



NM HFFF FY26 Rubric

Complete applications submitted by eligible entities will be evaluated and scored based on the criteria below. HFFF Review Committee will base scores only on the information provided in the application.

This is a competitive program, eligible entities will be evaluated and assigned scores according to the quality of the information they provide. There is a maximum of 125 total points.

Each application will be scored by five HFFF reviewers, and the scores will be averaged.

All complete applications will be further evaluated by the HFFF Review Committee of internal and external experts who will determine a consensus ranking of applications that will take into account the application score, project type and geographic diversity.

Budgets will be reviewed and may be adjusted for allowable costs and reasonable uses of funds.

In general, the fund prioritizes projects demonstrating a focus on underserved communities in the following **PRIORITY AREAS**:

- Increasing access to food for historically under-resourced communities
- Addressing workforce development challenges through the creation and retention of jobs in the food and agricultural supply chain.
- Strengthening and diversifying in-state market channel access for small and mid-scale food and agricultural operations
- Advancing food safe storage/aggregation, distribution and transportation in regional food supply chain networks
- Supporting producers in the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices

1. Project Category:

- a. Food Retail (0 to 10 Points), OR
- b. Processing (0 to 10 Points), OR
- c. Aggregation/Distribution/Transportation (0 to 10 Points)
- d. Production (0 to 10 Points), OR
- e. Climate Smart Pre-Production (0 to 10 Points),

2. Organization Ownership/Management Structure, Partnerships (0 to 15 Points):

Ownership or management structure, appropriate size, and strong relevant project partners including supplier or buyer relationships and/or community partnerships as applicable. Nature of partnerships including duration, impact, or other specific information. How organization's experience to date will ensure a successful outcome for this project.



3. **People and Places Served (0 to 15 Points):** Measures clarity and depth of populations served, especially underserved or low-access communities.
4. **Project Summary: Project Proposal (0 to 15 Points): Project proposed**, including brief overview of proposed activities and how they align with organizational goals; need for HFFF support; significance or catalytic impact of the project; and whether this is a new initiative or expansion of existing operations.
 - a. New Applicants: automatic 10 pts equivalent.
 - b. Previous Awardees: scored on outcomes, justification, and sustainability **(0 to 10 Points)**
5. **Business Model (0-15 Points):** More detailed business model and how HFFF grant funding might allow your organization to expand your existing business model.
6. **Timeline (0 to 15 points):** Provides an overview of project timeline, including current status, key milestones and key factors determining project feasibility and success. Applicant demonstrates that grant funds can confidently be used by Awardee by December 31, 2027.
7. **Project Impact – Priority Points (0 to 15 points):** Priority will be given to projects that have the following attributes:

Applicants asked to describe the relevant metrics of success they anticipate for the proposed project and to make sure to include measures, metrics and/or other quantitative aspects which provide value to the State food supply chain for one or more of the following:

 - a. Increasing access to food for historically under-resourced communities
 - b. Addressing workforce development challenges through the creation and retention of jobs in the food and agricultural supply chain.
 - c. Strengthening and diversifying in-state market channel access for small and mid-scale food and agricultural operations
 - d. Advancing food safe storage/aggregation, distribution and transportation in regional food supply chain networks
 - e. Supporting producers in the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices
8. **Budget & Budget Narrative (0 to 15 points):** Detailed, itemized, presented as table/spreadsheet. We advise including a 5% buffer for inflation in all budgets. You may also upload documentation demonstrating how you arrived at the budget figures (such as screenshots, quotes, or estimates). Higher scores will be awarded for thorough budgets and backup documentation. Additional funding sources secured. Describes in detail how the elements of the budget support capacity to achieve the goals of proposed project.