



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
KATHLEEN THEOHARIDES, SECRETARY  
GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

**FY 21 FOOD SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM**  
**ENV 21 FRF 01**  
**DATED: JUNE 10, 2020**  
**RESPONSES DUE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

**COMMBUYS BID # BD-21-1042-ENV-ENV01-52322**

**OVERVIEW AND GOALS:**

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, including the Department of Agricultural Resources and the Department of Fish and Game (collectively, “EEA”), and in coordination with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Department of Public Health (DPH) are pleased to announce the opportunity for funding for the **Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG)**. The goal of this grant program is to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to food, with a special focus on food that is produced locally and equitable access to food. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fisherman and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption. EEA may procure an outside consultant with expertise in grant management, as well as partner with Community Action Agencies (CAAs), to assist with the administration of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant.

Eligible grantees include entities that are part of the Massachusetts local food system including production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network, community and food organizations, school meal programming (including summer meal sponsors), urban farms and community gardens, non-profits, and organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance and information technology services. Applicants may be those representing farms, small retailers (under 50 full-and part-time employees), food banks, fisheries, seafood dealers & processors and other food system businesses or organizations who are facing disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and face difficulty in bringing their food to market. Applicants may also include those experiencing difficulty sourcing food for those facing food insecurity. This call for grant application proposals does not apply to the purchase of food for consumption.

Providing greater, more equitable access to local food and strengthening the role of local food in the Commonwealth’s overall food system is an important outcome for the FSIG. Local food is defined through this program as food which is produced and sold within the Commonwealth. The local food system is a network of consumers, workers, businesses, owners, and supporting organizations engaged in an array of activities, including fishing, farming, preparing, marketing, distributing, serving, and eating food. This network works to produce food that nourishes our communities, sustains businesses and workers, and supports responsible stewardship of our land

and water.

This call for grant application proposals is subject to and contingent upon the availability of funds. Funding is anticipated to be awarded in amounts up to \$500,000 (no minimum). Funding is based upon type of project, service area, and the provisions of this Call for Applications. Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis through June 30, 2021.

Applications for procurement of equipment to facilitate participation in the SNAP/HIP program will be evaluated separately from other proposals.

Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis through **September 15, 2020 by 4:00 p.m.** Successful applications will be notified on a rolling basis, and no later than October 15, 2020. All contracts awarded under this RFR will terminate on June 30, 2021, unless amended by the parties prior to that date.

Additional rounds may be available contingent on funding.

**PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR:** Projects to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to food, with a special focus on food that is produced locally and on equitable access to food. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fisherman and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system.

**TYPE OF PROCUREMENT:** Grant

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
[foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov](mailto:foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov)

**RESPONSE DUE DATE:** Rolling until September 15, 2020 at 4:00 PM

**SUBMIT RESPONSES TO:** Online application posted to:  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program>

**MULTIPLE CONTRACTS:** Each applicant may submit up to three applications. Multiple applicants will be selected for funding.

**BIDDERS CONFERENCE:** None. Please submit questions by email to: [foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov](mailto:foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov). The deadline for

questions is September 1, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Please note that EEA cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, EEA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process.

**SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS MAY CONTRACT UNDER THIS RFR:** ALL contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized solely by EEA.

**TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT (S):** The contract period will end by June 30, 2021 for most contracts issued pursuant to this RFR, and deliverables for these contracts must be received, along with final billing, by July 31, 2021 (exceptions and contract extensions will be handled on a case by case basis and addressed in individual contracts).

**ANTICIPATED BUDGET:** Up to \$500,000 per proposal. Proposals are expected to vary in the amount of funding requested based on the anticipated activity

**MATCH REQUIREMENT:** This program does not have a match requirement.

**PREVAILING WAGE APPLICABLE:** No

**IDENTIFICATION OF CONTRACTS WITH COMMONWEALTH AGENCIES OR SUBDIVISIONS:** Yes

**IDENTIFICATION OF FINANCIALLY INTERESTED PARTIES:** No

**RFR DISTRIBUTION (Comm-Buys):**

This RFR has been distributed electronically using the COMM-BUYS system. It is the responsibility of every Respondent to check for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Respondents who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent RFR files. The application and answers to questions will also be posted on the Food Security Grant website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program>

Respondents may not alter RFR language or any RFR component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections that prompt a Respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.

