

FY27 New Mexico Healthy Food Financing Fund Application Questions

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Application Preparation

AI may help organize or edit responses, but every answer must be specific to your organization and accurately describe your project, needs, budget, and anticipated results. Applicants are responsible for checking the accuracy of all submitted information.

Submission name / Organization name

SECTION 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

- Primary contact name (required)
- Primary contact email (required)
- Primary contact phone number (required) / Communications and grant updates go to the email associated with the Submittable account used to apply.
- Would you like to provide a secondary point of contact? (required)
 - Yes
 - No
- If yes: secondary contact name, email, and phone number (required)

Potential Interview and Follow-Up: The review committee may contact the primary contact with questions or request an interview. To update contact information after submission, email Sandra Rubalcava Lopez at sandra@vidamejorcapital.com.

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

- Organization address (required)
- Employer Identification Number or Tax ID (required)
- How many years has your organization been in operation? Enter whole years. (required)
- **Which eligible organization category or categories apply? (required)**
 - 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
 - You must upload a Board Approval Letter confirming this project has been reviewed and approved by your governing board
 - Tax-exempt nonprofit corporations
 - You must upload a Board Approval Letter confirming this project has been reviewed and approved by your governing board

- Small farmers/ranchers with gross cash farm income under \$250,000 are eligible
- Educational institutions (including universities, colleges, and schools)
- **Does your organization operate a food bank or charitable food distribution program? (required)**
 - Yes
 - If yes: will this project purchase food from New Mexico farmers, ranchers, or food producers? (required)
 - New Mexico Food Sourcing Plan: Describe the New Mexico farmers, ranchers, or food producers you plan to purchase from, the food products you expect to purchase, and how often you anticipate purchasing them. Explain how these purchases support your proposed project. (required) (300 word limit)
 - Required Upload: Include a letter of support, purchase commitment, or other verification from at least one New Mexico supplier. (required)
 - No
 - This project is NOT eligible because it does not include purchasing food from New Mexico farmers, ranchers, or food producers

SECTION 3 PROJECT LOCATION

Identify the underserved community the project will serve and where the project will take place.

- Project primary location and address (required)
- **Are there additional project locations? (required)**
 - Yes
 - If yes: provide all additional location addresses. (required)
 - No
- County where the project will primarily be located. If multiple counties are involved, choose the primary county. (required)

SECTION 4 IDENTIFY THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Select one category based on the main activity the grant funds will support, rather than your organization type.

What will the proposed grant-funded project primarily do?

Project Category Definitions

- **Food Retail:** Selling or providing food directly to consumers through a grocery store, food cooperative, farmers' market, mobile market, food-access program, or similar retail operation.
- **Processing/Value-Added Products:** Preparing, processing, packaging, or transforming meat, fruit, vegetables, dairy, or grain products into a value-added product.
- **Aggregation/Distribution/Transportation:** Collecting, storing, coordinating, distributing, or transporting food, including food hubs, warehouses, cold storage, and refrigerated transportation.
- **Production:** Growing crops, raising livestock, or producing food through farming, ranching, hydroponics, aquaponics, or similar agricultural activities.
- **Climate-Smart Pre-Production:** Developing or providing agricultural inputs, equipment, technology, or services that work with natural ecological systems to restore and/or improve agro-ecological integrity through regenerative food production, soil health interventions, water conservation, or agricultural efficiency.

Select the one category that best describes the primary activity the grant funds will support. Select based on what your proposed project will do, not your organization type:

- **If you select Food Retail**

- Does your food retail project include any of the following or include predevelopment to achieve any of the following (check as many as apply): Please expand on any of the above project elements that apply to your project in your Project Impact section below.
 - Accepts (or will accept) SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, or similar food assistance programs
 - Adds more space for fresh food (produce, dairy, meat, etc.)
 - Adds refrigerated or dry storage to handle more fresh food
 - Includes a mobile component (food truck, mobile market, delivery route, etc.)
 - Increases how much you buy from New Mexico grown local farmers and ranchers
 - Explain how the project will increase your purchases from New Mexico farmers, ranchers, or food producers. Identify the products you expect to purchase, current or potential suppliers, and how the amount or frequency of your purchases will increase. Include any existing supplier relationships, purchase commitments, or contracts. (required) (300 words limit)

