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”), in coordination with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Department of Public Health (DPH) is pleased to announce the opportunity for funding from the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG). The program 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. The goal of this grant program is also 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. EEA may procure an outside consultant with expertise in grant management to assist with the administration of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant.

Eligible grantees include applicants 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 focused on addressing food access and/or improving and strengthening the resiliency of the Commonwealth’s food system by increasing distribution of locally grown and sourced food. 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 grown/produced and distributed 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 and
distribute 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, 2022.

Applications are due on **October 31, 2021 by 11:59 p.m. via the online application portal** at [https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions](https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions). All contracts awarded under this RFR will terminate on June 30, 2022, 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:**
Reimbursement Grant. Grant funds are distributed following payment of grant expenses by grant awardee.

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

**RESPONSE DUE DATE:**
October 31, 2021 at 11:59 PM

**SUBMIT RESPONSES TO:**
Online application posted to: [https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program)

**SINGLE CONTRACT:**
Each applicant may submit a single proposal. Multiple applications from the same entity will not be considered.

**BIDDERS CONFERENCE:**
None. Please submit questions by email to: [foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov](mailto:foodsecurity.grant@mass.gov). The deadline for questions is October 18, 2021 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, 2022 for most contracts issued pursuant to this RFR, and deliverables for these contracts must be received, along with final billing, by July 31, 2022 (exceptions and contract extensions will be handled on a case by case basis and addressed in individual contracts and subject to available funding).

**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-BUY 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 applicants 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 a single proposal.

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 Businesses (must identify MA-grown components)
- Small grocery stores, corner stores (under 50 full-and part-time employees)
- Partnerships and collaborations among multiple sectors

**ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:**
The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in coordination with DTA, DESE, and DPH seeks applications 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 that seek to address food access by improving and strengthening resilience in production and distribution within the Commonwealth’s food system. This may include, but is not limited to food producing, sourcing, packaging, transportation and distribution. The grant program acknowledges that some producers and meal distribution sites 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 awardees to support efforts to strengthen the Commonwealth’s food system by providing greater access to local food, especially for those experiencing food insecurity.

Eligible projects will allow applicants to strengthen and improve the resiliency of the Commonwealth’s food system while allowing greater access to fresh, local food in a way that addresses systemic inequities. Projects will support immediate and long-term needs of the Commonwealth’s local food system, including (i) storage, processing, and delivery equipment to expand local food production and distribution; (ii) facility adaptations and renovations to increase capacity (iii) information technology needs; (iv) other strategies, including multi-sector collaborations that connect local food production with food insecure communities and residents and increase food equity for all residents. Applicants are limited to one grant proposal. Eligible projects must be for infrastructure, capital improvements, and durable equipment. Please see Exhibit A for a list of examples of eligible projects.

Collaborative proposals and partnerships are eligible and encouraged. Applicants must specify the lead entity for contracting purposes.

**GRANT REQUIREMENTS AND INVOICING:**

If your project is selected for funding, you will be sent the following forms to complete your grant contract:

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions
- W-9 Form
- Contractor Authorized Signature Listing
- Electronic Fund Transfer Form (must be submitted with a voided check or bank letter)

You can review these forms here: [http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/oversight-agencies/osd/osd-forms.html](http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/oversight-agencies/osd/osd-forms.html)

All contracts shall be subject to available funding. Contracts will end on June 30, 2022. Extension of the contract is at the sole discretion of EEA.

Entities that are awarded a grant 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.

Any construction or renovation project must be conducted by a contractor or contractors licensed in Massachusetts. Copies of the contractors’ license may be required in order to receive reimbursement for the work.
EEA may require verification of market agreements prior to or during contracting.

EEA may partner with a third party in the administration of the program. As a result, certain requirements and forms identified in this RFR are subject to modification.

Once the contract is fully executed itemized invoices must be submitted to EEA for reimbursement after approved items are paid in full and in the awardee’s possession. Only work completed during the period of the executed grant contract will be eligible for reimbursement. Each reimbursement request must be accompanied by a cover letter signed by the contractor’s authorized signatory, relevant vendor invoices, proof of payment of invoices, and photos of project process. Proof of payment can include cancelled checks, bank or credit card statements, receipts, and/or bank checks. After EEA approves the request, payment to awardees may take up to 60 days to process.

Payments will only be made via Electronic Funds Transfer to the bank account listed on the Electronic Fund Transfer Form submitted during contracting.

EEA may partner with third parties in the disbursement of grant funds. Should this occur, the payment process will be modified to accommodate this scenario.

Reimbursement requests can be submitted as items are paid in full and in the awardee’s possession, or when the entire project is completed. All reimbursement requests for contracts ending on June 30, 2022 must be submitted to EEA by July 31, 2022 to qualify for reimbursement. Grantees must also submit a final report upon project completion. Upon receipt of all required deliverables the grantee will be reimbursed for the balance of any grant funds outstanding.

Awardees will also be required to submit brief monthly progress reports until project completion. These progress reports will include a summary of tasks achieved throughout the month and all public outreach materials created during the month.

Monthly and final report templates will be provided by EEA to awardees.

Additional reporting and deliverable specifics will be defined in the grant contract.