**RESPONDENT ELIGIBILITY:**

Applicants must be part of the local food production and distribution system, including entities that are principally and substantially engaged in the business of production agriculture, farming, or seafood production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network,

community and food organizations, school meal programming (including summer meal sites), and including organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance and information technology services. Eligible entities must be legally recognized entities within the Commonwealth and must have the ability to enter a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth. Applicants are limited to three applications per review cycle. Applications to any subsequent rounds may be limited by performance in the previous round.

The following list of applicants includes, but is not exhaustive of, eligible commodities, businesses, or organizations:

- Agricultural Operations (including not-for-profit) as defined by M.G.L. c. 128, Section 1A
- Fisheries and Commercial Fishermen
- Aquaculture
- Buy Local Organizations
- Urban Agriculture and Community Farms that provide food for food insecure residents
- Farmers' Markets
- Food Banks and Food Pantries
- Food System Organizations
- Massachusetts Food System Access Points/Retailers
- Community Gardens/Spaces
- Livestock and Poultry for Food Production
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Processing Facilities, including new construction, expansion of, and improvements
- Distribution and Transportation
- Municipalities and School Districts
- Community Organizations and services (including summer meal sites)
- Emergency Food Distribution Network
- Seafood Businesses (including not-for profit) as defined by M.G.L. c. 130, Section 80
- Seafood Dealers and Processors
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Value-Added (must identify MA-grown components)
- Small grocery stores, corner stores (under 50 full-and part-time employees)

Other non-profits that address food insecurity, local food, or entities that support minority or low income communities

### **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in coordination with DTA, DESE, and DPH are seeking applicants from entities that are part of the food production and distribution systems, including those representing farms, retailers, food banks, school meal programming (including summer meal sites), fisheries, processors, and other food system businesses and community and health organizations who are facing disruptions (food producing, sourcing, packaging, transportation and distribution) or high demand due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting increase in food insecurity. The grant program acknowledges that producers and meal distribution sites currently do not have sufficient infrastructure to provide direct-to-consumer sales or to get food to vulnerable and insecure

communities and populations, which is creating food supply challenges across the state and exacerbating food insecurity for vulnerable populations. Therefore, this program will provide flexible resources to entities to support efforts to adapt to supply chain disruptions and to provide greater access to local food in a way that supports customer and worker safety.

Eligible projects will allow eligible entities to adapt to disruptions and the increase in food insecurity caused by COVID-19, while allowing greater access to local food in a way that supports customer and worker safety and addresses systemic inequities around access to fresh, local food. Projects will support the immediate and projected needs of the Commonwealth's local food system, including (i) information technology needs; (ii) facility adaptation to new safety guidelines; (iii) storage, processing, and delivery equipment to adapt to supply chain disruptions and to serve food insecure residents, and (iv) other strategies that connect local food production with food insecure communities and residents and increase food equity for all residents. Applicants are limited to three grant applications per review period. Eligible projects must be for infrastructure and must be eligible for capital funding. Please see Exhibit A for a list of examples of eligible projects.

#### **GRANT REQUIREMENTS:**

All contracts resulting from this RFR will require a brief project update every quarter. These updates will include a summary of tasks achieved and include all public outreach materials created during this period. A final report is also required. This final report must include a copy of the completed tasks as contracted. Reporting and deliverable specifics will be defined in a grant contract.

#### **INVOICING:**

Itemized invoices must be submitted to EEA for reimbursement. For example, awardees must provide itemized invoices for items purchased and labor hired, as well as proof of payment in the form of cancelled checks, credit card receipts, and/or bank checks.

Payments will only be made via Electronic Funds Transfer.

All contracts shall be subject to available funding. Contracts will end on June 30, 2021, with two renewal options for up to one year each, depending on the project. Extension of the contract is at the sole discretion of EEA.

EEA may partner with Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in the disbursement of grant funds. Should this occur, the payment process will be modified to accommodate this scenario.

Reimbursement requests should be submitted at least quarterly. Grantees must prepare a final report and invoice upon project completion that details all costs incurred and matching funds provided. Only work completed during the period of the executed contract will be eligible for reimbursement. Upon receipt of all required deliverables the grantee will be reimbursed for the balance of any grant funds outstanding.

#### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

All Grant Proposal Submissions must be submitted electronically through the following webform: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions> A copy of this web

form is attached for review as Exhibit C. Please upload a proposed budget to the webform. A sample form is provided in Exhibit B.

After successful applicants are chosen, the necessary contract paperwork will be provided to the successful applicants for original ink signatures. Proposals must be submitted on or before **September 15, 2020 at 4:00 PM.**

**Budget:**

Proposals must include an adequate budget for the proposed project. Preliminary budgets are acceptable for the evaluation process but applicants must provide quotes from vendors or contractors before a contract will be given during development of the Scope of Services and prior to contract execution. Budget template is provided in attachment A.

Any incurred project costs that occur prior to an executed contract are NOT eligible for reimbursement from the Department.

EEA reserves the right to offer an award amount different than the amount requested.

**Prohibited expenditures:**

- Costs either actual or anticipated for the loss of sales as a result of market disruptions in association with the COVID-19 pandemic are not eligible.
- Any costs associated with proposals from applicants whose operation is out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations.
- Any costs associated with proposals from applicants that do not meet eligibility requirements listed in Section 3.
- Costs for used equipment or materials.
- Non-labor costs (e.g., management) and fees associated with project oversight and administration costs are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Requests for audit and feasibility studies are not eligible for consideration under this program.
- Labor performed by the agricultural operation in completing the proposed project is not an eligible reimbursement expense.
- Any costs involving marijuana shall not be eligible for funding under this program.
- Any costs that are not allowable uses of capital funds; capital funds are used for the purchase of long-term and durable assets to improve the efficiency or capacity of the business
- Costs associated with the consumption of food

If selected, the Respondent will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract:

Proposals which are favorably reviewed and awarded a contract must apply for and receive all required permits, licenses, and any other federal, state, or local approvals necessary for the project prior to any reimbursement from the Department.

All contracts resulting from this RFR will require a brief project update every quarter. These updates will include a summary of tasks achieved and include all public outreach materials created during this period. Reimbursement requests should be submitted at least quarterly. A

final report is also required. This final report must include a copy of the completed tasks as contracted and details all costs incurred. Only work completed during the period of the executed contract will be eligible for reimbursement.

Successful applicants will be required to provide the Commonwealth with the following [documents](#) prior to award:

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions
- W-9 Form
- Contractor Authorized Signature Listing
- Electronic Fund Transfer Form and voided check

EEA may partner with Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in the administration of the program. As a result, certain requirements and forms identified in this RFR are subject to modification.

Respondents are encouraged to review these forms prior to submission of a Response. They are available at: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/oversight-agencies/osd/osd-forms.html>

#### **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

The Fund will select applications based upon analysis of the submitted response content. During the selection process a panel of reviewers may request additional information from the applicants. Scoring will be performed by a grant review committee lead by EEA and which may include staff from DTA, DESE, DPH, MDAR, and DFG. For projects over \$100,000, priority may be given to those with match components (cash, in-kind, etc.). Selections will be made based on the following criteria:

- **Ability to Address Demonstrated Food Insecurity Challenge:** the project will help connect the local food production and distribution system to communities and residents facing food insecurity, helping to alleviate immediate needs and ensuring stronger long-term access to food for all residents
- **Equity:** The applicant is able to show how the proposed project will increase equitable access to food, particularly healthy local food for residents of the Commonwealth who have historically experienced food insecurity, live in food deserts, and lack access to local food options particularly communities of color, Gateway Cities, low income residents, and environmental justice neighborhoods. Projects that support minority and urban producers and minority and woman owned businesses are also encouraged to apply.
- **Demonstrated Economic Impact & Need:** The entity is able to quantify and demonstrate economic impact related to COVID-19 and to show how this project will mitigate or relieve that impact, with a priority of increasing local food supply to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption.
- **Proposed Use of Funds and Support:** The proposed use of funds demonstrates that funds will be used effectively to adapt to disruptions in the food supply chain. Consideration will be given to proposals that lead to increased food access for food

insecure and vulnerable communities such as Gateway Cities, communities of color, and low-income census tract populations in rural and urban communities. Proposals that seek to achieve the objectives identified in the Massachusetts [Local Food Action Plan](#) will receive additional consideration.

