



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Q: Can applicants apply any other way than through the online form, such as a Word document, or mail in an application?

A: The online form is the only way we can accept applications. Applications submitted in other forms will not be considered.

Q: Do I have to provide multiple quotes for the project to be considered?

A: Applicants must submit two (2) quotes for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs \$50,000 or more. Applicants must submit one (1) quote for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs less than \$50,000. Quotes should be from qualified vendors or contractors and reflect accurate cost estimates. Failure to submit quotes will result in the application being ineligible.

Q: Do I have to use the Budget Form available on the FSIG website?

A: A Budget Form template (Attachment B. Budget Template) is available under 'File Attachments' on the COMMBUYS, however applicants are not required to use this specific form. Please note that a budget is required for all submissions to be eligible, and we recommend either using either the form provided, or providing a budget in a similar format.

Q: What is the word count limits for the online application questions?

A: There is no word count limit. However, some questions only ask for 2-3 sentence answers. Others will require more detailed responses.

Q: Can I include tables or images in the online application questions?

A: No, the online application platform we are using does not allow tables or images to be included in the answer boxes.

Q: Do I have to complete all the answers through the on-line application? For example, if I wanted to email the timeline as a separate document, is that allowed?

A: Answers should be completed through the online application. Please do not send separate documents for questions that can be completed through the online application.

Q: Can you please clarify for me the role that Commbuys plays in this application process?

A: COMMBUYS is the Commonwealth's e-procurement system. All Agencies are required to post Grant opportunities on COMMBUYS to allow for the widest visibility to potential applicants. The posting contains all the information about the Grant and is where interested applicants can view

Q: is it possible to see the application questions in a word doc or PDF ahead of actually applying? And, is there a way to save the application while you are applying and go back to it hours or days later?

A: You can download a copy of the application, (found in Attachment A) from the [COMBUYS Page](#) directly and view the questions. When you click “save and continue,” you are brought to a page with a link that prompts for your email address. You can then use the link to return and complete the form from any computer. You may also work on the document separately and copy and paste the replies in one sitting.

Q: Please confirm: registration on Commbuys is not required to complete this application.

A: No, it is not required to submit an application.

Q: Last year when I asked: As a public school district applying for a FSIG grant, does the application requirement for submission of a *Supplier Diversity Program Plan form* apply. MDAR answered: "No, we do not need that for the purposes of this RFR. All the required documentation is listed in the RFR." Is that still correct?

A: Yes, that is still correct for the FY27 RFR.

Q: Can you send me the questions that have to be answered for the food security grant. I would like to answer them all before I start the application process.

A: You can download a copy of the application, (found in Attachment A) from the [COMBUYS Page](#) directly and view the questions.

Q: The rfr says we need to submit multiple quotes. We are applying for a tractor and attachments. There is only one regional dealer for the tractor we want. Do we have to find other tractors of similar size from another manufacturer? Or is one quote sufficient in this case?

A: All applicants are required to provide two (2) quotes for each expenditure or budget line item with a cost of \$50,000 or more. If an item is genuinely unique and no alternative vendors exist to supply comparable products or services, applicants may note this in their application. However, the absence of multiple quotes may adversely affect the application’s evaluation score.

Q: We are the Boys & Girls Club on Martha’s Vineyard. We provide healthy snacks and meals, grab and go meals, produce, and food pantry access to our membership free of cost.

For the purposes of the FSIG grant can you tell me:

1. What is our Project Type?
2. What is our Primary Operation Type?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. Information about project types can be found in Section B1 of the RFR. Projects must fall primarily within one of the

project types listed. Applicants are instructed to select the project type that best aligns with their proposed project.

Q: Can you please provide a downloadable text-only version of the FY27 FSIG application questions? The currently available RFP and Application Review documents are formatted in a way that prevents applicants from being able to extract the questions cleanly into working Word or Google Docs, which are commonly used to prepare grant applications.

This creates an unnecessary burden as it requires applicants to reformat application text manually into working documents--a time-consuming and unnecessary step that is also a known barrier for people with dyslexia. Providing a downloadable text-only version of the application questions would significantly improve accessibility and increase efficiency within the application process for all.

A: Unfortunately, we do not have a different version of the application.

Q: In the application, it states "PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS: If there are any partner organizations contributing to the project, please list them." Does this include the contractor we intend to work with? Or only other nonprofits?

A: "Partner organization" refers to any entity that is actively collaborating on the design, implementation, or delivery of the project. This typically includes organizations that share responsibility, contribute resources, or play a substantive programmatic role. It does not include contractors or vendors who are hired to provide specific goods or services on a fee-for-service basis.

Q: My name is Mary and I run a small organization that builds culinary markets for invasive green crab in partnership with chefs, harvesters, product producers, and wholesalers in New England. Green crab markets are rapidly expanding in Massachusetts, with increasing demand for frozen green crab and green crab broth. We are hoping to partner with a seafood processor to improve the freezing capabilities of live green crab, as the current frozen supply has been completely wiped out across the state and several wholesalers have a long wait list of restaurants seeking green crabs (the season is just starting up). While I understand that projects cannot support direct marketing, I'm wondering if an organization such as ours could serve as a subapplicant to support coordination, logistics, cost analysis, HACCP plan development, or a multicultural consumer feedback study. In partnering with processors across the US, we've found that these steps are crucial for supporting product development that results in products with culinary and market value. For example, several processors across the US have procured infrastructure funding for green crab paste extraction that did not result in positive consumer feedback or food-grade processing once sampled and tested.

