

Farmers Market Sustainability Grant Program

MDAR Webinar

September 6, 2024

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

This Webinar will be recorded

Session Goals and Agenda

- 2:00 pm – 2:05 pm: MDAR Deputy Commissioner Winton Pitcoff
- 2:05 pm – 2:15 pm: Background, goals and eligibility
- 2:15 pm – 2:40 pm: Review the Request for Response (RFR)
- 2:40 pm – 3:00 pm: Q & A

THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

Please use the Q&A Function to ask questions.

Key Contacts

David Webber, Farmers Market Coordinator, David.Webber@mass.gov

Rebecca Davidson, Dir. of Food and Climate Equity Rebecca.Davidson@Mass.gov

Keri Cornman, Grants Manager Keri.Cornman@Mass.gov

❖ For Follow-up Questions, contact David.Webber@mass.gov

Goals and Overview

- The Farmers Market Sustainability Grant Program aims to enhance Massachusetts farmers markets through marketing, promotion, consumer education, planning, and infrastructure.
- MDAR intends to fund \$150,000 in projects through this program with a maximum award of \$10,000 per organization.
- This program does not have a cost sharing or match requirement.
- This funding comes from MDAR's FY25 Operating Budget: State appropriation 2511-0100.

- Farmers markets must meet MDAR's [Policy for Massachusetts Farmers Markets](#) which defines farmers market as public markets for the primary purpose of connecting and mutually benefiting Massachusetts farmers, communities, and shoppers while promoting and selling products grown and raised by participating farmers.
- Farmers market minimum qualifications include:
 - Two or more farmers, or their employees, volunteers, or representatives, who are present at all times during the operation of the farmers market and who are selling products of which a majority are grown, produced, or raised by the farmer at their agricultural operation within the Commonwealth.
 - Set hours of operation and operate on a regular schedule.
 - The products are clearly labeled as to origin.
 - The market complies with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
 - The market must have, and abide by, a set of written rules that govern the operation of the market and, at a minimum, assures the primary purpose of a Massachusetts farmers market as providing a direct marketing opportunity for Massachusetts farmers, foresters, and fisheries and addresses the following:
 - Terms and conditions of sales, including pricing and labeling.
 - Vendor eligibility and product source.
 - Compliance by all vendors with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Key information

- ❖ This RFR is competitively posted to the Mass.gov Website and Massachusetts' Procurement website [COMMBUYS](#).
- ❖ Deadline to Respond is 4:00PM Tuesday, October 8, 2024.
- ❖ Use the online form to submit your application and supporting documents. You can find a list of supporting documents in the "Downloads" section of the grant [webpage](#).
- ❖ Submit questions to David.Webber@mass.gov until September 30, 2024 at 4:00pm.
- ❖ Questions and answers will be added to a FAQ document that will be updated on the grant webpage.

Eligible Project Areas

- ❖ Projects should enhance Massachusetts farmers markets through marketing, promotion, consumer education, planning, and infrastructure.
- ❖ While all projects that meet the grant requirements will be considered, the categories listed below are examples of eligible projects. This is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list. Applicants may suggest projects that differ from these suggestions.

Examples of Eligible Projects

- Strategic planning, such as board development, training, volunteer recruitment and long term or succession planning.
- Develop and/or administer a farmers market marketing/advertising campaign.
- Website or social media development/enhancement.

Examples of Eligible Projects Cont'd

- Market signage or printed materials.
- Repair, replace, or enhance market infrastructure (i.e., tents, tables, handwashing stations, etc.), or SNAP processing equipment that is not already funded through an outside source (Hardware only: no yearly, monthly, transaction fees or subscriptions). For information on SNAP processing, go to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/snap-and-hip-at-farmers-markets-and-farms>.
- Develop, increase, or improve consumer outreach and education, including events or activities that educate consumers about Massachusetts agriculture nutrition or enhance the farmers market.
- Language access services, including translation of materials and language classes for market staff.
- Staff/personnel costs to administer a funded project of this grant.

