

Eligibility Criteria

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.
- Educational institutions (including universities, colleges, and schools)

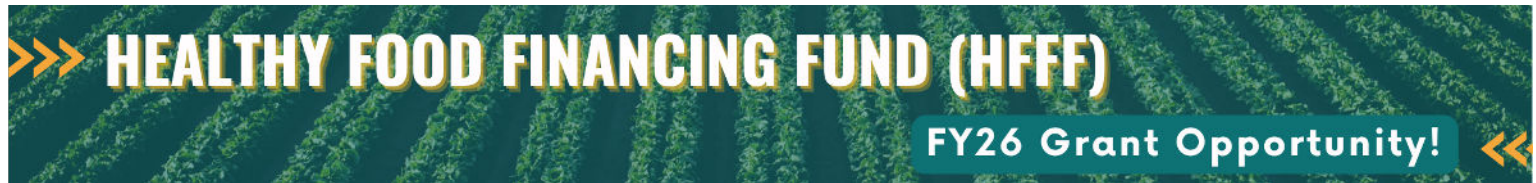
All successful grantees are required to submit a NM Substitute W9, form to be provided.

Eligibility Requirements

Projects should be ready for implementation or “shovel-ready” when applying for HFFF funding, with an anticipated completion of December 2026.

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 must demonstrate a well-thought-out, shovel-ready plan that is ready for implementation. Shovel-ready means all required permits, licenses, zoning approvals, and other regulatory clearances are already secured at the time of application. Projects that are still conceptual, awaiting approvals, or in early design/development stages will NOT be considered eligible.



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

- **Predevelopment:** Grant needs can include predevelopment and soft costs, including feasibility studies, market analysis, site plan or 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 and 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 health 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:** 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. This category may also include operating or staff costs directly associated with project implementation; however, these operating or staff costs may not exceed 20% of the total project budget.
- **Research and Development (Climate Smart Pre-Production Projects Only):** Eligible activities include testing, design, and development of climate smart agricultural inputs, products, or technologies that directly support regenerative production. This may involve piloting or validating soil amendments (such as compost or biochar), developing or refining controlled environment kits (e.g., vertical farming, greenhouses), advancing irrigation or water efficiency systems, or other innovative inputs that improve soil health, water conservation, crop productivity, and long-term sustainability.

Ineligible

- If your organization was awarded a HFFF grant in FY25.

What We Will Not Fund

- **Land or Building Acquisition:** Funds cannot be used for real estate transactions, commissions, or fees.

>>> HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING FUND (HFFF)

FY26 Grant Opportunity! <<<

- **Individual-Only Projects:** Projects that are exclusively limited to educational experiential, or community enterprises (i.e. community gardens, educational gardens, or other gardens whose harvest is for self-use) and productive farms either 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 research-based are not eligible for funding, except for Climate Smart Pre-Production Projects
- **Operating Capital:** Grants may not be used to primarily support the ongoing operation or working capital for an existing venture, including ongoing staffing or payroll costs; grant funds may be used to cover operations and staffing capital needs during the grant period that are directly tied to the implementation of the proposed project. ***Please see the "Other soft 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.