A: An organization such as yours may be included in a proposal as a partner organization, provided your role is focused on allowable project activities. Funds cannot be used for project management. Additionally, MDAR cannot facilitate or match organizations with potential project partners; applicants are responsible for identifying and establishing their own collaborations.

Q: Hello, two questions about FSIG 27: Can the two quotes for line items above \$151,000 be from two different dealers of the same equipment (for example, two different John Deere dealerships) or must they be for the generic item, for example, two 100hp tractors with comparable features. Second, if submitting a market analysis to prove project need, can this be done by another party, for instance, a milk cooperative to which an applying dairy farm belongs?

A: The quotes can be from two different John Deere dealerships if they are independently owned. You may submit any documents that you feel would bolster your demonstration of project need and feasibility and/or demonstration of project benefit to underserved/under-resourced communities.

Q: We recently acquired a new six acre plot, which a local conservation organization leased to us. The lease is still being drafted and won't be approved by their Board until May 15th. We're wondering if there is any sort of document we can provide when we submit our application before the May 4th deadline in order to be eligible for the FY27 FSIG grant. We expect to have the final lease in hand the evening of May 15th and can send it as soon as we do.

A: We cannot accept any application documents submitted after the application due date. Please refer to section A4 of the RFR for information on property ownership and lease.

Q: Under the *Operational/Background Context* section, the application asks, **“How many people do you provide food for annually?”**

Is there a standardized metric that MDAR or the Commonwealth expects applicants to use when calculating this figure? Current industry and federal guidance varies:

- USDA studies often estimate 3–5 pounds of food per person per day (including beverages).
- Food banks and emergency food providers commonly use 1.2 pounds per meal as a conversion standard (USDA data).
- Food availability data from USDA ERS shows average per-person availability of over 5 pounds per day.
- Common industry conversions include 1 lb/person/meal
- Feeding America’s standard: 1.2 lbs per meal × 3 meals/day = 3.6 lbs/day

Given these variations, can you provide guidance on the preferred calculation method for determining the number of people served annually?

A: MDAR does not require a standardized formula for calculating the number of people served annually. Given the variation in industry practices, applicants may use a reasonable and well-supported methodology that aligns with their operations. The expectation is that the estimate is reasonable, transparent, and based on the best available data the applicant maintains.

Q: We operate a couple of distinct Massachusetts LLCs (a farm partnership, a seafood wholesale dealer permit within the partnership, and a farm to oven mobile food truck LLC). May separate entities each submit separate applications for distinct projects in the same FY27 cycle?

A: Entities and/or individuals that own multiple businesses cannot submit applications for each business.

Q: I intend to upload a graphic and a data table to supplement my application. Please advise on the recommended method for submitting these documents.

A: Graphics and data tables cannot be part of a response. They can be included in the supporting documentation, such as documentation of project need and feasibility or documentation of project benefit to underserved and under-resourced communities.

Q: Our organization is currently in the process of transitioning our legal name from Nantucket Resource Partnership to Nourish Nantucket. Is it appropriate to list our name on the application as "Nantucket Resource Partnership dba Nourish Nantucket"?

A: The name on the application should be the same name that would appear in the contract, if awarded.

Q: I am helping a farmer with their FSIG Grant Proposal and I am confused by question 29 asking for the "Annual Operating Budget / Revenue (2025)". This seems like two different numbers to me, but there appears to be only one space. I'm assuming you are asking for the gross revenue for the farm in 2025, but "annual operating budget" makes me think you are asking for the total costs for 2025? Which figure would you like us to put in for question 29, total revenue, total costs for the year, or are you asking for the net revenue?

A: Please provide total annual revenue for 2025 in response to question 29. If the applicant does not generate revenue, you may instead provide the annual operating budget.

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

Q: This is my first year in operation, am I eligible to apply to FSIG? What if my operation has been in business for multiple years, but this is a new venture for my business?

A: To be eligible applicants must be in operation for a minimum of three years to the date of the application.

Q: If I don't have a written lease agreement, am I eligible to apply?

A: Yes, you are eligible to apply. However, if your proposed project is selected for funding, some type of written documentation will be required that shows the legal relationship between the parties to ensure the correct entity/individual who legally owns the property is allowing the proposed project to be completed on their land. The lease should include things like a description of the property, type of use(s) allowed, duration, and signatures of the parties involved, including the landowner.

Q: Are we able to apply for this new round of FSIG even though we were awarded in a previous round?

A: Proposals from applicants or entities previously funded through the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) Program are eligible to apply, **provided that all prior FSIG funded projects have been fully completed and all required reporting has been submitted and approved by the Department.** The Department may require returning applicants to submit documentation demonstrating completion, outcomes, and benefits of any previously funded FSIG project.

Q: If two owners have two separate companies with independent tax ID numbers. May they apply for both companies individually? Or do they have to choose what company to apply for?

A: Entities and/or individuals that own multiple businesses cannot submit applications for each business.

Q: Is the FSIG subject to prevailing wage law?

A: It is the responsibility of any contractor to ensure compliance with Prevailing Wage Requirements, when applicable. [Prevailing Wage Program | Mass.gov](#)

Q: I wanted to reach out to you to see if a purchase of a truck would be a qualified expense under the infrastructure grant. We would be looking to purchase a vehicle to make trips to Greater Boston as well as Cleaners and local farms to pick up items for the Community Pantry.