- **Feasibility of Action Plan:** The entity is likely able to meet its defined objectives through proposed use of resources during the period of the grant (through June 30, 2021).
- **Sustainability & Scalability of Efforts:** The entities' efforts are able to be sustained beyond initial funding and support and have the potential to be broadened, replicated, and scaled to address not only this food crisis, but others in the future to build the overall resiliency of the Commonwealth's system.

#### **For SNAP/HIP projects only:**

Applications for SNAP/HIP projects will be evaluated separately on the following criteria:

- **Ability to Support Producer Readiness to Accept SNAP/HIP benefits:** The entity will use grant funds for SNAP EBT equipment, technical support, or outreach to support producers in processing SNAP/HIP benefits.
  - Note: Requests to add HIP access points must be approved by DTA before grant applications for HIP-processing equipment will be approved.

*NOTE:* EEA reserves the option to interview some or all of those submitting a proposal for the purpose of clarifying a proposal prior to making a final award.

#### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION:**

Applicants that seek a reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of the call for application information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the Grant Manager at [foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov](mailto:foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov), no later than 4:00 p.m. on **September 1, 2020**.

#### **PUBLIC RECORDS:**

All responses and information submitted in response to this call for applications are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, sec. 10 and c. 4, sec. 7, cl. 26. Applicants should not include personal information or personal data in their responses.

**PROJECT TERMS:** A final contract is subject to successful negotiation of a Final Scope of Services. Please note that EEA does not guarantee that any contract may result from this RFR or that any particular funding level will be awarded. It is anticipated that projects could commence immediately upon contract execution. The awarded contract will be reviewed during its course and, upon request by the Contractor, may be extended at the sole discretion of EEA for up to one additional year. Any extension granted will not necessarily change, or increase, the monetary value of the contract.



EXHIBIT A:

Examples of eligible projects include but not limited to:

**Up to \$10,000**

- Procurement of Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) enabled SNAP processing devices. Note: Requests to add HIP access points must be approved by DTA before grant applications for HIP-processing equipment will be approved.
- Adaptation of facilities to meet new safety guidelines, such as new signage and handwashing stations for customers and worker protection.
- Provisions and equipment for remote ordering and payment, and curbside pick-up or delivery
- Food storage, processing, and delivery equipment to adapt to supply chain disruptions, including for cold and ambient storage; storage containers and bins.
- Food safety equipment, such as coolers and thermometers, for safe meal transportation to expand distribution or for summer meal sites
- Projects that support community gardens and urban agriculture, such as procurement of raised beds and other equipment used to grow food in urban areas.
- Procurement by small grocers and corner stores located in Gateway Cities and low-income census tracts to purchase refrigeration and freezer capacity to expand their ability to provide fresh and lightly prepared local food to feed their neighbors

**\$10,000 to \$75,000**

- Purchase of food processing, washing and packing equipment, produce and fruit sorting equipment (reduce human contact), cleaning and sanitation equipment.
- Procurement of equipment to support extension of the growing season, including, but not limited to, hoop houses, greenhouses, or cold storage.
- Provide grants that support food banks, food pantries, summer meal sites and other parts of the food distribution channel to meet the urgent needs as a result of COVID-19 by expanding services with infrastructure investments.
- Business planning and technical assistance for new business models and new crops to adapt and secure the local food supply, and ensure its expansion to new markets.
- Food waste management equipment.

