

Eligibility Criteria

PROJECT READINESS

Your application should describe a specific project, the steps needed to carry it out, and how it can be completed by December 2027. If your project involves construction, renovation, or installing an asset at a site, you must have legal authority to use and improve that site. You will provide details and supporting documentation in the full application.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR

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 that might be replicated or scaled in other communities.

WHAT HFF FUNDING MAY SUPPORT

Grant funds must pay for expenses directly related to your proposed project. Eligible expense categories include:

- **Predevelopment:** Project planning, feasibility, site analysis, and design. Not available for Production projects.
- **Construction or Renovation:** Building, renovating, or expanding a facility, including permanently installed fixtures.
- **Capital Assets:** Large, lasting purchases such as vehicles, tractors, trailers, refrigeration, machinery, and equipment.
- **Durable and Non-Durable Goods:** Project supplies, smaller equipment, and one-time inventory purchases.
- **Value-Added Product Materials:** Packaging, labeling, and materials for initial or expanded production of eligible healthy staple foods. Ongoing ingredient purchases are not eligible.
- **Other Soft Costs:** One-time professional services and other support directly tied to implementing the project. Project-related operating or staff costs cannot exceed 20% of the total project budget.
- **Research and Development:** Testing and development of agricultural inputs or technologies only for Climate Smart Pre-Production projects.

The full application provides more detailed examples and asks you to explain each expense in your budget.

WHAT HFFF WILL NOT FUND

- Land or Building Acquisition: Funds cannot be used for real estate transactions, commissions, or fees.
- 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.
- Food banks and charitable food operations may apply when their proposed project fits an eligible category and includes purchasing food from New Mexico producers.
- 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.

AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If selected for an award, you will be required to provide detailed information about how the funds were used, how they affected your organization, and how they strengthened the regional food supply chain and/or increased access to healthy food. You will also be required to participate in monthly check ins to discuss your project's progress.

PREVIOUS AWARDEES

Organizations that received an HFFF FY26 award are not eligible to apply for HFFF FY27 funding.