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: Hello, I'd like to establish a microgreens ecosystem in and around Boston. I don't own any land or greenhouse. I need your help regarding land or fields available for rent from the government, either free or at low cost. Could you guide me on how to proceed with this process?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I was interested in possibly applying to this grant. Milton had been awarded a few years back and wanted to know if that posed any issues if applying for this year. I believe it was FY 22 that Milton had been awarded

A: There is currently no restriction on how many times an organization can apply for FSIG.

Q: This question is regarding section A2. Ineligible Applicants. The last bullet point states as ineligible:

- "Applications for projects that are currently being funded through another state or federal grant program, whether in whole or in part."

How is 'project' defined for purposes of this exclusion? For example, if a program or organization is received a capital grant for construction related to food insecurity, but wants to request funding for

a completely different purpose, such as equipment (e.g. cold storage, vehicle, or back-up power source), is that project ineligible?

A: If an applicant is receiving funding from another source they should clearly disclose this in the application as we are unable to pre-determine whether another funding source may impact the ability to receive funding under this program.

Q: I got a grant in 2025 FSIG FY25. I want to apply for this year's grant FY27. I am applying under commercial food access and availability. My grant request is under \$200,000. Can I apply for this grant? If not, what grant can I apply for?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I wanted to check our eligibility for the upcoming FSIG round. We currently have an active FSIG contract that ends on June 30, 2026. I noticed in the program guidance that entities with a current FSIG contract that will not be completed before the application submission date are ineligible to apply. I'm assuming that since the new application is due in May 2026, that means we're not eligible for this cycle. Is that correct?

A: Awarded entities with active contracts who have not completed their current project by the application submission date are not eligible to apply for additional funding.

Q: Our organization is considering a single project that would involve coordinated kitchen equipment upgrades across four program sites, all serving underserved populations. The project would be structured with shared goals and outcomes across sites. Can you confirm whether a multi-site project structured this way would be considered eligible under the RFR?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I am looking to get clarification and guidance about if further aspects of my enormous farm store construction project could be eligible for further funding under the new round of FSIG? As this project progressed over time, and as regulators imposed their strict rules, and contractors made updated inflation boosted quotes, the costs of this project have increased over time. We have completed the basic building construction using the original FSIG grant and the insurance money and some fundraising, and we have financing in the works to complete final phase steps to get the building ready to open which are underway currently, and include install of the electrical service and wiring, building the driveway and parking area, completing the water works (well and line are

already drilled and in place) and purchasing some retail merchandising coolers and display equipment.

But we have had to delay several major aspects of the original plan and vision into phase two. These include install of the septic system, construction of the two bathrooms, construction of the café kitchen space inside the building, and furnishing the café kitchen with appropriate cooking equipment. (Until these aspects happen, the building will rely on portable toilets for customers and staff, and the kitchen prepared food aspects of our business plan is on hold.) Would it be possible for Red Fire Farm to apply to the new round of FSIG for all or any aspects of this phase 2 work? Our current budget based on contractor estimates is about \$250,000 to complete these phase two aspects. Please let me know if these are potentially eligible.

Meanwhile we also have other major needs for infrastructure improvements on our Montague property, including especially to replace the roofs on two barn buildings in order to prevent those roofs from collapsing and destroying those barns. We have unsuccessfully applied to FSIG for these roof repairs previously. If phase two of the Granby Store barn projects are eligible, is it potentially viable to also include Montague barn roof repairs as part of the same application, or is that type of combining of projects into the same application frowned upon?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I hope this email finds you well. I am reviewing the application which was recently released and I just needed clarification. Is the purchase of a building, to be used for a food hub, an eligible project? Or is it just the renovation of such a property?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: We are in need of replacing an aging evaporator located in the area where our ice is stored. Given our limited resources and the short turnaround time for this application (due April 20), I wanted to ask for your professional opinion on our likelihood of being awarded funding for this critical component of our cold storage system under this grant.

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I am a little stuck in the process because we are a Municipality that serves 60 Commercial Fishers that are the Provincetown Fleet plus another 60 Transients. The Grant keeps asking how much fish we sell, we don't sell it we supply all the needs for the Fishermen including ice. Unless FSIG wants the Provincetown stats?

Do you have any suggestions? And last question can we apply for multiple Grants?

A: Yes, municipalities are eligible. Since the vast majority of FSIG applicants are involved with selling or buying/sourcing food, providing data about food products is a requirement. If are not involved with those activities and are still applying for the grant, you can enter 0 for the buying/sourcing questions asking for a breakdown of food products and how many people are provided food for annually.

Applicants may submit proposals to more than one Department grant program within the same fiscal year; however, the Department will not issue funding from multiple programs for the same or substantially similar project activities. If an applicant applies to multiple department programs for the same project, the Department reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine under which program, if any, the project will be funded. The Department's determination shall be final and binding. The Department cannot, however, take an application from one program and fund it through a different program to which the applicant did not already separately apply. Applicants should carefully consider whether their proposed project is best aligned with FSIG or another MDAR grant program. Projects focused primarily on farm business viability, on-farm improvements, or on-farm energy and climate-related investments may be more appropriately suited to other MDAR programs, including the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP), APR Improvement Program (AIP), Stewardship Assistance and Restoration on APRs (SARA), the Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) Program, and the Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP).

Q: We are operating out of a space with outdated electrical infrastructure, which means we cannot currently cook lunch for our clients. We receive food donations from local organizations like Gaining Ground farm and have a commercial-grade stove, but we are unable to connect and use it as the electrical capacity of the building is not up to spec.

