

Eligibility Criteria - HFFF FY25

Eligible Entities

- Political subdivisions of the state,
- Indian nations, tribes and pueblos
- For-profit business enterprises (including a corporation, limited liability company, sole proprietor, public benefit corporation, social enterprise)
- Cooperatively owned businesses
- Tax-exempt nonprofit corporations
- Small farmers/ranchers with gross cash farm income under \$250,000 are eligible.

All successful grantees are required to submit a NM Substitute W9, form to be provided.

Eligibility Requirements

Projects should be ready for implementation or “shovel-ready” when applying for HFFF funding, with an anticipated completion of December 2025.

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

- **Predevelopment:** Grant needs can include predevelopment and soft costs, including feasibility studies, market analysis, site location analysis, appraisals, architectural or design assistance, training, or other contractual or consulting uses.
- **Brick and Mortar Facility Development:** Hard capital costs including construction; fixtures, furniture, and equipment for the construction, renovation, or expansion of a brick-and-mortar facility. Must demonstrate proof of ownership of property or building to be developed.
- **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 isn't for facility, including refrigerated vehicles, machinery, equipment, technology, hardware, software, purchase of existing business assets, a one-time investment in inventory or raw materials, or other.
- **Consumer Packaged Goods:** This program will support the startup, operation, or expansion of enterprises that produce only one or only a few consumer packaged goods, such as staple healthy food items.
- **Agriculture-Only Projects:** Projects that are exclusively limited to food production, including farming, ranching, hydroponics, aquaponics, vertical farms, or other agricultural activities that already are or seek to become New Mexico Grown Approved Suppliers. Projects that include growing or production as well as downstream food supply chain activities including distribution and sale will be eligible.
- **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 (including logo or website

development), 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.

We encourage 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.
- **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 ready for implementation.

Ineligible

- If your organization was awarded a HFFF grant in FY24.

What We Will Not Fund

- **Land or Building Acquisition:** Funds cannot be used to purchase land or property, buildings or structures, or for real estate transactions, commissions, or fees.
- **Individual-Only Projects:** Projects that are exclusively limited to educational or community enterprises (i.e. community gardens, educational gardens, or other gardens whose harvest is for self-use) and productive farms whose harvest is primarily for self-use are not eligible. Projects that include growing or production as well as downstream food supply chain activities including distribution and sale will be eligible, as long as grant funds are primarily to support supply chain activities.
- **Charitable Food:** Projects that are primarily about supporting programs where food is given for free, such as food pantries, food banks, meals programs, and food donations, are not eligible. Organizations that engage in charitable food donation are eligible to apply as long as funds are used to support a market-based food access project that meets the eligibility requirements.
- **Restaurants:** This program will not directly support projects that are primarily focused on the sale of prepared, hot foods in a restaurant or takeaway setting to consumers. Prepared foods may be a component of an eligible food retail or food enterprise project that can also demonstrate how the proposed project will expand or preserve the availability of Staple and Perishable foods.
- **Research:** Projects that are primarily a research study will not be eligible.

- **Operating Capital:** Grants may not be used to primarily support the ongoing operation or working capital for an existing venture. Grant funds may be used to support capital needs or expansion activities of an existing venture.
- **Staffing/payroll costs:** Grants will not support staffing or payroll costs.
- **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.
- **Food Retail Consulting Programs:** Applicants seeking funding to administer programs and initiatives that are primarily consulting, technical assistance activities, educational activities, or other program initiatives that are focused on supporting or coordinating retailers or food enterprises will not be considered eligible.