



# Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG)

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# Overview of FSIG

## About the Program



The goal of the Food Security Infrastructure 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.

Total grant awards:

**\$63** million, **507** organizations

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# FY21 and FY22 Funding Breakdown



- In the first round of the program, FY21, FSIG received 1,353 applications requesting \$203 million
  - \$35.5 million was awarded to 360 projects
- In FY22, grant program focus shifted from responding to COVID disruptions to increasing the resiliency of and strengthening the MA food system as a whole
  - Received 587 applications requesting \$97.2 million in funding and awarded \$27.5 million to 147 organizations
- Awardees were across various sectors including distributors/suppliers, farms, fisheries, food banks/pantries, food hubs, municipalities, nonprofits, other for profits, & schools.
  - Grant project accomplishments included:
    - Made local, fresh food production more efficient and accessible which allowed more produce to be distributed and sold in-state
    - Lowered the cost of production which in turn has made food more accessible to lower-income communities
    - Increased the ability of distributors to partner with SNAP, EBT, and other organizations as a result of lower costs and higher efficiency in production

# FY21 and FY22 Feedback



- We are working to understand the current needs of the Commonwealth's food system through a feedback survey:  
<https://www.mass.gov/forms/food-security-infrastructure-grant-feedback-survey>
- Survey is ongoing and food system participants are encouraged to submit their feedback
- Results from this feedback will be used to shape upcoming RFR
- To date, the survey has identified:
  - Most common funding needs: construction updates, kitchen equipment (mostly schools), vehicles, technology upgrades (mostly fisheries and schools), program expansion, including increasing staff, to accommodate an increase in food insecurity related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Largest barriers affecting role in food system: lack of transportation/access to communities in need (“last mile delivery”), old buildings/equipment, high prices, smaller organizations struggling to find partnerships to decrease costs and increase impact, supply chain issues making the market more competitive

**What's Next?**

# Launch of FY24 FSIG Program



- The RFR is anticipated to be posted in mid-January following the conclusion of both Q&A sessions
- Application will be open for 6 weeks
- Each applicant will be allowed to submit only 1 application for projects up to \$500k
- This is a reimbursement grant; all awardees are required to pay for project costs up front and then be reimbursed by the Commonwealth at a later date following approval of expenses
- Contracts will all be for FY24 running from July 1st, 2023 - June 30th, 2024
  - **It is unlikely that extensions into FY25 will be granted**

# Standard Program Criteria



- 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:
  - 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.
  - Information technology needs
  - Regional projects that address or study systemic causes and impacts of food insecurity throughout the Commonwealth
  - Projects that intends to increase long-term resilience to drought or extreme weather events
- Scoring is anticipated to be performed by a grant review committee lead by EEA and which may include staff from DTA, DESE, DPH, MDAR, and DFG
- 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.
- Evaluation Criteria:
  - Potential Impact to the Commonwealth's Food System
  - Ability to Address Demonstrated Food Insecurity Challenge
  - Ability to Ensure Equity
  - Economic Impact & Need
  - Feasibility of Action Plan
  - Sustainability & Scalability of Efforts
  - Collaboration



# What's New?



- Based on feedback and experience from the first two rounds of the program, it is anticipated that the FY24 round will expand eligibility to a broader array of project types
- This includes projects that:
  - Assist farmers with the cost of water supply infrastructure needed to address current and future drought conditions
    - Technology Upgrades – such as drip irrigation for farms and greenhouses
  - Wells and other actions to provide a reliable water supply – digging or expansion of new wells or surface water bodies, services to support well maintenance and rehabilitation, with the necessary local and state regulatory approvals
  - Regional study on factors that relate to greater food insecurity, including food deserts, communities of color, Gateway Cities, low-income residents, and environmental justice [neighborhoods](#), and how to best address these in each region
    - Research related to ongoing food security measures and their impact throughout the Commonwealth
    - Studies analyzing the impact of climate change on food security
    - Analysis of the impacts of food insecurity on health