I am wondering if applying for this grant to cover the cost of replacing the electrical system of the building in order to be able to use our stove and process foods for our clients would be a good use of our time. I have read through the eligibility guidelines but was unable to determine if this project would qualify.

A: Please see the below language, found in the RFR:

Eligible projects must be capital improvement investments, including the purchase of new equipment and, where necessary, contracted labor for installation or construction, that strengthen the Commonwealth's food supply chain and improve equitable access to nutritious and preferably locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods. Eligible projects must result in durable, functional infrastructure that supports food production, processing, aggregation, storage, distribution, or access.

Q: I have had multiple requests from farmers who are seeking grants to assist in the construction of H2A labor housing. Do you see FSIG as an avenue for that?

A: The applicant would need to justify that building labor housing aligns with and advances the goals of the FSIG program, and falls into 1 of the 5 project types that they can apply under. They'd also need to comply with all the application requirements to be eligible (provide a budget, quotes, timeline showing the project can be completed, feasibility documentation for larger projects, etc.).

Q: Merrimack Valley Dream Center has operated a Mobile Food Pantry for several years. It distributes groceries -- perishable and nonperishable food -- to several hundred very low income household in Lawrence and Methuen, one Saturday a month in each city. MVDC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and meets all the other criteria. I just wanted to check if this program model fits the requirements.

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I have a question about the eligibility of Si, Se Puede, Inc. It has an afterschool and summer program for approximately 45 children and teens in grades 1-12. The Afterschool Program is in session every day that Lawrence Public Schools are in session. The Summer Camp is five weeks from July 5 through August 7 this year. During the school year, the students receive one full hot meal. This was instituted in fall 2020, after the pandemic and when the Executive Director realized that an afterschool snack was not sufficient since kids were asking for food to take home. It became obvious that food insecurity was a problem for their families. During summer, campers received two full meals.

A: This grant program cannot fund direct food purchases.

Q: I am in the process of applying for FSIG for a new farmstand. In reading over the RFR my project fit in the Commercial Food Access and Availability Infrastructure portion. Then i saw at the bottom that projects under \$150,000 should refer to the Food Ventures Program. Do you have time to chat with me about this for clarification?

I believe my project will be under that amount and I cant understand if this means my project is ineligible for FSIG and only fits the Grant or if I am still allowed to apply for FSIG. I already had everything together for FSIG and the Food Venture Program asks for triple the estimates. I just wanted to make sure I am applying for the correct grant that has the best chance of getting funded.

A: If you are requesting \$150,000 or less for a commercial food access project related to improving economic opportunities in low- to moderate-income communities and increasing access to healthy, affordable food - then you are eligible for the Food Venture Program, not FSIG (pg. 11 of the RFR).

Q: We are considering applying for funds for a deer exclusion fence that will serve four of the farmers on our land. We have a very promising opportunity from a grant that will pay for half of the \$110,000 fence. The timing of this grant is running parallel to FSIG. I was hoping to talk with you about the best option for our FSIG application: Should we apply for the full cost of the fence from FSIG and describe our situation? Or should we apply for just the half that I will need from FSIG if we do get the other Grant? Thank you for reading and offering any advice that you can! I also wondered if the CSAP grant might be appropriate for this project?

A: The project budget should be for the entire FSIG project. If you are applying for another grant for the same project, please disclose this in the application.

Applicants should carefully consider whether their proposed project is best aligned with FSIG or another MDAR grant program. If an applicant applies to multiple department programs for the same project, the Department reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine under which program, if any, the project will be funded. The Department's determination shall be final and binding. Applicants are encouraged to review program purposes and eligibility requirements before applying.

Q: If we are successful this year in obtaining a van or truck, can we apply again the following year for another vehicle? If so, does the grant review team take into consideration who is a recent grantee or would our chances be the same as any other applicant?

A: The department has not finalized the details or requirements for the next grant cycle. Any updates regarding eligibility—including whether prior recipients may apply for additional funding and how applications may be evaluated—will be outlined in the next Request for Responses (RFR).

Q: We are working with farmers who are considering FSIG applications and one question that's come up has to do with completion of previous FSIG funded projects. In some cases, due to cost overruns or other factors, projects that were awarded were scaled back from the original description in the grant proposal. In most cases I think farmers discussed the changes in the project with you, spent their funds, and were reimbursed, but the project may not be exactly as it was originally described, or may be getting fully completed in stages. Can you advise about how "completion" is defined for the purposes of eligibility for another award? Or are you willing to talk to individual farmers about just that question of eligibility on the basis of whether a previous award is considered complete? I hate for farmers to go through the effort of preparing a proposal if in fact they are not eligible.

A: The Project is considered fully complete when all funded equipment and materials are delivered to the Contractor, on-site, installed (if applicable), and fully operational in accordance with the approved and finalized Scope. Any changes to the scope would need to be approved by the department prior to implementation. No final payment shall be issued until the Project reaches this state of completion. The Department reserves the right to conduct an inspection of the Project prior to making any payment.

Q: In regards to 10b. I am planning on applying for a Canadian made potato harvester. I've only been able to find this specific type of potato harvester from this dealer/manufacturer and is above \$50,000.00. How am I supposed to get 2 different quotes if I can't find another vendor who sells the same harvester? In regards to 10d. The pieces of equipment that I'm applying for in this grant are going to help us with planting, harvest, and post-harvest production. We aren't working with anyone who would be able to supply a letter of commitment or MOU. We do some wholesale with Boston Food Hub, Worcester Food Bank, and Boston Gleaners (to name a few), and although these projects will make it feasible for us to offer them reasonable pricing on produce, it's not something that we're partnering with them on. Should we then be focusing on more of a project plan and relating it to under-resourced communities?

