineligible, the entity may submit another Funding Inquiry in alignment with the submission deadlines outlined in this RFA if changes have been made to the proposed project that may make it eligible.

Funding Inquiries must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>). Funding Inquiries will be reviewed to determine applicant eligibility for the HFFI FARE Fund. The Funding Inquiry phase includes applicant information, project location(s), eligibility related questions, and a brief project summary that includes an overview of the applicant's proposed project, stage of development, organizational background, project timeline, and funding request.

Reinvestment Fund will screen all Funding Inquiries for eligibility based on submission requirements, applicant eligibility, project location, and project types. **Applicants that do not provide adequate information in their Funding Inquiry may be declined eligibility for the HFFI FARE Fund. Applicants will not be able to edit the Funding Inquiry once it is submitted.**

Following review of submitted Funding Inquiries, applicants will receive notification of the funding type(s) (Grant or Technical Assistance) for which their project was determined to be eligible and invited to submit a full application. Each type of assistance has a separate application.

B. Phase 2: Application

Each type of assistance (Grant or Technical Assistance) has a separate application. Only eligible projects will be invited to submit a full application for the types of assistance requested in their Funding Inquiry. Applications

must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>).

Inquiry forms that are overall considered eligible and invited to submit an application will receive feedback indicating components of their project that are ineligible/unallowable. This information should be addressed when completing the full application.

Full applications build upon the Funding Inquiry and will require additional project information, project narrative questions, operating projections, budget details, and budget narrative. Application submissions must adhere to the deadline guidance stated in Part V and VI of this RFA.

If a full application submission has significantly changed from the inquiry form submission and includes the addition of significant unallowable costs and activities, the application may be determined to be ineligible and not scored.

C. Other Application Guidelines and Funding Restrictions

Applicant Entity

When submitting a Funding Inquiry to the FARE Fund, the SmartSimple account and applicant entity information provided in the Funding Inquiry Form must be for the entity that will accept and manage the award if selected for funding.

Multiple Submissions

The HFFI FARE Fund will only accept one eligible Funding Inquiry per entity or project for this RFA. Entities who submit a Funding Inquiry may apply for both Grant and Technical Assistance funding but will only be selected for one type of award.

Previous America's HFFI FARE Fund Awardees: Organizations and projects that received an HFFI FARE Fund Implementation Grant through the 2024-2025 RFA will not be eligible for grant awards through this 2026 RFA. Organizations and projects that received an HFFI FARE Fund Implementation Grant through the 2024-2025 RFA may apply for Technical Assistance funding.

Changes in Applicant Primary Point of Contact

Correspondence regarding submissions, updates, and award notifications will be sent to the contact associated with the SmartSimple Funding Inquiry. One primary contact is allowed per applicant entity. Applicants must inform Reinvestment Fund regarding any changes in their submission's primary point of contact during the application period, including name, email address, and phone number. Please contact help@investinginfood.com should the applicant need to change their primary point of contact.

Failure to comply with these above requirements for a submission to the HFFI FARE Fund may result in Reinvestment Fund determining that the applicant is not eligible to receive funding.

PART IV— SUBMITTING A FUNDING INQUIRY

Only electronic submissions will be accepted in response to this RFA. This funding opportunity is administered by Reinvestment Fund, a nonprofit intermediary, and this funding opportunity will not be available on grants.gov. Applicants must use Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>).

Submissions in response to this RFA must follow the instructions in the sections below. If there is discrepancy between the information presented here and the online grants portal, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Applications received by email, mail, or fax will not be reviewed. Please contact us if you have any issues with the online submission process. To avoid technical issues, we encourage you to submit your application in advance of application deadlines.

A. Applicant Requirements

In order to submit a Funding Inquiry in response to this RFA, applicants will need to provide:

Applicant Entity Information

This information must match the documentation submitted as evidence of the applicant's legal status as an entity. When submitting a Funding Inquiry to the FARE Fund, the SmartSimple account and applicant entity information provided in the Inquiry Form must be for the entity that will accept and manage the award if selected for funding.

- *When registering for SmartSimple, applicants will provide the following information:*
 - Legal Entity Name and d/b/a (if applicable)
 - Entity Address
 - Primary Contact's First & Last Name
 - Primary Contact's Email & Phone
 - Primary Contact's Address
- *Applicants must provide the following information to evidence the legal status of the entity in the Funding Inquiry Form:*
 - Applicant entity type (For-profit business, Nonprofit organization, State or Local Government or Governmental Agency, Tribal Government or Governmental Authority, Institution of Higher Education, or Cooperatively-owned business);
 - Applicant entity's EIN and IRS-issued Employer Identification Number (EIN) Notice;
 - An IRS-issued tax-exempt Determination Letter or Governmental Information Letter (only for applicants that are tax-exempt nonprofit organizations)

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration & UEI

Applicants must provide the following information from the System for Award Management:

- SAM Report indicating active registration
- 12-character Unique Entity ID (UEI)
- SAM expiration date

B. Funding Inquiry (FI) Narrative

Applicants will be required to provide the following information as a Funding Inquiry (FI) submission. Applicants that do not provide adequate information for the following sections may be declined eligibility for the HFFI FARE Fund.

Project Eligibility and Overview

Applicants will answer a series of questions based on HFFI eligibility criteria that best describes their project. Please see Part II - D of this RFA for more information about ineligible projects.

- **Operating Status:** Indicate if the business model is currently operating and the month and year when the business model began operating or will begin operations. If the business model is not yet operating, or the operations were temporarily or permanently discontinued, the applicant must describe any factors affecting the timeline to begin operations (150 words).
- **Construction Status:** If construction or real property improvements are necessary for the business model to begin operating, applicants must indicate when groundbreaking will tentatively occur.
- **Food Retail or Food Enterprise (select all that apply):** Select the type of food business model(s) that will be supported by the project for which you are requesting funding:
 - This project will support a SNAP authorized Food Retail Outlet that will sell an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods directly to consumers
 - This project will support a Food Enterprise that will participate in post-harvest food retail supply chain activities such as processing, aggregation and distribution to downstream SNAP Authorized food retail outlets
- **SNAP Authorization (select one):** If your project involves a Food Retail Outlet, indicate if the business model for which you are seeking funding is currently SNAP authorized or will become SNAP authorized once operating.
 - This business model is currently SNAP authorized
 - The business model will be SNAP authorized once operating/the project is complete
 - The business model will not be SNAP authorized
- **Food Retail Projects:**
 - For direct-to-consumer Food Retail and Food Enterprise projects, applicants must:
 - Select which of the Staple (fruits or vegetables; proteins, i.e. eggs, meat, poultry, or fish; dairy products; breads or cereals) and Perishable (fresh, refrigerated, or frozen) food categories will be sold to consumers through the proposed business model.
 - Describe the specific assortment of Staple and Perishable food items that will be sold (100 words)
 - Provide a narrative description of the location the project will serve.
 - Provide the operating address(es) and status (where consumer sales will take place) of the proposed business model.
 - Upload an image indicating the project's location on the HFFI eligibility map available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility/>.
 - If the location is not located in an eligible area on the HFIF eligibility map, upload evidence of the location's eligibility under another methodology that has been adopted for use by government or philanthropic healthy food initiatives.