- **If you select Processing/Value-added Products**

- If you selected Processing above, please select one or more Processing subcategory(ies) that apply to your project
 - Processing Staple Food: Meat, Fruit, Vegetables, Dairy, Grain or Other
 - Required Food Permits & Business Licenses: Upload copies of any food permits and business licenses required for your processing operation. If you have not yet obtained them, upload a brief note listing which permits/licenses will be required and your anticipated timeline to secure them.
 - Will this project help you serve more New Mexico grown buyers or food retailers in low food access areas?
 - Yes
 - Please describe the project's intended impact on customers, including NM grown buyers or food retailers in underserved communities. Explain any existing formalized or meaningful relationships with buyers, retailers, or partners, including established working relationships, agreements, or contracts. Describe how the project will strengthen or expand these relationships through increased products, volume, frequency, or longer-term commitments. (required) (300 words limit)
 - No

- **If you select Aggregation Distribution or Transportation**

- Will this project help you serve more New Mexico grown buyers, or food retailers in low food access areas?
 - Yes
 - Please describe the project's intended impact on customers, including NM grown buyers or food retailers in underserved communities. Explain any existing formalized or meaningful relationships with buyers, retailers, or partners, including established working relationships, agreements, or contracts. Describe how the project will strengthen or expand these relationships through increased products, volume, frequency, or longer-term commitments. (required) (300 words limit)
 - No

- **If you select Production**

- **Which option best describes the primary production activity this project will support?**

- **Crop or plant production**

- Production History and Readiness Please describe your current agricultural operation and explain how the proposed project will strengthen your production. (required) (300 word limit). Address each of the following:
 - Production history: How long have you been in operation, and what do you currently grow?
 - Production scale: How many acres, rows, plants, growing units, or other relevant units are currently in production?
 - Prior-year sales: Approximate total sales from farm production in the past year.
 - Market-channel expansion: Will this project help you expand your existing market channels or enter new ones? If yes, describe the new or expanded sales opportunities, such as additional farmers markets, wholesale buyers, restaurants, retailers, institutions, or direct-to-consumer sales.
 - Project production plan: How will this project help you scale up? Include an estimate of additional rows, acreage, or units (e.g., number of plants) and the specific crop(s). Example: "This project will add approximately 7,000 additional plants of [crop]."
 - Sustainability and future growth: How will this project support the long-term sustainability and growth of your operation? Describe your plans to maintain or expand production, sales, or market opportunities over the next 12–24 months.
 - Production Letters of Support: Upload any letters from customers or buyers confirming interest and/or support of your expanded production.
 - Production applicants must be approved New Mexico Grown suppliers or currently in the process of obtaining New Mexico Grown supplier status. You must upload documentation verifying your current status or showing that the approval process is underway.

- **Livestock or ranching production**

- Ranching History and Readiness Please describe your current ranching operation and how the proposed project will strengthen it. (required) (300 word limit). Address each of the following:
 - Ranching history: How long have you been operating, and what types of livestock do you currently raise?
 - Operational scale: Approximately how many acres do you manage, and how many animals do you currently raise?
 - Prior-year sales: What were your approximate total sales from ranching activities during the past year?
 - Market-channel expansion: Will this project help you expand your existing market channels or enter new ones? If yes, describe the new or expanded opportunities, such as auctions, processors, wholesale buyers, restaurants, retailers, institutions, or direct-to-consumer sales.
 - Project production plan: How will this project strengthen your ranching operation? Describe the proposed activities and expected measurable improvements, such as hours of labor saved, additional acres managed, improved livestock monitoring or movement, strengthened fencing or water access, expanded rotational grazing capacity, reduced operating costs, or improved animal health.