**\$75,000 to \$500,000**

- Infrastructure that supports farms, retailers, food banks, fisheries, seafood dealers and processors, food system businesses and food distribution channels including, but not limited to, food banks, summer meal sites, farm stands, food hubs, elder services, and community supported agriculture farms, while taking into account the unique needs of rural and urban areas and gateway municipalities.
- Local food production projects that reduce and redirect food waste and expand access to healthy food to food-insecure communities through infrastructure investments.
- Construction of food processing facilities in Massachusetts to ensure local food security.
- Costs associated with equipment needed for repackaging food products to meet the demand and quantity sizing required by food banks.
- Vehicles for distribution of food products and meals; refrigerated trucks: for deliveries/part of the new systems for contactless shopping and to expand meal distribution to reach food insecure residents.
- Projects that support mobile markets that bring healthy food to communities or individuals with limited access to local, healthy food.
- Food Hub infrastructure (pooling resources and creating partnerships to streamline sourcing and delivery)
- Information technology needs, including the development of online markets and delivery systems, including online system to link food system channels to identify and match agricultural and fishery products to consumers and markets. Projects that develop and support online platforms for essential trainings such as food safety and worker protection in the food space. This could include educational videos for beekeeping, livestock care and resources along with invasive pest and plant disease information and technical assistance.
- Projects that fund infrastructure investments to engage small and mid-size food manufacturers, such as soup and sauce companies, in processing any surplus produce into products that can be distributed through the emergency response network in the near term, and integrate in a “Buy Massachusetts” program, and sold at grocery stores.
- Adaptations to farm housing that will support social distancing and other safety protocols adopted in response to COVID-19.



## Exhibit C – Questions in Online Application Form

Please review the Food Security Infrastructure Grant RFR prior to submitting your application.

Applicant Name\*

First Name

Last Name

Operation Name\*

Legal Structure (Sole Proprietor, Corporation, Partnership, LLC, Other)\*

Mailing Address\*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

ZIP Code

County\*

Click if the Site/Business address is the same as above

Site/Business Address \*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

ZIP Code

Site/Business County \*

Home/Mobile Phone\*

Email\*

Website\*

Are you only applying for SNAP/HIP EBT-processing equipment?\*

Yes [Note: yes response will lead to specific questions related to processing equipment]

No [Note: "no" response leads to questions below]

Briefly describe your enterprise or organization, its services or businesses, and its place in the food production and distribution system and/or role in addressing food insecurity.\*

State your annual budget or gross sales\*

Describe your proposed project\*

Where in Massachusetts will this project take place?\*

Describe how your enterprise or organization has been impacted by COVID-19 and how these funds will mitigate these economic impacts.\*

Describe disruptions (food producing, sourcing, packaging, transportation and distribution) or high demand due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that your organization or enterprise has been unable to accommodate\*

Describe how this project will mitigate or relieve that impact or disruption, with a priority of increasing local food supply and distribution and addressing food insecurity and access issues within the Commonwealth.\*

How will your project address food insecurity? How will the project support people or communities that have difficulty accessing food during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as those in food insecure and vulnerable communities (i.e., Gateway Cities, low-income census tract populations, communities of color)? \*

Will your project connect the local food production and distribution systems to food insecure communities and residents? If yes, to the best of your ability please state/name who the project will or aims to support. Does the proposed use of funds seek to achieve the objectives identified in the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan? If so, please name at least one recommendation from the Plan that the project seeks to achieve.\*

Describe how your project will meet one or more of the four program priorities to improve the Massachusetts Food System and mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption:

- information technology needs;
- facility adaptation to new safety guidelines to adhere to public health guidelines associated with COVID-19;
- storage, processing, and delivery equipment to adapt to supply chain disruptions and to serve food insecure residents, and
- Other strategies that connect local food production with food insecure communities and residents.

If applicable, please describe worker and customer protections that will be developed and implemented with grant funds.\*

Project plan: \*

Please provide a task-by-task description of each major element of the proposed project including means of accomplishment, projected budget, a timeline indicating anticipated initiation and completion dates; any product to be delivered or outcome to be realized.

If you are applying for SNAP EBT-processing equipment, please check the box here – [Response will enable the following questions]

Note: If you have recently been approved to add Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) access points through the Department of Transitional Assistance’s COVID-19 HIP Notice of Opportunity, please use this application link [HOLD FOR LINK TO STREAMLINED APP].

For grants to purchase SNAP EBT-processing equipment, will the equipment be a landline device or wireless? \*

landline device

wireless

For vendors approved by DTA for additional HIP access points through the Notice of Opportunity posted June 4, 2020:

How many HIP-enabled access points has DTA approved for your business since June 4, 2020? \*

List your mobile HIP-processing terminal needs and the number requested of each.

iPad

cellular data plan

EBT card reader

receipt printer

TotilPay app license fees for 1 year

Attach a copy of your approved application from DTA. \*

No File Chosen

File uploads may not work on some mobile devices.

Budget\*