Examples of Ineligible Projects

- Insurance such as farmers market liability insurance.
- Funds to support food purchases through Market Match Programs such as SNAP, WIC/Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program matching, veggie prescriptions or other types of food coupons or food distribution programs.
- Rent or lease costs associated with the market(s) location.
- Construction Costs
- Staff/personnel costs unrelated to a funded project of this grant.

Allowable Expenses

- Expenses incurred through June 30, 2025, including Salary, Fringe Rates, Travel, Supplies, Equipment, Contractual, and Indirect Costs. For Indirect costs, organizations may utilize their Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA). If an applicant does not have a NICRA, use a de minimis rate of 10%.

Ineligible Expenses

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Costs for loans and/or loan programs
- Costs relating to lobbying activities
- Tuition/tuition reimbursement or career-related/scholarship funds
- Construction Costs
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Any portion or expense for which the applicant pays a contractor in merchandise or service in lieu of cash
- Routine business expenses that fall outside of the scope of the proposed project
- Legal expenses related to litigation
- Indirect (above negotiated indirect rate or de minimis 10%)

Project Requirements

Projects must enhance farmers markets in Massachusetts through marketing, promotion, consumer education, planning, and infrastructure.

- Complete the project within the contractual timeframe **by June 30, 2025.**
- Submit a final project report, including a description of how the funds were used within one month after the contract ends.
- Submit a final financial report itemizing actual expenses.
- Provide copies of invoices and proof of payment with payment requests.

Awarding Priorities

- ✓ Farmers markets located in Environmental Justice Communities and serving Environmental Justice populations.
 - Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.
 - To determine whether your farmers market and/or proposed project will impact an Environmental Justice Population, visit the [Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#).
 - If you have any questions about Environmental Justice, please contact Rebecca.Davidson@Mass.gov, or visit MDAR's [Environmental Justice Program page](#).

Awarding Priorities Cont'd

- ✓ Strategic planning projects, such as board development, training, volunteer recruitment and long term or succession planning.
- ✓ Organizations who provide operating guidelines/market rules that meet MDAR's Policy on Farmers Markets.
- ✓ Organizations who did not receive funding through the Farmers Market Sustainability Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2024.

Online Application

- Review the Complete RFR [here](#). Use the [online form](#) to submit your application and supporting documents. You can find a list of supporting documents in the "Downloads" section of the [webpage](#).
- Applications must be RECEIVED electronically by Tuesday, October 8, 2024, by 4:00pm. Allow adequate time for submission of the proposal by considering potential on-line impediments like internet traffic, internet connection speed, file size, and file volume.
- An application submitted via the application website will be deemed received at the time accepted by MDAR's application webpage system and is considered the official time of record.
- Late submissions will not be accepted. Failure to provide any of the materials listed below may result in the disqualification of the proposal.
- Applications that are sent by email, mail, or fax will NOT be accepted.

Project Narrative

- **Executive Summary:** An executive summary is a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public.
- **Introduction:** Provide the official (legal) organization name or fiscal sponsor that will hold responsibility for an awarded contract. Include a brief description of the organization, the project, and the project goals. How will the funding enhance the farmers market? What needs will the grant fulfill?
- **Project Narrative/Plan:** Describe the project in detail, including expected outcomes and potential impacts. If the project has more than one component, describe each component with the corresponding outcomes and impacts. How will the project impact the market, its vendors, and the community?
- **Environmental Justice:** Describe how the work will include and/or impact environmental justice communities and populations. How will this work be prioritized?