- **Food Enterprise Projects:**
 - For Food Enterprise projects that will not involve retail sales directly to consumers, applicants must
 - Select which of the Staple (fruits or vegetables; proteins, i.e. eggs, meat, poultry, or fish; dairy products; breads or cereals) and Perishable (fresh, refrigerated, or frozen) food categories will be distributed to downstream retailers through the proposed business model.
 - Describe the specific assortment of Staple and Perishable food items that will be distributed. (100 words)
 - Describe how increased access to those food items will meet an unmet need of the community at existing SNAP authorized food retailers. (100 words)
 - Provide a narrative description of the location the project will serve.
 - Provide the operating address(es) and status (where post-harvest food retail supply chain activities will take place) of the proposed business model.
 - Provide the address(es) and total number of SNAP authorized retailers in eligible underserved areas that the business model will distribute to.
 - Upload an image indicating the project’s location on the HFFI eligibility map available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility/>.
 - If the location is not located in an eligible area on the HFFI eligibility map, upload evidence of the location’s eligibility under another methodology that has been adopted for use by government or philanthropic healthy food initiatives.

- **Other Info** (optional - 150 words): Applicants can use this space to provide any other important information HFFI Staff may need to know about the project.

Project Information

Applicants must provide the below information regarding the proposed project:

- **Project Name (100 characters)**

- **Organization Background (250 words):** Applicants must briefly describe the business or organization that is leading and operating this project. What type of experience does the applicant have with similar food retail or post-harvest food retail supply chain projects?

- **Partner Entity Funding Inquiries (optional - 100 words):** If there are multiple entities involved in a project, applicants must disclose any partner entities who are also submitting a Funding Inquiry and the type of assistance they are requesting. The HFFI FARE Fund will only accept one eligible Funding Inquiry per entity or project for this RFA.

- **Business Model Description (300 words):** Applicants must describe the business model operations of the specific Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise for which HFFI funding is being requested, including details regarding the retail or post-harvest food retail supply chain activities it will carry out.

- **Business Model Type (select all the apply):** Applicants must select the type(s) of project that best describes their project.
 - Grocery Retail

- Mobile Market
 - Food Hub
 - Farmers Market or Farm Stand
 - Grocery Delivery
 - Food Processing
 - Wholesale Distribution
 - Other
- **New or Expansion (select one):** Applicants will also be asked to indicate if the business model for which they are requesting funding is a new business model or the expansion of an existing business model.
- **Project Stage**
 - **Development Stage (select one):** Applicants must select the stage of development for their project and briefly describe the activities completed to date (150 words).
 - Concept/Planning (project is an idea)
 - Predevelopment (project is early-stage and may need to complete feasibility analysis tasks)
 - Implementation (site control established - executed purchase agreement, lease agreement or ownership, construction timeline finalized, feasibility tasks are completed, and project is expected to open within an established timeline)
 - **Feasibility Tasks (150 words):** Applicants must indicate what feasibility analysis tasks have been completed to date for the proposed business model, and what additional feasibility tasks need to be completed.
- **Community Served and Need (250 words) :** Applicants must briefly describe the community to be served and demonstrate why the project is needed to achieve increased access to Staple and Perishable foods in that community.
- **Funding Request:** Applicants should include the requested amount for each funding opportunity. Applicants will not be asked to identify exact dollar amounts for each use at this stage.
 - Planning and Implementation Grant requests may be from \$20,000-\$250,000
 - Planning and Implementation Grants may be used for:
 - Early predevelopment activities such as site analysis, feasibility studies, market studies, community needs assessments, or financial planning
 - End-stage construction or predevelopment such as building or land acquisition, construction for new build, renovation, or expansion of a business, materials, equipment, technology/software.
 - Technical Assistance requests may be up to \$75,000
 - Technical Assistance may be provided for contractual soft costs to be paid by Reinvestment Fund directly to a third-party consultant for early-stage predevelopment activities including business model development, project planning, market studies, business planning, financial modeling, appraisals, community engagement, technology development, community development and food systems/access, business and retail management, project management, leadership development/management training, financial management, governance and organizational structure, community engagement and outreach, and legal

- **HFFI Project Description (500 words):** For each type of funding request, applicants will need to briefly describe the specific project activities for which HFFI funding is being requested. Descriptions should answer the following questions: How would funds be used? Why is funding needed? What would the key goals or accomplishments be for the award period?

PART V –GRANT INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

At least \$5,250,000 is available for planning and implementation Grants for the 2026 Grant and Technical Assistance HFFI FARE Fund RFA. Grant awards may be from \$20,000-\$250,000. We expect to make 20-25 awards.

All applicants interested in grant funding must submit a Funding Inquiry form in order to determine eligibility. If determined to be eligible, applicants will be invited to submit a full application for the appropriate funding opportunity.

Total funding may be increased, and more grants awarded, if additional funds become available. For more information on projects previously funded through HFFI, please visit www.investinginfood.com/impact.

B. What We Will Fund

Grant funding is available for both planning and implementation stage projects.

- Planning stage includes projects that are in early predevelopment phases and need to complete activities such as site analysis, feasibility studies, market studies, architectural plans, or financial planning.
- Implementation stage includes projects that are shovel-ready and have a clear timeline for opening at the time of Funding Inquiry submission. Projects must have site control via an executed lease agreement, purchase agreement or full property ownership, completed feasibility tasks, and a concrete timeline for opening.

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed project will contribute to food access through the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods for retail sale in a venue that accepts SNAP.

Proposed projects could include (but are not limited to):

- **Planning & Late-stage Business Planning:** Business, feasibility, and operations planning/development activities such as community engagement, feasibility studies, financial analysis, business/strategic planning, development of proformas and business financials, staff training, financial or development consultants, project management, marketing & advertisement (including online and print)
- **Predevelopment:** End-stage predevelopment and soft costs, including site location analysis, appraisals, architectural or design assistance, training, other end-stage contractual or consulting uses, and other soft costs that will indirectly support the acquisition and/or pre-construction preparation of land such as legal support, permitting, fees, and environmental/energy assessments
- **Brick and Mortar Facility Development:** Hard capital costs including land or building acquisition; construction; and fixtures, furniture, and equipment for the construction, renovation, or expansion of a brick-and-mortar facility. *Please note that using Federal grant funds for real property (purchase or*

construction) will result in a Federal Interest in your property. See [2 CFR 200.310-316](#) for more information.