A: All applicants are required to provide two (2) quotes for each expenditure or budget line item with a cost of \$50,000 or more. If an item is genuinely unique and no alternative vendors exist to supply comparable products or services, applicants may note this in their application. However, the absence of multiple quotes may adversely affect the application's evaluation score.

For the second part of your question, MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I was looking at this grant opportunity and wondering if I would be eligible for boat upgrades. I am a Massachusetts commercial lobsterman/fisherman with a 42' boat. I would like to upgrade my engine and widen my boat to make it more productive and efficient in order to bring more product into the marketplace.

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: We were reviewing the FY27 Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) and have a question about our eligibility to apply. Roots Rising's total awarded funding across all cycles (including our current FY26 contract) comes to \$992,102.28. Is there a cumulative lifetime cap?

A: There is not a cumulative lifetime cap on FSIG Awards. Proposals from applicants or entities previously funded through the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) Program are eligible to apply, **provided that all prior FSIG funded projects have been fully completed and all required reporting has been submitted and approved by the Department.** The Department may require returning applicants to submit documentation demonstrating completion, outcomes, and benefits of any previously funded FSIG project.

Q: The FSIG project eligibility says that projects must be capital investments and includes new equipment, but doesn't specifically eliminate used equipment. Do you think this purchase would be eligible to be considered for grant funding?

A: Costs associated with purchasing used, refurbished, or reconditioned equipment or materials are not eligible for the grant (pg 10. of RFR).

Q: The City of Boston's [GrowBoston](#) team is interested in applying to the FSIG program to establish an urban farm. I see that "eligible applicants must be located and operating in Massachusetts, have been in operation for at least three (3) consecutive years, and operate or support a commercial or noncommercial food operation that contributes to the Commonwealth's food system and serves Massachusetts residents."

The urban farm being proposed has not yet been constructed, but of course the City of Boston has been in operation for more than 3 years. Is the City eligible to apply for this grant program for this project?

A: Operation refers to the commercial or noncommercial enterprise that a Food Security Infrastructure Grant would support and further enhance and who would be the recipient (i.e., contractor) of the grant funding. MDAR is unable to answer specific eligibility questions prior to the submission of any application.

Q: Our Food Access program consists of: the Full Plate Project (food distribution program operating 80+ distributions annually) and the Sharing the Harvest Community Farm (STH Farm), a 5 acre farm, all produce is donated to local food pantries. We are currently looking at the FSIG program to potentially support the following expenses and/or repairs:

1. Well
2. Box Truck
3. Greenhouse

Each of these three are old and require annual maintenance expenses. The Well and Greenhouse support the STH Farm, and the Truck supports the Full Plate Project. Each supports the efficiency of our Food Access program, helping us to do more and reach more people. After reviewing the website, we believe the Well and Greenhouse are allowable expenses and would like to know if the Truck is an allowable expense. Furthermore, I need to know if the FSIG grant allows us to request for more than one expense, like the Well and the Greenhouse together.

A: Please review the RFR for a comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible expenses. You are able to apply for more than one line item, given the request does not exceed \$500,000.

Q: We are an Indirect Air Carrier (IAC) and certified Screening Facility, and we are currently evaluating an upgrade to our X-ray screening equipment. Our existing machine, a Rapiscan Model 632-DV-AT Cargo/Pallet Security Screening System, is approximately 25 years old and has been

placed on the TSA's expiration list of recognized equipment. After learning more about the FSIG program, I wanted to inquire whether the purchase of a new X-ray screening system would qualify for program eligibility. Approximately 95% of the commodities screened at our facility are seafood products, including live, fresh, and frozen shipments distributed globally. Upgrading this equipment is critical to ensuring we maintain the highest level of screening compliance with TSA and continue providing reliable service to our customers and partners. We would appreciate any guidance you can provide regarding eligibility requirements and next steps for participation in the program.

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I am a service provider helping a Massachusetts farmer apply to the FSIG Program. The farmer's project is a bed/pack structure for livestock. The question is: Are there any particular building specs required by MDAR for this type of structure, other than applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, codes, ordinances, and permitting requirements?

A: Please refer to the [RFR](#) for requirements related to project specifications.

Q: My name is DJ Fowler, and I am reaching out from Worldwide Perishables in Chelsea, Massachusetts regarding the FSIG program. We are an Indirect Air Carrier (IAC) and certified Screening Facility, and we are currently evaluating an upgrade to our X-ray screening equipment. Our existing machine, a Rapiscan Model 632-DV-AT Cargo/Pallet Security Screening System, is approximately 25 years old and has been placed on the TSA's expiration list of recognized equipment. After learning more about the FSIG program, I wanted to inquire whether the purchase of a new X-ray screening system would qualify for program eligibility. Approximately 95% of the commodities screened at our facility are seafood products, including live, fresh, and frozen shipments distributed globally. Upgrading this equipment is critical to ensuring we maintain the highest level of screening compliance with TSA and continue providing reliable service to our customers and partners. We would appreciate any guidance you can provide regarding eligibility requirements and next steps for participation in the program.

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Q: We are in the process of applying for the FSIG Grant. Beaus Seafood has been in Business for 35 years on the fish pier in Boston. I recently took 2 more stalls (12000 sq ft) on the fish pier. A new company was formed 18 months ago and will operate as Bay State Lobster. The three principles have over 80 years as owners in the seafood business. We would be sourcing local Lobster and Hiring 15/20 new employees.