**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

All Grant Proposal Submissions must be submitted electronically through the following webform: [https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions](https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions) A copy of this webform is attached for review as Exhibit C. Please upload your project budget and quotes to the webform. A sample form is provided in Exhibit B. Proposals must be submitted on or before **October 31, 2021 at 11:59 PM** to qualify for consideration.

After successful applicants are chosen, the necessary contract paperwork will be provided to the awarded grantees for original ink signatures.

**Budget:**
Proposals must include an adequate budget for the proposed project. Applicants must provide quotes from vendors or contractors with the application. Items listed in the budget must have an associated quote from the supplier. Line items without quotes will not be eligible for consideration.

A budget template is provided in Exhibit B.

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:**

This list includes but is not limited to the following. Eligibility of capital expenses is at the discretion of EEA.

- Costs either actual or anticipated for the loss of sales as a result of market disruptions in association with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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. (e.g., used vehicles)
- Non-labor costs (e.g., management) and fees associated with project oversight and administration.
- Labor contractors who are not licensed within Massachusetts.
- Audits and feasibility studies.
- Labor performed by the agricultural operation in completing the proposed project.
- Any costs involving marijuana.
- 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 marketing materials, signage, vehicle graphics, or advertising.
- Costs associated with the purchase or consumption of food.
- Permits
- Vehicle registration, documentation, title preparation, and inspection fees.
- Warranties
- Costs associated with disposable goods, packaging materials, consumables.
- Subscription based services (e.g., software-as-a-service or monthly costs).
- Monthly operating costs
• Dock fees
• Real estate and land purchases

EVALUATION CRITERIA:
EEA will select applications for funding based upon analysis of the submitted response. 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:

• **Potential Impact to the Commonwealth’s Food System:** The applicant is able to articulate how the proposed project will improve and strengthen the resiliency of the Commonwealth’s food system. The applicant should demonstrate how this project will impact food production, sourcing, packaging, transportation and distribution within the Commonwealth. Proposals that seek to achieve the objectives identified in the Massachusetts [Local Food Action Plan](https://www.mass.gov/local-food-action-plan) will receive additional consideration.

• **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.

• **Ability to Ensure 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 and lack access to local food options and culturally relevant food particularly for communities of color, Gateway Cities, low-income residents, and environmental justice neighborhoods. Projects that support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and urban producers and minority and woman owned businesses are also encouraged to apply.

• **Economic Impact & Need:** The applicant is able to quantify and demonstrate the economic impact this project will have on their organization as well as the Commonwealth's food system. Priority will be given to project proposals that seek to increase local food supply to help increase food security and strengthen the food distribution network.

• **Feasibility of Action Plan:** The applicant is very likely able to meet its defined objectives through proposed use of funds during the period of the grant (through June 30, 2022). Applicant has defined ability to fund project until reimbursement. For larger project, applicant has successfully defined matching contributions.

• **Sustainability & Scalability of Efforts:** The applicant’s efforts are able to be sustained beyond initial funding and support and have the potential to be broadened, replicated, and scaled to build the overall resiliency of the Commonwealth’s system.

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1 Please refer to EEA’s Environmental Justice webpage for further information: [https://www.mass.gov/environmental-justice](https://www.mass.gov/environmental-justice)
**Collaboration:** The project will depend on multi-sector collaboration and cooperation to successfully address inequities and have a greater impact on strengthening the food system as a whole. Applicants must specify the lead entity for contracting purposes.

*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 decision.

**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, no later than 4:00 p.m. on **October 18, 2021**.

**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 awardee, may be extended at the sole discretion of EEA. Any extension granted will not necessarily change, or increase, the monetary value of the contract.
EXHIBIT A:
Examples of eligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Food storage, processing, and delivery equipment to adapt to supply chain disruptions, including for cold and ambient storage. Examples include shelving units, refrigerators, freezers, pallet jacks, and forklifts.
- Food safety equipment, such as coolers and thermometers, for safe meal transportation to expand distribution.
- Vehicles for distribution of food products and meals, refrigerated trucks, or vehicles to expand meal distribution to reach food insecure residents.
- Purchase of food processing, washing, and packing equipment, produce and fruit sorting equipment.
- Large scale kitchen equipment such as convection ovens and steam kettles.
- Procurement of equipment to support extension of the growing season, including, but not limited to, hoop houses, greenhouses, or cold storage.
- 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.
- Fish processing and packaging equipment, such as gutting, skinning, and ice machines.
- Year-round farm stands to bring fresh, local food to residents across the Commonwealth.
- Dairy processing equipment.
- Meat processing equipment.
- Renovations to food storage spaces.
- 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 demand.
- 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)
Budget:

EEA has the option to negotiate the budget before entering into a contract with the applicant. EEA will decide if an applicant has adequately addressed this requirement. Applicants must provide quotes from vendors or contractors with the application.

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| Total Project Costs | | | | | $ |
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Exhibit C – Questions in Online Application Form

https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-application-questions

Please carefully read and review the Food Security Infrastructure Grant RFR prior to submitting your application. The RFR specifies the goals of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program and what items are eligible for funding. This is a reimbursement grant program. Only submit 1 application per organization.

A sample of the application form is available on the COMMBUYS posting page for review.