- **Equipment and Other Capital Needs:** Hard costs for the creation, retrofit, expansion, or other one-time investment in capital needs for a retail operation or enterprise that is not for a facility, including machinery, equipment, technology, software, purchase of existing business assets, a one-time investment in raw materials, or other. Vehicle purchases are not an eligible expense under grants. *Please note that using Federal grant funds for equipment and materials/supplies with a lifespan more than one year and a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more will result in a Federal Interest in your property. See [2 CFR 200.310-316](#) for more information.*
- **Other Soft Costs:** One-time soft costs such as training, consumer/community engagement, governance support, financial or development consultants, project management, marketing and merchandising work, environmental/energy assessments, food safety assistance, project learning and/or impact assessment, and other one-time soft costs that contribute to preserving or expanding access to food retail.
- **Operating Capital:** Operational and pilot costs may be no more than 25% of the total proposed project budget. This includes costs such as start-up inventory and personnel for post-launch operations. Projects that solely request grant funds for operational or pilot costs, or request grant funds for more than 25% of allowable operational and pilot costs, will be considered ineligible.

C. Application Timelines

Eligible Funding Inquiries will be invited to submit a full application. Applications must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund’s online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>).

Grant Funding Inquiry forms and full applications will be due on the following dates:

| Grants | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Funding Inquiry Form Submission Deadline | 11:59 PM ET on July 31, 2026 |
| Funding Inquiry Eligibility Determination Notification | By September 4, 2026 |
| Application Submission Deadline (if eligible) | 11:59 PM ET on October 30, 2026 |
| Award Notification* | No earlier than January 2027 |

Program staff will be available to answer questions regarding Funding Inquiry and Application submissions until 5 PM ET on the day before each associated deadline above.

*Award notification dates are subject to change due to unexpected delays caused by limited capacity and/or shutdowns of the federal government.

Funding Inquiry

Funding Inquiries requesting Grants and Technical Assistance will not be considered after July 31, 2026. After this date, interested applicants must wait to apply during a future RFA cycle.

Applicants will be contacted once their Funding Inquiry has been reviewed and, if eligible, will receive an invitation to submit a full application. Review time for Funding Inquiries will vary based on the volume of submissions.

Full Application

Full Applications will be evaluated and scored by a review panel based on the criteria in this RFA. Funding decisions will be made no earlier than January 2027. Selected grant award recipients will be notified of their selection electronically and must be ready to work with Reinvestment Fund to begin the Grant Agreement and funding process.

Performance Period

Projects may take up to 12 months if their HFFI use of funds does not involve construction; projects that include construction (real property improvements) in their HFFI use of funds may take up to 24 months. **If selected for an award, award conditions must be met within 60 days of award notification, and the proposed project must start within 120 days of award notification.**

PART VI — TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

At least \$1,000,000 is available for Technical Assistance (TA). TA will be offered through TA providers contracted directly by Reinvestment Fund to complete approved early-stage planning, predevelopment, or business assistance needs. TA will be provided to selected eligible organizations where expert guidance would further clarify, advance, or strengthen a project that supports HFFI goals and priorities. Applicants selected to receive Technical Assistance will receive services of no more than \$75,000 per project to be paid by Reinvestment Fund directly to a third-party service provider. The number of projects that receive TA will depend on the need identified.

All applicants interested in TA funding must submit a Funding Inquiry form to receive an eligibility determination. If determined to be eligible, applicants will be invited to submit a full application for the appropriate funding opportunity.

Total funding may be increased, and more TA awarded, if additional funds become available. Receipt of TA does not guarantee an organization's selection for future HFFI funding.

B. What We Will Fund

Technical Assistance will be provided to eligible organizations that are working to plan or develop a Food Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise that seeks to improve access to healthy food in underserved areas through Food Retail. Funding will support contractual costs for early-stage planning and development of projects aiming to

strengthen, expand, and innovate within the food retail sector or post-harvest food retail supply chain. Current or past grantees with immediate TA needs that would fortify the capacity and sustainability of the project are eligible to apply.

Applicants must demonstrate how the business model(s) they are planning will contribute to food access through the availability of Staple and Perishable Foods for retail sale. Funds may be used for planning the expansion of an existing business model, if the expanded business model will serve new underserved populations that are not already serviced by the existing business. Funds can be used for expenses that will directly support the planning and overall sustainability of the new or expanded business model.

Proposed uses of funds could include (but are not limited to) the following contractual expenses:

- **Community Engagement:** consumer/community engagement support and activities, governance support & activities, community food assessments
- **Business, feasibility, and operations planning/development:** Information gathering and decision-making activities such as market research or personnel that will support outreach activities, feasibility studies, financial analysis, business/strategic planning, development of proformas and business financials, staff training, financial or development consultants, project management, marketing & advertisement (including online and print), etc.
- **Construction predevelopment:** site location analysis, appraisals, architectural or design assistance, and soft costs that will indirectly support the acquisition and/or pre-construction preparation of land such as legal support, permitting, fees, and environmental/energy assessments
- **Other capital needs:** including one-time investments into capital needs for the planning and development of a business model's operations such as capital campaign planning, or development of technology (i.e. build out of a website) that will operationalize the next phase of the project

A list of potential TA providers is available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/ta-providers/>. Applicants are required to vet providers' capabilities and experience themselves for their specific project. If an applicant wants to work with a provider not on this list, they will need to connect the provider to Reinvestment Fund for vendor due diligence and onboarding. If an applicant does not yet have a TA provider identified, if chosen to receive TA they will work with Reinvestment Fund to determine the best provider.

C. Application Timelines

Eligible Funding Inquiries will be invited to submit a full application. Applications must be submitted through Reinvestment Fund’s online grants portal, SmartSimple (<https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/>).

Technical Assistance Funding Inquiry forms and full applications will be due on the following dates:

| | Technical Assistance |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Funding Inquiry Form Submission Deadline | 11:59 PM ET on July 31, 2026 |
| Funding Inquiry Eligibility Determination Notification | By September 4, 2026 |
| Application Submission Deadline (if eligible) | 11:59 PM ET on October 30, 2026 |
| Award Notification* | No earlier than January 2027 |

Program staff will be available to answer questions regarding Funding Inquiry and Application submissions until 5 PM ET on the day before each associated deadline above.

*Award notification dates are subject to change due to unexpected delays caused by limited capacity and/or shutdowns/interruptions of the federal government.

Funding Inquiry

Funding Inquiries requesting Grants and Technical Assistance will not be considered after July 31, 2026. After this date, interested applicants must wait to apply during a future RFA cycle.

Applicants will be contacted once their Funding Inquiry has been reviewed and, if eligible, will receive an invitation to submit a full application. Review time for Funding Inquiries will vary based on the volume of submissions.