My question is , would we still be considered because of the three year minimum.
Thank You for your help

A: Operation refers to the commercial or noncommercial enterprise that a Food Security Infrastructure Grant would support and further enhance and who would be the recipient (i.e., contractor) of the grant funding. The company that is applying for the grant must be in operation for 3 or more years regardless of years of experience of employees.

Q: Is a pick up truck an eligible expense?

1. Can we get/submit a partnership letters from another organization that is also applying for this grant?
 - a. If yes, can we include expenses for the partner organization in our proposal as well?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I am a chemical engineer PhD and farmer. My company uses the latest tech for regenerative farming without any synthetic chemicals. We grow algae superfoods, vegetables, and medicinal teas to improve access to healthy foods and culturally relevant crops in underserved communities where we sell most of our produce. We've been officially operating as an LLC since 2022 but we're still early-stage with gross annual sales less than \$10k. The company started by composting kitchen waste to produce biogas for energy and healthy soil for farming. In 2025, we expanded from our small indoor farm in Boston to grow food on 3.4 acres of MDAR state-licensed land in Middleborough, MA. Unfortunately, last season our crops in Middleborough were decimated by deer and irregular water supply. Therefore, we'd like to apply for FSIG to help with deer fencing and a water pump. The water pump is a mobile pump powered by a walk-behind BCS tractor which we will also include in our grant application. We received quotes from vendors at approximately \$17k for everything. Before applying, I'd like to make sure that we're eligible. Can we apply?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: Are used vehicles eligible under the FSIG grant if they meet all other requirements?

A: Used vehicles are not eligible.

Q: I have a question for you about the FSIG application that is currently open. Our food pantry and café (we also run a hot meal program serving breakfast, lunch and dinner M-F) flooring is tile and is old. A bunch of the tiles crack each year and we replace them over and over again. We can't have any cracked tiles for obvious safety reasons and to comply with board of health regulations. The floor is also not level and we want to pull up all the tiles, level the floor, pour a concrete floor and

seal/caulk it. Is this something that makes sense to apply for or does it not really fit into the scope of the grant?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: We are preparing an application for the FY 2027 Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG), and I have a couple of questions about operating as a community garden. One question concerns food sales. The community garden holds a plant sale to raise funds and sells seedlings. Does that mean we should answer yes to selling food products?

A: If your organization sells items intended for consumption, you should answer “yes” to the question about food sales. However, if your sales are limited to seedlings or plants (rather than harvested food products), you may still answer “yes,” but should clarify the nature of those sales. You can use the section asking how the proposed project will change or improve food sales to explain that your current sales primarily involve seedlings rather than finished food products.

Q: I am writing on behalf of Community Day Charter Public School with a question regarding the FY27 FSIG eligibility requirements. The grant guidelines state that "Eligible applicants must be located and operating in Massachusetts, have been in operation for at least three (3) consecutive years"- does this refer to the applicant's operations or the location itself? Are applicants eligible if their project supports existing operations in a new space? For context, we have been operating since 1995 and are interested in submitting a proposal that would support the purchase of kitchen equipment in a new building. Since the building itself is new and would not have been operational for three years, would this still be an eligible project given that our school has been operational for over 30?

A: Operation refers to the commercial or noncommercial enterprise that a Food Security Infrastructure Grant would support and further enhance and who would be the recipient (i.e., contractor) of the grant funding. MDAR is unable to answer specific eligibility questions prior to the submission of any application.

Q: We are a for-profit Massachusetts Benefit Corporation with a facility lease in final negotiation. May we submit a letter of intent from the landlord in lieu of a signed lease at time of application?

A: Please refer to section A4 of the RFR for information on property ownership and lease.

Q: Our owner qualifies as a socially disadvantaged producer (Métis of Maine enrolled member with documented disabilities). Does this qualify under the 'underserved and under-resourced community' priority language, even though the eligibility is at the owner level rather than the community served level?

A: Applicants could share if their organization or business itself will have any direct benefits for groups such as historically underserved farmers and/or ranchers and middle-of-the-supply chain small businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals (as defined by the Small Business Administration). Please provide information about any barriers you have faced accessing funding if applicable.

Q: The project includes both equipment purchases and minor facility improvements (electrical, drainage). Is there a threshold above which facility improvements require architectural drawings or building permits before application?

A: There is not, however, reviewers will consider project feasibility as part of the scoring criteria. Feasibility is the extent to which the project scope, budget, timeline, and implementation plan are realistic and achievable within the grant period. Applications should demonstrate readiness to implement (**including permits if applicable**), capacity to manage the project, and financial ability to cover upfront costs and the required match.

Q: Can a single application include both (a) a refrigerated cargo van for distribution from the farm to retail and wholesale accounts, and (b) refrigeration and/or display equipment for the new retail store, if framed as one "Commercial food access & availability" project serving island residents?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: Our farm partnership meets the three-year requirement. The retail store is newly formed location for farm product sales, under Eat Fire Farm LLC. If the retail store is a project component within an application submitted by the farm or dealer entity, does the project itself need three years of history, or does just the applying entity?

A: Operation refers to the commercial or noncommercial enterprise that a Food Security Infrastructure Grant would support and further enhance and who would be the recipient (i.e., contractor) of the grant funding. MDAR is unable to answer specific eligibility questions prior to the submission of any application.

Q: Are prior FSIG recipients eligible to apply in subsequent fiscal years? If so, are there any restrictions related to prior award completion status, or scoring differences between first-time and repeat applicants? We received an FSIG grant in FY24 for a walk-in freezer, and we would like to apply again in FY28 for Expansion of agriculture for our mushroom production.