- Sustainability and future growth: How will this project support the long-term productivity, resilience, and financial sustainability of your ranching operation over the next 12–24 months?
- Production Letters of Support: Upload any letters from customers or buyers confirming interest and/or support of your expanded production.
- Production applicants must be approved New Mexico Grown suppliers or currently in the process of obtaining New Mexico Grown supplier status. You must upload documentation verifying your current status or showing that the approval process is underway.
- **If you select Climate Smart Pre-Production**
 - Farmer and Rancher Connections and Deployment Strategy Describe how your project will support New Mexico farmers and ranchers by providing climate-smart or regenerative agricultural inputs, services, tools, or technologies. (required) (300 word limit). Explain:
 - The specific need your project will address.
 - How you identified or learned about this need from the agricultural community.
 - Your existing relationships or networks with farmers, ranchers, producer groups, or other partners.
 - How you will connect producers with and deploy your proposed input, service, tool, or technology.
 - How the project will strengthen the broader agricultural ecosystem and increase producers' access to climate-smart or regenerative practices. Provide specific examples whenever possible.

SECTION 5 ELIGIBLE PROJECT COST TYPES

What will the grant pay for?

Eligible Projects Cost Types

Projects should be ready for implementation or “SHOVEL-READY” when applying for HFFF funding, with an anticipated completion of December 2027. Please select all eligible project cost types that the grant funds will pay for. Review the definitions above before making your selections.

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. Predevelopment costs are not eligible for projects in the Production category.
- **Construction or Renovation:** Construction and other hard costs associated with building, renovating, or expanding a brick-and-mortar facility, including permanently installed fixtures. Applicants must demonstrate legal authority to use and improve the project site. Acceptable documentation may include proof of ownership, signed landlord authorization, a shared-use agreement, or Tribal land authorization.
 - What legal authority does your organization have to use and make improvements to the project site? Upload documents showing your control of the project site
 - Property owned by the applicant
 - Property leased by the applicant
 - Shared-use agreement
 - Tribal land authorization

- If your project involves the construction, renovation, or expansion of a brick-and-mortar facility, please list all permits and approvals required below. For each permit, include: Name/type of permit: Issuing agency: Current status (obtained, pending, not yet applied): Expected timeline for approval: Agency's contact information
- **Capital Assets:** Hard costs associated with creating, retrofitting, or expanding a retail operation or food enterprise, excluding facility construction or renovation costs. Eligible expenses include one-time investments in large, durable, and generally depreciable assets, such as refrigerated vehicles, tractors, trailers, walk-in coolers or freezers, machinery, equipment, hardware, and the purchase of existing business assets. If a capital asset will be installed, attached to, or remain at property not owned by the applicant, the applicant must provide signed authorization from the property owner or landlord.
 - If a capital asset will be installed, attached to, or remain at property not owned by the applicant, the applicant must provide signed authorization from the property owner or landlord.
- **Durable and Non-Durable Goods:** Tangible items, consumable supplies, and smaller project-related purchases needed to implement the project. Examples include agricultural tools, seeds, compost, soil amendments, bags for pelletized agricultural inputs, carts, baskets, stainless steel shelving bins, food-safety supplies/materials and small equipment, crates, delivery containers/ bins, and one-time inventory purchases.
- **Value-Added Product Materials:** This category supports the startup, operation, or expansion of enterprises that produce value-added, packaged food products that qualify as healthy staple foods. Eligible expenses include tangible materials to package and label these products, such as jars, bottles, bags, lids, covers, printed labels, food-safe packaging, tamper-evident seals, and specialty packaging. Ingredients and other tangible materials may also be eligible for test batches, initial production runs, or a one-time expansion of production. Ongoing ingredient purchases are not eligible under this category. Professional and consulting services related to product development should be included under Other Soft Costs.
- **Other Soft Costs:** One-time professional or project-support services, including training, consumer or community engagement, governance support, financial or development consulting, project management, marketing and merchandising, logo or website development, environmental or energy assessments, food-safety assistance, HACCP planning, food-production safety plans, product formulation, packaging design, shelf-life testing, nutritional analysis, laboratory services, project learning, and impact assessment. Project-related software and technology subscriptions may also be eligible when they are necessary for project implementation and cover only the grant period. Operating or staff costs directly associated with project implementation may be included but cannot 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 management and sustainability.

SECTION 6: ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW AND PARTNERSHIPS

Instructions: This section asks about your organization, its experience, partnerships, and connection to the underserved community the project will serve. Focus on your organization's existing capacity and relationships.