Full Application

Full Applications will be reviewed by Reinvestment Fund. TA will be awarded on the merit of the proposed project. Reinvestment Fund will negotiate final budgets, including disallowing ineligible costs, with TA recipients and third-party service providers. Funding decisions will be made no earlier than January 2027.

Technical Assistance Period

Technical Assistance Projects may take up to 12 months. **The proposed project must start within 120 days of notification of receipt of Technical Assistance.**

PART VII – SUBMITTING A GRANT APPLICATION

A. Grant Application Requirements

When invited to submit, applicants will be required to provide the following information, as a supplement to the information submitted during the Funding Inquiry phase, as a full application for funding to the HFFI FARE Fund.

I. Narrative

Organization Overview and Background (250 words)

Briefly describe the applicant organization, its ownership or management structure, size, and relevant project partners including supplier or buyer relationships and/or community partnerships as applicable. Please describe the applicant organization's and/or project partners' experience and role relevant to the success of developing and operating the proposed project.

Population, Community, and/or Market Served (500 words)

Describe the critical elements and needs of the local food environment and the community that would benefit from the proposed project. This could include brief demographics and geographic characteristics of the area or population involved with or to be served by the proposed project. Applicants could describe the market within the food economy to be served by the Food Retailer or Food Enterprise, including data on access points and possible competition. Applicants could draw from a Community Food Assessment or a market study to describe the challenges to access to food in this community. Most relevant is an explanation of who is to be served by this proposed project, and to what extent they are involved in project development, activities, operations, and successes.

HFFI Project Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes (750 words)

Describe the overall HFFI project for which you are seeking funding, including the community or market needs to be met; the goals of the project; the overall model, such as business model, program model, and sources of revenue and ability to cover ongoing operating expenses; project activities to be undertaken and the timeline to accomplish these activities; the specific changes (outcomes) that will occur as a result of the project, and who and what will benefit. Most relevant is why these activities were selected, and what impact on access to/preservation/expansion of Staple and Perishable Foods the applicant expects they will produce.

Business Model Description (300 words)

Applicants must describe the business model operations of the specific Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise for which HFFI funding is being requested, including details regarding the retail or post-harvest food retail supply chain activities involved.

Need for and Use of Funds (500 words)

Describe the elements of the project for which you are seeking grant funding, and how grant funding will be used if received. Most relevant is why grant funding is needed in particular for these uses of funds, as well as what grant funding will enable for the project, and the organization. If grant funding is part of a larger set of funding sources, describe what the grant will support within the project funding structure, as well as the source of other funding or financing, and the status of other funding sources. The most successful submissions will be those that have demonstrated how grant funding will enable a sustainable project that can thrive after the grant period is over.

Business Model Sustainability & Leveraged Resources (300 words)

Describe how HFFI funding would lead to long-term business model sustainability and equitable food access, along with how the business model will financially sustain operations beyond the grant period. Applicants should also describe how they are or plan to leverage HFFI funding to ready the proposed business model for loans, grants and/or other forms of capital or capacity to support project implementation and long-term growth.

Activities Completed to Date (300 words)

Describe the activities completed to date to move forward the new or expanded business model. Include any predevelopment, planning or implementation activities that have already occurred to move the project forward.

Project Impacts (250 words)

Impact assessment is an important component of the HFFI program overall. Reinvestment Fund seeks to collect impact metrics across all of its programs in order to assess the success of its funding initiatives.

Applicants must briefly describe the metrics of success they project for their proposed project, as applicable, such as:

- Growth in annual revenue for their organization / enterprise
- Leveraged capital – the amount of other capital supporting the project
- Square footage created – the amount of food retail space created or preserved
- Jobs to be created or preserved - the number of jobs created or retained
- Sales revenue – weekly or annual sales revenue, weekly basket size, percentage of sales from SNAP transactions
- Other metrics appropriate to the project's impact

Priorities

Applicants may answer the following optional questions, to describe, if applicable, their project's impacts relating to the following program priorities:

- How will the business model resulting from this project create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community? (100 words)
- How will the business model resulting from this project support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent possible? (100 words)
- Will the business model resulting from this project be accessible by public transit? (100 words)
- How will the project involve women-owned or controlled businesses? (100 words)
- How will the project involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses? (100 words)

Project Timeline (500 words)

Applicants must describe the amount of time needed to complete the project and an overview of their project's timeline, as well as a description of the overall project timing and relevant factors influencing project timing and success. Projects may take up to 12 months if the HFFI uses of funds do not involve construction; HFFI projects that include construction may take up to 24 months. Applicants will be asked to upload a table identifying key project activities and milestones with relevant dates to be completed during the grant period.

II. Budget

Budget

Applicants will be asked to provide a complete budget breakdown and explanation for their HFFI FARE Fund grant request by cost category. Stronger applications will outline detailed budgets that include reasonable estimates for costs eligible for HFFI funding. Applicants who include ineligible costs or expenses that do not align with the HFFI eligible project described in the narrative questions will score lower and ineligible costs will not be funded. **Operational and pilot costs may be no more than 25% of the total proposed project budget.** This includes costs such as start-up inventory and personnel for post-launch operations. Projects that solely request grant funds for operational or pilot costs will be considered ineligible. Applications that request more than 25% of the total budget for operational costs may be considered ineligible or, if selected for funding, only partially awarded at the discretion of Reinvestment Fund.

Describe how you arrived at the budget figures (such as quotes, estimates, or comparable figures) and the associated justification for each of the following cost categories included in your project:

Personnel

As applicable, include each staff person for the applicant who has a substantive role in the proposed project, their # of hours or % of FTE, salary/hourly wage, and the amount of the request. Personnel costs should be reasonable for the services rendered, specifically relating to the HFFI project, conform to the established written policy of your organization, and be consistently applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities.

Fringe

As applicable, provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the personnel listed above for which you are requesting grant funds. The costs of fringe benefits should be reasonable and in line with the established policies of your organization.

Travel

As applicable, provide trip details and purpose for all travel requested. Travel in this section is for staff of the applicant organization. Travel expenses must be in accordance with the applicant organization's established travel policies, which will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips, in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200.475](#) or [48 CFR Part 31.2](#).

Furniture/Fixtures/Equipment

As applicable, list all purchases for items with a life span of one year or more and a cost of \$10,000 or above per each item acquired. Examples of such purchases may be equipment and fixtures such as portable/unaffixed refrigeration, kitchen and storage equipment, and furniture. Please note that using Federal grant funds for equipment with a lifespan more than one year and a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more will result in a Federal Interest in your property. See 2 CFR 200.310-316 for more information.

Vehicle purchases are not an eligible expense under HFFI FARE Fund Grants.

Construction

As applicable, include the acquisition and/or construction and renovation of land and/or buildings. Construction budget should include a minimum of 10% contingency. Please note that using Federal

grant funds for real property (purchase or construction) will result in a Federal Interest in your property. See 2 CFR 200.310-316 for more information.