A: Proposals from applicants or entities previously funded through the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) Program are eligible to apply for a FY27 grant, **provided that all prior FSIG funded projects have been fully completed and all required reporting has been submitted and approved by the Department.** The Department may require returning applicants

to submit documentation demonstrating completion, outcomes, and benefits of any previously funded FSIG project.

Q: I am writing a grant on behalf of a nonprofit food pantry who is doing wonderful things around the Merrimack Valley. In order to make sure we are eligible, I am hoping to get some clarification.

Regarding the following requirement:

A4. Property Ownership or Lease If the proposed project is located on property not owned by the applicant, a written lease agreement must provide a long-term, legal right to use the property for the project and contract duration. This typically requires a lease term of no fewer than five (5) years from the date of submission. The lease must expressly authorize the construction, installation, or operation of the proposed improvements. The Department may request a copy of the lease agreement.

Will the attached MOU between the nonprofit and the church where they currently reside suffice for the sake of this grant? I just want to clarify before we begin that we are, in fact, eligible.

A: Please refer to section A4 of the RFR for information on property ownership and lease.

Q: Hello i was wondering if a container unit dairy plant would be eligible for the grant? It would be to make yogurt ice cream and fluid milk . Figured i better confirm before I started to get a quote. Thank you

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: We are hoping to apply for the upcoming FSIG FY27 grant, it was recommend to us that we reach out to ask about the eligibility of our requests and the likelihood that we would receive funding. We've recently acquired a new plot of land and are looking to install an agriculture well with electric service, along with a wildlife exclusion fence. This would more than quadruple our growing space, increasing our food production proportionally. Are applications that include installations like this usually accepted and do they often get selected for grant funding?

A: MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. The goals of the FSIG program, along with all applicant and project eligibility requirements, can be found in the RFR.

Q: I am a volunteer and member of the board of directors of the Medway Village Food Pantry. Due to substantial increase in families and individuals that we serve, we are moving from the basement of a church to a larger, more modern and more accessible building at 74 Main Street in Medway. The Town has already approved the planned buildout of the new rental space and the work has begun. We have paid funds for the work and materials on the project. We expect that all the work will be completed and we will be able to move into the new space in early to mid-July 2026. The total cost will be \$350,000.00 and we expect to have paid most of that by mid-July.

My question is, are we eligible to apply for a grant to be reimbursed for up to 80% of the cost of this capital expenditure? This new facility will enable us to serve many more people, avoid long lines or wait for clients to access the items they want, enable us to deliver food to people who cannot get to the location and afford more privacy for clients as they walk through and select the items they want. Please let me know if we will be eligible to apply for and hopefully receive a grant.

A: Costs for work started, equipment purchased, or construction completed before a fully executed contract is in place with the Department is not eligible for reimbursement.

Q: I just wanted to clarify that applicants must wait to start their projects until awards are issued in August/September and that projects started before are not eligible for this grant.

A: Yes, this is correct. Recipients must wait until they have an executed contract, signed by both parties, in order to begin their project.

BUDGET AND MATCH QUESTIONS

Q: Can the match be in-kind? Can I use other grant funding towards it?

A: The match must be a cash match and cannot be in-kind. Federal and state grants cannot be used as a match or as a funding source for the project.

Q: Can the costs of shipping, and installation be included in the request?

A: Yes, the costs of shipping and installation can be included in the total project costs.

Q: We are wondering what types of expenses can be used as a cash match (i.e., staff salaries, supplies, rent, etc.)

A: The match must be a cash match, meaning the applicant must contribute a certain percentage of their own money based on the total project cost. In-kind matches are not eligible.

Q: Please confirm that line items that can't be funded by the grant, can we list them in the budget and state that it will be funded by other sources?

A: The budget submitted should be for the FSIG project only.

Q: My name is Donald Cox. I am the operator of Lindsay's Cape Cod Herb Farm, located at 2412 Meetinghouse Way, West Barnstable, Massachusetts 02668. I am currently preparing a FY2027 FSIG application for the purchase and installation of a commercial walk-in cooler (Astra CWF10X12 with remote Turbo Air refrigeration system) at the farm. Our total project cost is \$30,000, with a grant request of \$24,000 (80%) and a \$6,000 cash match (20%).

I have one question regarding eligible project costs that I would like to clarify before finalizing our application budget. As part of the installation, the project requires site excavation and the pouring of a concrete pad as the base for the cooler unit. I am capable of performing this excavation and site preparation work myself rather than hiring an outside contractor. My question is: May owner-performed labor — specifically, excavation and concrete pad preparation carried out by the farm operator — be counted as an eligible project cost for purposes of the FSIG grant budget and/or the required 20% cash match? If so, what documentation (time logs, equipment records, comparable contractor rates, etc.) would be required to support that cost?

A: Labor performed by the applicant, its owners, employees, family members, affiliates, or any business in which the applicant holds an interest in completing the proposed project is not an eligible for the FSIG budget or as a match.

Q: Could you clarify MDAR's preferred format for presenting quotes for items over \$50,000? Specifically:

- Does MDAR prefer a side-by-side budget comparison showing both quotes for each line item over \$50,000?
- If the formal budget includes the **preferred vendor**, and the secondary quote is uploaded separately, does that meet FSIG's documentation requirements?
- Is there a recommended way MDAR would like applicants to display or organize the comparison between the primary and secondary quotes?