- Organization Overview and Project Partners: describe management or ownership, organization size, and relevant supplier, buyer, and community partners, including each partnership's nature, duration, and importance. (required) (500 word limit)
- Additional Project Partnerships: if available, upload agreements, MOUs, or letters of support not already submitted elsewhere. Do not duplicate uploads.
- Organizational Experience and Capacity: describe the experience, staffing, and resources that will help you complete the project. (required) (300 word limit)
- Underserved Community Served: Describe the underserved community the project will serve, including its location, relevant demographics, estimated number of people who will benefit, and the food-access challenges the project will address(required) (700 word limit)

SECTION 7: PROJECT SUMMARY

- **Please provide a narrative description of the project for which you are requesting a grant. (required) (1000 word limit). Your response should include:**
 - Identify your selected project category and explain how the proposed activities fit that category.
 - Identify the eligible project cost types selected and briefly describe the major expenses the grant will pay for.
 - Provide a concise overview of the project, including whether it is a new initiative or an expansion of existing operations.
 - Explain why HFFF funding is necessary for the project to move forward.
 - Describe how HFFF funding and this project will be catalytic in advancing your organization's broader goals and planned activities over the next 12–24 months.
- **Optional Project Media: Help Reviewers See Your Vision! Instructions:** You may upload up to five files, including photographs and/or short videos to help reviewers understand your project, the need it addresses, and its proposed impact. Videos must not exceed three minutes. This section is optional.
- **Have you previously been awarded a HFFF Grant? (required) (500 word limit)**
 - Yes
 - If you have previously received an HFFF grant (FY23-FY25), you must also address the following:
 - How were the previous grant funds used? (Include activities, purchases, or improvements, and note if the project was completed as originally proposed. If not, explain the changes.)
 - What measurable outcomes resulted? (Examples: revenue growth, production increases, new customers or markets, job creation, efficiencies.)
 - Why do you need additional funding at this time? (Describe challenges or gaps and how this funding will differ from your previous award.)

- What are your future plans and how will you ensure sustainability beyond this grant cycle? (Include leveraged funding, partnerships, or expansion efforts, and how this investment will contribute to regional food system resilience.)
 - No
- **Business Model: To help outline your business or operating model, you may refer to the Business Model Canvas available [HERE](#). This resource provides suggested topics to consider in your response. (required) (700 word limit).**
 - Describe your organization's current business or operating model and explain how HFFF grant funding would strengthen, expand, or improve it. Include your primary products or services, customers or communities served, sources of revenue or funding, and key supplier or partner relationships
- **Project Timeline**
 - Projects should be ready for implementation or "SHOVEL-READY" when applying for HFFF funding; priority will be given to projects that clearly demonstrate "shovel-readiness."
 - Projects must be completed and grant funds must be used by Awardee by December 17, 2027.
 - Grant agreements will be in effect through December 31, 2028. Reports will be requested throughout the duration of the grant agreement period.
- **Project Impact**
 - For each Priority Point selected, please limit your response to 250 words per Priority Point. In your response, please include: A clear description of how your project addresses the selected priority; At least 2–3 measurable outcomes; Metrics or quantitative evidence wherever possible (e.g., number of households served, jobs created, contracts secured, square footage added, etc.).
 - 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

SECTION 8: PRIMARY GRANT BUDGET

- Primary HFFF grant awards will be \$50,000, \$100,000, or \$150,000. Applicants may apply for more than one funding level; however, each selected amount must have a complete budget. Awardees will receive only one grant award.
- Complete your primary grant budget
- Upload quotes and cost estimates
- If awarded, will HFFF grant funding be a part of a larger set of funding sources?
 - Yes, If HFFF grant funding is part of a larger set of funding sources, please 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. (required) (300 word limit)
 - No

- Budget Narrative: Describe with some detail how the elements of your budget support your capacity to achieve the goals of your proposed project(required) (300 word limit)
- **Alternative \$20,000 Award: Applicants who are not selected for a primary \$50,000, \$100,000, or \$150,000 grant may be considered for an alternative award of up to \$20,000 and 10 hours of technical assistance.**
 - Would you like to be considered for the alternative \$20,000 award if you are not selected for a primary grant?(required)
 - Yes, Upload a \$20,000 alternative budget along with a required project narrative, including a budget narrative and a brief statement of anticipated impact
 - No
- Would you like to receive email updates from Economic Development New Mexico (EDNM) about funding opportunities, technical assistance, and business financing resources?
 - Yes
 - No