Contractual

As applicable, list all contractual services such as predevelopment soft costs, third-party consultant or design fees, trainings, etc.

Materials/Supplies:

As applicable, include items with a useful life of less than one year and items under \$10,000 per unit, such as paper, envelopes, pens and pencils, office supplies, marketing materials, Point of Sale (POS) or computers, copy/fax machines, telephones, software, etc. Please note that using Federal grant funds for materials and supplies will result in a Federal Interest in your property. See 2 CFR 200.310-316 for more information.

Other Costs:

As applicable, list other costs not covered by the above categories, such as inventory, raw materials, insurance, maintenance costs, or other.

Indirect Charges:

If you do not have a Federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA), you may elect to use the de minimis rate, which is 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$50,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$50,000.

However, you must comply with any approved negotiated indirect cost rate that you have received from the Federal government, so if you have a NICRA, you must use that rate to calculate your indirect costs. Regardless of which way you calculate indirect costs, you may not charge more than 10 percent of your total HFFI award amount as indirect costs.

Program Income:

As applicable, list program income that will be generated by the proposed activities. As described in 2 CFR Part 200, program income means gross income earned by the non-Federal entity that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the Grant Period. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use or rental of real or personal property acquired under Federal awards, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under a Federal award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and principal and interest on loans made with Federal award funds. Interest earned on advances of Federal funds is not program income. Refer to 2 CFR Part 200.307 for more information on Program Income. To the extent possible, all program income identified in the grant agreement budget may be utilized according to the Additive Method (see 2 CFR Part 200.307(e)(2)).

III. Attachments

Operating Projections

Applicants must submit 5-year projections for the operations of the proposed Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise. Financial projections may include estimates for sales projections, gross margins and operating expenses. Projections may be high level based on best available information. Where possible, applicants should include details concerning how you arrived at the assumptions, in addition to general sources of income. Successful projects will have projections that demonstrate the sustainability of operations beyond the grant period.

Sources and Uses

If the HFFI grant request is part of a larger project with additional sources of funding and activities, applicants must provide a budget spreadsheet summarizing the additional funding sources, the status of these funds (i.e. applied or committed), and uses of funds in the overall larger project.

Demographic Questions (optional)

Applicants may optionally provide demographic information about their organization's leadership, board members, or owners. This information will be taken into consideration for priority point allocations.

IV. Attestations

Applicant must complete the attestations required for this award:

- Applicant has not been convicted of a felony criminal violation under Federal law in the 24 months preceding the date of application.
- Applicant does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.
- Applicant holds current insurance coverage required by local licensing, regulatory authorities, or aligned with industry standards.
- Applicant is, and has at all times been, in compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements of the laws implemented by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury ("OFAC"), in each case to the extent OFAC applies to Applicant.
- Applicant hereby authorizes Reinvestment Fund to conduct OFAC searches, background checks and other searches and verifications as Reinvestment Fund may determine to be necessary or desirable.

PART VIII — GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW

Invited applications submitted by eligible applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the criteria below. Reinvestment Fund's HFFI Review Panel of internal and external experts will base scores only on the information provided in the application. This is a competitive program, so you will receive scores based on the quality of the information provided. There are 105 total points available for the criteria, and 27 available additional points for the priority areas listed below. Each application will be scored by at least two reviewers, and the scores will be averaged.

The top 25% of applications will be further evaluated by the HFFI Review Panel who will determine a consensus ranking of applications that will take into account the application score, project type and geographic diversity (including urban and rural), program diversity, and ability to advance the HFFI goals. Additionally, at least 10% of

the available funding will be awarded to high scoring projects (in the top 25% of applications) that are in the planning and predevelopment stages. In the event of tied scores, HFFI program staff and the Review Panel have discretion in breaking ties.

Applications selected for an award will be funded up to the maximum amount requested. Budgets will be reviewed and may be adjusted for allowable costs and reasonable uses of funds. For example, an equipment budget may be adjusted to reflect more reasonable prices, or construction budgets may be reduced to reflect a more reasonable scope of work. An application that cannot be fully funded with available funds may be offered partial funding at Reinvestment Fund's discretion.

A. Applicant Qualifications (0 to 10 points)

Applications will be evaluated for the applicant and project team's track record and experience in Food Enterprise and/or Food Retail industry development and management, and/or food systems or post-harvest food retail supply chain experience. The application will be evaluated for the applicant's demonstrated ability to deliver the project described. More points will be awarded to applicants that demonstrate relevant industry experience, relevant partners in the project team, and the ability to obtain qualified services necessary to carry out a successful project.

B. Stakeholder Involvement (0 to 10 Points)

Applicants will be awarded points for the extent to which they demonstrate inclusion of stakeholder communities and targeted beneficiaries in the design and operation of the project. Points will be given to projects that describe established or proposed partnerships and collaborations with relevant organizations and businesses. More points will be given to projects that describe the leadership, ownership, and/or involvement of the project's target community and market in the design and implementation of the HFFI project.

C. SNAP Authorized Retail Outlets in Underserved Areas (0 to 20 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposed project involves SNAP authorized Retail Outlets in Underserved Areas. For food retail projects, more points will be awarded to applications that clearly involve the creation or expansion of a SNAP authorized Retail Outlet in an Underserved Area. For supply chain projects, more points will be awarded for projects that will significantly participate in post-harvest food retail supply chain activities with SNAP authorized Retail Outlets. Less points will be awarded to projects that provide unclear information or where a significant amount of the proposed business' activities will be outside of the post-harvest food retail supply chain in underserved areas.

D. Staple and Perishable Foods in the Retail Supply Chain (0 to 20 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposed business model will create, expand, or sustain a substantial assortment of Staple and Perishable foods for sale at SNAP authorized Retail Outlets. Food retail projects will be awarded more points if they will sell a significant assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods once operating. Supply chain projects will receive more points if the proposed business' post-harvest food retail supply chain activities involve an assortment of both Staple and Perishable foods that will be distributed to downstream SNAP authorized retailers, or, if the business will only involve a limited assortment of Staple and Perishable foods, the food is culturally appropriate for the community being served and increased access to the food(s) will meet an existing unmet need of the community.

E. Project Activities and Business Model Viability (0 to 20 points)

Applications will be reviewed for the alignment of the proposed project activities with the long-term viability of the proposed business model.

For implementation stage projects, more points will be awarded to applications that reflect thoughtful planning efforts and communicate the extent to which HFFI funding will contribute to enterprise success, and, in turn, the applicant's capacity to contribute to sustained, long-term food access. More points will be awarded for a clearly defined problem and proposed solutions, with projections supported by market analysis and/or community assessment and industry metrics or historical financials. Additionally, projects will be awarded more points if the supplier or buyer relationships have been determined or are a part of activities to be completed during the grant period.