Project Narrative Cont'd

- **Work Plan and Timeline:** Describe how the project will be accomplished and undertaken by June 30, 2025. Provide a Work Plan that describes the activities and timeline associated with each project goal/objective
- **Project Budget:** Using the budget template, provide a detailed budget providing a breakdown of costs associated with performing the work described in the narrative. Projects that involve hiring a subcontractor must include quotes from the subcontractor.
- **Project Staff:** Include information about the applicant organization, demonstrating its eligibility for the Project. Describe the individual or team that will be involved in completing this project, their qualifications, and any level of market or community support. List relevant work, projects, and qualifications or those of any external partnering entities.
- **Project Sustainability:** How will this project contribute to building long-term sustainability of the farmers market and increase the market's viability?

Required Attachments: Use the templates provided

- ✓ **Attachment A.** Include a copy of your market's operating guidelines/rules. These should comply with [MDAR's Policy for Massachusetts Farmers Markets](#)
- ✓ **Attachment B.** [Budget Narrative](#)
- ✓ **Attachment C.** [List of Market's Vendors Template](#)

Optional

- Environmental Justice Policy Questionnaire. The environmental justice questions are integrated into the on-line application form.
- Up to two letters of support

Evaluation Criteria: Up to 78 total points

- ❖ The applicant's farmers market(s) is in an Environmental Justice Community (5 points).
- ❖ The applicant did not receive funding through the Farmers Market Sustainability Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2024 (3 points).
- ❖ **Introduction** (up to 10 points): How well the applicant explains the project's contribution to enhance the farmers market and the market's needs. Is there a clear description of the organization, the project, and the project's goals?
- ❖ **Project Narrative** (up to 15 points): How well the applicant has identified and explained the project scope, details and objective(s), including quantifiable outcome(s) and potential impacts to the market, its vendors and/or the community.
- ❖ **Project Timeline and Budget** (up to 15 points): Are costs and deadlines reasonable and accurate? Will the work be completed by June 30, 2024? Is enough detail provided? Was the budget template provided by MDAR followed?
- ❖ **Project Staff and Market/Community Support** (up to 10 points): Who will be involved in completing this project? Was a description of the individual or team's qualifications provided? What is the level of market/community support? Is it sufficient to complete the project's goals?

Evaluation Cont'd

- ❖ **Project Sustainability** (up to 5 points): How does this project contribute to building long-term sustainability or increase the farmers market's viability?
- ❖ **Application Prioritization** (up to 5 points): The proposal includes strategic planning projects such as board development, training, volunteer recruitment and long term or succession planning.
- ❖ **Application Prioritization** (up to 5 points): How does the project meet priority considerations to serve Environmental Justice populations?
- ❖ **Application Prioritization** (up to 5 points) How closely the market and its operating guidelines/rules align with and meet MDAR's policy on farmers markets.

Additional Considerations:

1. Final Reports from previous MDAR grant initiatives have been submitted in a timely manner consistent with the requirements of the grant initiative's goals.
2. Successful completion of previous Farmers Market Sustainability Grant project initiatives.

- The Farmers Market Sustainability Grant RFR and other supporting documentation and information is posted openly on Commbuys under Bid # [BD-25-1002-1003-001-106866](#). **It is the responsibility of every applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond.**
- The Grant Webpage with a link to the on-line application and downloads can be found [here](#).
- Check the grant webpage or COMMBUYS for updates to the FAQ.

Grant Timeline:

- ❖ August 29, 2024: RFR Release Date
- ❖ September 6, 2024: Webinar
- ❖ September 30, at 4:00 pm: Deadline for questions
- ❖ October 8, by 4:00 pm: Applications due
- ❖ December, 2024: Estimated award date
- ❖ June 30, 2025: Contracts end. Projects must be complete. This includes all project deliverables and expenses, including but not limited to purchases, planning, advertising, and personnel costs.
- ❖ July 25, 2025: Final Reports due



Closing Words and Next Steps

- Questions can be submitted until Monday, September 30, 2024 at 4:00pm to David.Webber@mass.gov.
- Applications must be received by 4:00 PM Tuesday, October 8, 2024 via the online application portal. Late submissions will not be considered.
- FAQ's will be posted to [COMMBUYS](#) and the Grant [webpage](#).
- Thank you for attending!