A: The submitted FSIG budget should reflect the selected (preferred) vendor(s). There is no required format for presenting comparisons between quotes. Applicants may choose to submit two separate quote packages—a primary package that aligns with the budget and includes the preferred vendor quotes, and a secondary package demonstrating that alternative vendors were considered. Alternatively, applicants may present a side-by-side comparison of quotes. The expectation is that the comparison is clear and supports the selection of the preferred vendor.

Q: For items exceeding \$50000 that require multiple quotes, should the most expensive quote be used when completing the Attachment B - FSIG FY27 Budget Template, even if other quotes differ?

A: The submitted FSIG budget should reflect the selected (preferred) vendor(s). There is no required format for presenting comparisons between quotes. Applicants may choose to submit two separate quote packages—a primary package that aligns with the budget and includes the preferred vendor quotes, and a secondary package demonstrating that alternative vendors were considered. Alternatively, applicants may present a side-by-side comparison of quotes. The expectation is that the comparison is clear and supports the selection of the preferred vendor.

Q: I am preparing an application for the FY27 FSIG and I am writing to request clarification on the vendor quote requirement for one of our proposed budget line items. Our application will include the purchase of an electric truck from a vendor that operates exclusively as a direct-to-consumer manufacturer with publicly listed, non-negotiable pricing — there is no dealer network, no ability to negotiate price, and no alternative vendor from whom a second quote could be obtained for the same vehicle. Since the FSIG application requires state two vendor quotes for expenditures over \$50,000, I am uncertain how to fulfill the requirement given the vendor's pricing model.

Would a single quote accompanied by a written explanation of their direct-to-consumer, fixed-pricing model satisfy the two-quote requirement? Alternatively, would a quote for a comparable electric pickup truck from a different manufacturer — submitted alongside the primary quote - be acceptable? Is there another approach MDAR would recommend for documenting competitive pricing in this situation? Transparently, many of the manufacturers have discontinued production of electric trucks over the past year, so the primary quote I would be submitting is from a manufacturer that is reliably continuing production....

A: All applicants are required to provide two (2) quotes for each expenditure or budget line item with a cost of \$50,000 or more. If an item is genuinely unique and no alternative vendors exist to supply comparable products or services, applicants may note this in their application. However, the absence of multiple quotes may adversely affect the application's evaluation score.

Q: We are submitting for a new barn designed for beef and dairy. The quote will certainly be more than \$50,000. Can you explain the required 2 quotes for items over 50,000. Do we need two quotes from two different building companies? Providing one quote with all the detail is time consuming so we are just asking if the intent is really for two separate building contractors?

A: All applicants are required to provide two (2) quotes for each expenditure or budget line item with a cost of \$50,000 or more. If an item is genuinely unique and no alternative vendors exist to supply comparable products or services, applicants may note this in their application. However, the absence of multiple quotes may adversely affect the application's evaluation score.

FUNDING PROCESS AND TIMELINE QUESTIONS

Q: When to you estimate awards will be released?

A: We estimate that awards will be announced in Summer 2026.

Q: Will the award amounts be taxable?

A: Applicants may receive a 1099-G for funding received under the FSIG Program. MDAR cannot give any tax advice and applicants should reach out to a tax professional for questions regarding the implications of receiving this funding.

Q: How will MDAR distribute the funding?

A: Applicants who are receiving funding will be required to enter into a contract with the Department before receiving funding. This includes documentation such as a Standard Contract form, a W-9, and an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Form. More information about the required documentation is outlined in the RFR.

Q: Can I start the project before awards are made?

A: No, applicants that start a project or incur costs outside of a contract with the Department are not eligible for reimbursement under the FSIG Program.

Q: Will there be any extensions if I am unable to complete the project by June 30th, 2027?

A: Projects are required to be completed by June 30th, 2027.

Q: Hello I am a Farmer Fisherman curious on the process of the grant and what exactly it means by a reimbursement grant.

A: The Department shall reimburse the Contractor for the cost of approved equipment, materials, and associated labor necessary to complete the Project, as described in this Contract. The Contractor shall be responsible for any costs not approved or beyond the Department's maximum obligation or for any costs not approved under the terms of this Contract. The Contractor shall be reimbursed for funds expended on this project. To receive reimbursement, the Contractor shall submit a written request ("Invoice") to the Department using the schedule below. If a project has not begun or no costs were incurred, the Contractor shall notify the Department in writing.

Q: We are hoping to get some funds towards our project from NRCS. Can you please advise if this is allowed or not? Our project totals over \$150k, but we may not request above that threshold. If we request less than \$150k, would our project still fit in the simplified project category?

A: Federal and state grants cannot be used as a match or as a funding source for the project. Simplified projects are requesting ranging from \$10,000 - \$150,000 (see Section 3B of the RFR).

Q: We are simultaneously applying for a USDA VAPG Planning Grant (Application 2) that includes a feasibility study for the same Zone 4 facility. FSIG funds equipment; VAPG funds planning. Do these applications conflict? Can VAPG planning grant funds or in-kind match be used toward the FSIG 20% cash match?

A: The match must be a cash match and cannot be in-kind. Federal and state grants cannot be used as a match or as a funding source for the project.

Q: For the 20% cash match, what form of documentation is expected at the application stage versus the reimbursement stage?

A: Please refer to the Letter of Match description in the RFR (pg. 15) for the application stage. For the reimbursement phase, awardees will need to provide sufficient documentation such as cashed

checks or bank statements to ensure the project has been paid in full and therefore the cash match has been met.