For earlier stage projects, projects will be evaluated for the appropriateness of their proposed planning activities to the overall project goal and how the proposed planning activities will ultimately help to unlock additional sources of capital, resources, and information; catalyze project sustainability; and/or enable the next phase of implementation for deeper impact or project reach. More points will be awarded for clearly defined activities that align with demonstrated need to support project development and move towards implementation. If feasibility activities are a part of the grant project, the application should describe the projections, analysis and assessments that will result from grant activities.

In all cases, more points will be awarded for projects that demonstrate ability to attract other funding and capacity for long-term growth, relative to the needs of starting up and operations. HFFI supports market-based business models, therefore, projects that propose business models that may rely on unobtained grant or philanthropic funding to sustain operations once open will receive less points.

F. Identified Metrics (0 to 5 points)

Applications will be evaluated for the applicant entity's demonstrated commitment to data collection, impact assessment, and sharing learnings with Reinvestment Fund and the HFFI program. More points will be awarded to applicants that identify clear metrics and outcomes and are able to collect those during the grant period.

G. Budget (0 to 10 points)

Budgets and budget narratives will be reviewed for completeness, applicability, and detail. More points will be awarded for budgets that align with the application narrative, are reasonable for accomplishing the project outcomes, and describe all categories of costs, including estimates or quotes, and categorize expenses within line items. Ineligible or unallowable costs in the budget may result in a lower score.

H. Timeline (0 to 10 points)

More points will be given to timelines that align with the project narrative and budget, describe activities in detail, and include a reasonable and differentiated timetable for proposed tasks to be completed during the grant period. More points will also be given if key project milestones and activities, with relevant dates, are included.

Priority Points

Priority will be given to projects that have the following attributes. Points will be awarded for each attribute for a total of 27 priority points awarded on top of points awarded for the criteria above.

- Projects that are located in and/or serve Very Low-Income Communities (as defined earlier in this RFA) (4 points).
- Projects that will create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community (2 points).
- Projects that support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent possible (2 points).

- Projects that are accessible by public transit (in areas that are served by public transit) (2 points).
- Projects that will involve women-owned or controlled businesses. Applications submitted by women-owned business will receive more points (up to 3 points).
- Projects that will involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses. Applications that are submitted by BIPOC owned or controlled business will receive more points (3 points).
- Projects located in and/or serve Rural Areas (as defined earlier in this RFA) (4 points).
- Organizations 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 (2 points).
- Projects in communities that have been underserved by HFFI investment, including other national, state, and/or local HFFI programs (5 points).

In accordance with the program’s Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy, Reinvestment Fund has a process in place to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation and will keep applicant information confidential.

PART IX – GRANT AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Successful applicants will be notified through an award document (Letter of Conditions) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the grant effective date, and other pertinent instructions and information regarding funding. Grantees will be asked to submit additional documentation, forms required for federal grants, and other information as applicable during the funding process as a condition of receiving the award.

This documentation includes:

- A final, approved budget and project workplan
- The name, title, and home address of the authorized signatory for the Grantee
- The name and information of the grant period point of contact for the Grantee
- Certification regarding Lobbying Activities and SF LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," if applicable.
- RD Form 400-4, Civil Rights Assurances
- Certificate describing the Grantee’s current insurance
- W-9: Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- Bank Account information for ACH payments
- Projected project impact metrics
- USDA Preliminary Environmental Information Survey (PEIS) and other supporting documentation for environmental review

Grant awards will be funded with federal funds and, as such, grant award recipients are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations provided in 2 CFR part 200. Grant terms and conditions, grantee requirements, and applicable regulations will be described in a Grant Agreement to be signed between Reinvestment Fund and the Grantee.

Award Conditions and Project Timeline

Grantees will be expected to meet all required award conditions within 60 days of award notification and begin their project within 120 days of award notification.

Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, grantees 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.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans

All funds granted under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved project scope and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, and applicable federal regulations. In accordance with 2 CFR part 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.
- A change in budget of over 10% of any budget line.

Federal Award Requirements

Grantees shall remain in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and other generally applicable requirements for the duration of the Grant Agreement including 2 CFR Parts 175, 200, 400, 415, 416, 417, 418, 421, and 422. The most commonly referenced provisions are identified below.

Federal Financial Management and Internal Controls Requirements

Grantees are expected to comply with applicable federal financial management requirements included in the award's terms and conditions and 2 CFR Part 200.300-.309. This includes maintaining a financial management system in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200.302 and internal controls in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200.303. Failure to comply could result in Reinvestment Fund suspending Grantee's access to funds.

Program Income

Grantees must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200.307. Additionally, if program income is earned during the period of performance, grantees may use it in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.307(e)(2), provided that you inform Reinvestment Fund in writing of your intent prior to the award date. However, if Grantees earn program income in excess of what can be used under 2 CFR Part 200.307(e)(2) or if they earn unanticipated program income, they must comply with 2 CFR Part 200.307(e)(1). Costs incidental to the generation of program income may be deducted from gross income to determine program income, provided these costs have not been charged to the award. Program income requirements under 2 CFR 200.307 flow down to all subawards made under HFFI; recipients must apply 200.307(e)(2) (additive) or 200.307(e)(1) (deductive) as directed in the Grant Agreement.

Procurement and Property Standards

Grantees must follow the procurement standards requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200.310-.327.

Cost Principles

Grantees must comply with the provisions in 2 CFR Part 200, most of which are contained in Subpart E.

Audits

Grantees must comply with the provisions in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F.

Record Retention and Access

Grantees must retain records related to this work performed under their Grant Agreement and allow access to them in accordance with 2 CFR Parts 200.334-.338.

Notice of Federal Interest

Federal interest means that the federal government has a stake in an asset bought or improved with federal money. USDA has a federal interest in the following assets if they are purchased or improved with HFFI FARE Fund awards:

- *Real Property:* Land and any structures permanently affixed to it, such as buildings.
- *Equipment:* Items with a lifespan of more than one year and a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more.
- *Supplies:* Items that are short-lived (less than one year) or cost less than \$10,000 per unit.

Any assets acquired or improved with federal funds will be held (e.g., lien, etc.) on behalf of awarded entities by Reinvestment Fund until the federal interest is no longer vested. Real property, equipment, or supplies with vested federal interest must be used exclusively for HFFI activities until the federal interest is no longer vested. See 2 CFR 200.310-316 for more information.

Recruitment Activities

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

- Must present factual statements intended to inform, not to persuade
- May include locational information about retail outlets (i.e., the address of the retail food store participating in the grantee's project)
- May also specify that retailer outlet accepts SNAP (this includes appropriate logo use as outlined at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/logo-guidance>)

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.

Environmental Review of Eligible Projects

To facilitate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Program Regulations, as amended, 7 CFR Part 1b, projects may be required to complete and submit environmental documentation for the HFFI funded project. The purpose is to assist Reinvestment Fund in determining whether the funded project qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion ("CE").

Where Reinvestment Fund determines that a funded project involves extraordinary circumstances, RF shall then refer the project to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Business-Cooperative Service for a final determination. USDA's final determination may result in the project being reclassified to one requiring an

Environmental Assessment (“EA”) or an Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). Reinvestment Fund’s review of environmental documentation, including potentially by third party experts, may require a 4-8 week turnaround.

Build America, Buy America Act Requirements for Grant Awards Made to Non-Federal Entities

If the grantee is a Non-Federal Entity (2 CFR 200.1) and the project includes covered infrastructure, the grantee must comply with Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements consistent with USDA RD guidance, including applicable thresholds, waivers, and definitions. USDA has a small grants waiver that applies to awards with total federal funding below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, which is currently set at \$250,000. See <https://www.rd.usda.gov/build-america-buy-america> for additional guidance.

Expected Program Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports semi-annually during the project period and, as applicable, after grant closeout. The reporting requirements will be included in the award terms and conditions within the Grant Agreement. If there are any program or award-specific terms, those will be identified in the Grant Agreement.

Grantee reporting requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- Requests for reimbursement or advance of grant funds along with appropriate backup documentation at regular intervals throughout the grant period.
- Semi-annual reporting of grant project progress and use of grant funds throughout the grant period.
- Ongoing monitoring of compliance with Federal Award Requirements, including environmental review and Build America, Buy America Act requirements.
- Final progress report, financial closeout report at the end of the grant period.
- Ongoing reporting after the grant period closeout, including status of equipment or real property purchased with grant funds, status of SNAP retailer permit, and brief general project updates.

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, HFFI Grant Agreements, and all applicable Federal Laws. If any grantee fails to comply with HFFI policies or requirements, 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 and may terminate the grant agreement as a result of noncompliance.

PART X — SUBMITTING A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

A. Technical Assistance Application Requirements

When invited to submit, applicants will be required to provide the following information, as a supplement to the project summary and other information submitted during the Funding Inquiry phase, as a full application for funding to the HFFI FARE Fund. Technical Assistance will be available to support contractual services provided by third party vendors for new, existing, or expanding projects in the planning, predevelopment, or implementation stages and for current or past grantees with immediate TA needs that would fortify the capacity and sustainability of the project. Operating capital is not an eligible use of TA funding.

A list of potential TA providers is available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/ta-providers/>. Applicants are required to vet providers' capabilities and experience themselves for their specific project. If an applicant wants to work with a provider not on this list, they will need to connect the provider to Reinvestment Fund for vendor due diligence and onboarding.

I. Narrative

Project Parameters (150 words)

Applicants must share any parameters, constraints, or deadlines we should be aware of in finding a match with a technical assistance provider and developing a scope of services. If you have a provider or providers in mind, please share their names and contact information.

Project Summary (150 words)

Applicants must provide a brief description of the project, including an overview of proposed HFFI funded planning, predevelopment activities, or business assistance needs, and the ultimate goals and outcomes of these activities.

Business Model Description (300 words)

Applicants must describe the business model operations of the specific Retail Outlet or Food Enterprise for which HFFI funding is being requested, including details regarding the retail or post-harvest food retail supply chain activities it will carry out.

Organization Overview & Background (250 words)

Briefly describe the applicant organization, its ownership or management structure, size, and relevant project partners including supplier or buyer relationships and/or community partnerships as applicable. Please describe the applicant organization's and/or project partners' experience and role relevant to the success of developing and/or operating the proposed project. If the applicant does not have relevant industry experience, the application should describe how they will seek qualified services in order to carry out a successful project.

Population, Community, and/or Market Served (500 words)

Describe the critical elements and needs of the local food environment and the community that would benefit from the proposed project. This could include brief demographics and geographic characteristics of the area or population involved with or to be served by the proposed project. Applicants could describe the market within the food economy to be served by the Food Retailer or Food Enterprise. Applicants could

draw from a completed Community Food Assessment or a market study to describe the challenges to food access in this community or describe the need for a Community Food Assessment or market study to be conducted. Most relevant is an explanation of who is to be served by this proposed project, and to what extent they are involved in project development, activities, operations, and successes.

Community Engagement & Involvement (500 words)

Describe how the project has engaged the communities, populations, and/or market that it plans to serve. This should include the process used to ensure inclusion of targeted populations and communities; the extent to which community members have been involved in development and design of the proposed project; and any challenges that have arisen and strategies to address them. If community engagement activities have not yet occurred, the applicant should describe the engagement plan and next steps.

Contractual Use of Funds & Project Objectives (500 words)

Describe the overall planning, predevelopment, or business assistance contractual services for which you are seeking HFFI funding. Applicants should describe how HFFI funding will be used if received, why HFFI funding is particularly needed for these consultant services, as well as what HFFI funding will enable for the project and the organization. Most relevant is why these services were selected, and how they will support the ideation, information gathering, design, planning, and development of a Food Retail or Food Enterprise project that will ultimately improve access to fresh, healthy food through food retail in Underserved Areas. Applicants may include in their description the community or market needs to be met; the goals of the project; activities that have been completed to date; relevant providers that will be participating in planning activities or the need to identify providers to support planning activities.

Project Outcomes (250 Words)

Describe the direct outcomes expected as a result of the planning, predevelopment, or business assistance activities for which you are seeking HFFI funding. This should include the results of these activities that would be accomplished by the end of the award period and the specific changes (outcomes) that will occur as a result of these activities. Applicants should describe how HFFI funding will enable the development of a new or expanded Food Retail or Food Enterprise project that can be implemented and/or sustained after the award period is over.

Capital Access & Project Sustainability (250 words)

Describe how this HFFI award would leverage additional funding and/or resources to support the long- term sustainability and execution of a Food Retail or Food Enterprise project. If HFFI funding is part of a larger set of funding sources, describe the sources, uses, and status of other funding or financing, including funding you may still need to acquire to make the project feasible.

Project Timeline (500 words)

Applicants must describe the amount of time needed to complete the project (up to 12 months) and an overview of their project’s timeline, as well as a description of the overall project timing and relevant factors influencing project timing and success. Applicants will be asked to upload a table identifying key project milestones and activities, with relevant dates, to be completed during the award period.

Priorities

Applicants may answer the following optional questions to describe, if applicable, their project and ultimate business model’s impacts relating to the HFFI FARE Fund priorities:

- How will the business model resulting from this project create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community? (100 words)
- How will the business model resulting from this project support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent possible? (100 words)
- Will the business model resulting from this project be accessible by public transit? (100 words)How will the project involve women-owned or controlled businesses? (100 words)
- How will the project involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses? (100 words)

II. Budget

Applicants will be asked to provide a complete budget breakdown and explanation for their HFFI TA request. TA awards may only be used for contractual soft costs for services provided by third-party vendors and may not be used for the purchase or installation of equipment or real property improvements. A list of TA providers within the HFFI network is available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/ta-providers/>. This list serves as a resource for your project. Applicants are required to vet providers' capabilities and experience themselves for their specific project. If you want to work with a provider not on this list, the provider will still be contracted by Reinvestment Fund and will undergo vendor due diligence and onboarding.

Describe relevant service providers, listing contractual services such as predevelopment activities, third-party consultant or design fees, trainings, software development, etc. This should include a brief description of each service and the total amount to be allocated to each service during the TA period.

III. Attachments

Sources and Uses (If applicable)

If your HFFI award request is part of a larger project with additional sources of funding and activities, applicants should provide a budget spreadsheet summarizing the additional funding sources, the status of these funds (i.e. applied or committed), and uses of funds in the overall larger project.

Demographic Questions (optional)

Applicants may optionally provide demographic information about their organization's leadership, board members, or owners. This information will be taken into consideration for priority point allocations.

TA Consultant Letter of Commitment or Service Quote (If applicable):

If applicable, applicants can attach a one-page letter of commitment and/or quote from their preferred TA provider(s) detailing the cost and scope of requested services. If you will be working with Reinvestment Fund to determine the best provider, you do not need to submit these.

IV. Attestations

Applicant must complete the attestations required for this award:

- Applicant has not been convicted of a felony criminal violation under Federal law in the 24 months preceding the date of application.
- Applicant does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

- Applicant holds current insurance coverage required by local licensing, regulatory authorities, or aligned with industry standards.
- Applicant is, and has at all times been, in compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements of the laws implemented by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury (“OFAC”), in each case to the extent OFAC applies to Applicant.
- Applicant hereby authorizes Reinvestment Fund to conduct OFAC searches, background checks and other searches and verifications as Reinvestment Fund may determine to be necessary or desirable.

PART XI – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION REVIEW

To support HFFI goals, Reinvestment Fund will offer Technical Assistance (TA) to eligible organizations that are in a planning phase or early stage of a Food Retail or Food Enterprise project. TA will be provided to eligible organizations where expert guidance would further clarify and advance a project that supports HFFI goals and priorities. Applications for TA will be reviewed by Reinvestment Fund staff and awards will be provided on a merit-basis to eligible projects.

Technical Assistance will be administered as non-financial assistance through a third-party service provider. Reinvestment Fund will directly contract with the agreed-upon provider(s) who will conduct approved contractual services up to a 12-month period. A list of potential TA providers is available at <https://www.investinginfood.com/ta-providers/>. Applicants are required to vet providers’ capabilities and experience themselves for their specific project. If an applicant wants to work with a provider not on this list, they will need to connect the provider to Reinvestment Fund for vendor due diligence and onboarding, and the provider will be approved at Reinvestment Fund’s discretion. If an applicant does not yet have a TA provider identified, if chosen to receive TA they will work with Reinvestment Fund to determine the best provider.

Successful applicants will be notified electronically if they are selected to receive Technical Assistance. TA selections will be made at the discretion of Reinvestment Fund and will take into account the merits of the project based on the criteria below, the project type, geographic diversity (including states, urban and rural), program diversity, ability to advance the HFFI goals, and allowable costs. Budgets will be reviewed and may be adjusted for allowable costs and reasonable uses of funds. An application that cannot be fully funded with available funds may be offered partial funding at Reinvestment Fund's discretion. Reinvestment Fund will not provide feedback on Technical Assistance applications.

Project Team

Applications will be evaluated for the applicant and project team’s track record and experience in Food Enterprise and/or Food Retail industry development and management, and/or food systems or food supply chain experience.

Stakeholder Involvement

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate inclusion of stakeholder communities and targeted beneficiaries in the design and operation of the project.

Food Access Goals

Applications will be evaluated based on how strongly they align with the goal of the HFFI program, which is to improve access to affordable and healthy Perishable and Staple foods for sale at retail outlets in Underserved Areas.

Proposed TA Activities

Projects will be evaluated for the appropriateness of their proposed planning or predevelopment activities to the overall project goal and how the proposed planning or predevelopment activities will ultimately help to unlock additional sources of capital, resources, and information; catalyze project sustainability; and/or enable the next phase of implementation for deeper impact or project reach.

Budget & Timeline

Budgets and budget narratives will be reviewed for appropriateness, completeness, and detail.

Priority Points

Priority will be given to projects that have the following attributes.

- Projects that are located in and/or serving Very Low-Income Communities (as defined earlier in this RFA).
- Projects that will create or retain Quality Jobs (as defined earlier in this RFA) for low-income residents in the community.
- Projects that support regional food systems and locally grown foods to the maximum extent.
- Projects that are accessible by public transit (in areas that are served by public transit).
- Will involve women-owned or controlled businesses.
- Will involve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned or controlled businesses.
- Projects that are located in and/or serving Rural Areas (as defined earlier in this RFA).
- Applicants who are applying for TA as part of a larger project and have secured or are actively seeking 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 TA 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.
- Projects in communities that have been underserved by HFFI investment, including other national, state, and/or local HFFI programs.

In accordance with the program's Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy, Reinvestment Fund has a process in place to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation and will keep applicant information confidential.

PART XII – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

Expected Program Reporting Requirements

All Technical Assistance recipients will be required to submit performance reports after the completion of their TA project. The reporting requirements will be included in the TA recipient notification. If there are any program-specific terms, those will be identified also.

Technical Assistance recipient reporting requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting of TA project progress and use of TA funds during the TA period.
- Final closeout report when the TA project is completed.
- Ongoing reporting after the project closeout, including brief general project updates.

Project Timeline

If awarded, TA projects and related contractual agreements must be completed within 12 months. **If selected for TA the proposed project must start within 120 days of notification.**

Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

TA recipients may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of TA funds.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans

All funds under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are awarded in accordance with the approved project scope and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, and applicable federal regulations. TA recipients must notify 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).
- 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.

Recruitment Activities

TA recipients may promote or advertise HFFI projects using any media, including television, radio, and billboards. Regardless of format, however, promotional activities funded with HFFI funds:

- Must present factual statements intended to inform, not to persuade
- May include locational information about retail outlets (i.e., the address of the retail food store participating in the grantee's project)
- May also specify that retailer outlet accepts SNAP (this includes appropriate logo use as outlined at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/logo-guidance>)

Under no circumstances should HFFI TA recipients 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.

Noncompliance with Program Policy

TA recipients 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, HFFI Grant Agreements, and all applicable Federal Laws. If any TA recipient fails to comply with HFFI policies or requirements, Reinvestment Fund will notify that TA recipient of the issue and establish a timeline for corrective action. If the TA recipient fails to take required corrective action within the established timeline, then Reinvestment Fund will immediately suspend payment of contractors and may terminate the provision of technical assistance services as a result of noncompliance.