Would providing bulk produce to food pantries and soup kitchens be an eligible project type?

Food can be purchased and used in meals that are distributed through the LFPA program, however all meal components must meet the definitions for domestic and local, as defined in the RFA. Minor ingredients (spices, oils, sweeteners, etc.) used in meal preparation must meet the definition of “Domestic Food” outlined in the RFA. Meal preparation must also be performed locally.

MDAR has sought further clarification on this question from USDA and will provide further information once USDA has responded with any updates.

Are the funds used to underwrite the cost of food?

At least 51% of project funds must be spent directly on food purchases. The remaining funds may cover all other expenses, including staff time, transportation, and food storage costs. Projects dedicating a higher percentage of funds on food purchasing will be prioritized.

Do food purchases need to be distributed to participants free of charge?

Yes.

Section C of the RFR indicates that proposals that require participants to sign up are ineligible for the program. Is there any permissible way to ask participants to opt in or express interest in receiving food in advance of a distribution (e.g. for food boxes), to limit perishable food waste?

Agreement holders cannot place any additional conditions on receiving food. However, gathering a list of those who express interest in receiving food to estimate participation would be allowable, as long as there is a fair and equitable outreach process to all community members, beyond those that initially expressed interest.

Section C of the RFR indicates that proposals that have conditions for participation are ineligible for the program. Does that preclude applicants from having any eligibility criteria for participation, or are certain eligibility criteria – such as income level, ALICE status, disability status, or other criteria – permissible and/or preferred?

No. Eligible beneficiaries to receive the food are those members of communities in need of food. Agreement holders cannot place any additional conditions on receiving food.

The statement “considered Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE)”... was added in error and will be removed. Please refer to the MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer for federal poverty level information.
The RFR defines “Socially Disadvantaged” as a “group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.” Are producers who are subject to discrimination on any of these bases (including those listed after “where applicable”) equal priorities for funding?

Yes, MDAR is utilizing USDA’s definition of “Socially Disadvantaged” to report on the number of Socially Disadvantaged farmers/producers procured from during the life of the grant. MDAR will provide awardees with reporting template during contracting phase.

MDAR’s Socially Disadvantaged producer self-identification tool encourages producers to identify only their race, ethnicity, and identity as an immigrant or limited resource producer. Does MDAR want members of groups who have faced other kinds of discrimination – such as based on sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation – to use the self-identification tool?

The purpose of the Self-Identify as a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form is to ensure that self-identified farmers are kept informed of the opportunity to provide produce to the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) Program, and other Department initiatives, by email and other communication methods. The final question on the Self-Identify as a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form allows farmers and producers to provide more information on their socially disadvantaged status. MDAR encourages any farmer who self-identifies as socially disadvantaged, and who is interested in receiving communications on the LFPA Program, and other Department initiatives, to complete the self-identification form.

For LFPA application submission purposes, please refer to the RFR definition of Socially Disadvantaged farmer.

In the “Awarding Priorities” section, where it says “Commitment to procure from Socially Disadvantaged producers, small producers, and/or vendors” – are small producers a distinct priority, whether or not they are Socially Disadvantaged? What is the definition of a “small producer?” (and/or a “small farm” as used on page 11, Item 2 under the Farmer/Producer Engagement section)

The USDA defines small farms as farms with agricultural sales below $250,000. While small producers are eligible to participate, the emphasis of the program is on contracting with Socially Disadvantaged farmers and producers, which may also meet the definition of small farms or producers.
Applicants are required to “target populations for distribution and include any low-income food insecure household... who is at or below the federal poverty level or who is considered Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (“ALICE”).” How do you recommend applicants identify and/or ensure they are including all ALICE households in their distribution?

When developing their proposals, applicants are encouraged to consult the resources provided in Section 5. Additional Resources, including the Environmental Justice Map Viewer, the Massachusetts SNAP Gap Map, and the Massachusetts Food Systems Map.

Section H. Application Submission Instructions outlines the expectations for applicants to identify how the proposal will target populations for distribution and include any low-income food insecure household, citizen or non-citizen, who is at or below the federal poverty level

“considered Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE)”.... was added in error and will be removed. Please refer to the MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer for federal poverty level information.

Since the producers need to be socially disadvantaged, and should self-identify as such, will we need to document this in some way? And, then, what’s the best way to go about this?

Yes, recipients will be required to track the number of producers sourced from, including business name, product type, quantity, price, and if the producer self-identifies as Socially Disadvantaged. MDAR will provide awardees with reporting template during contracting phase.

I am interested in signing up and joining the program. How can I sign up?

You can register as a business on the MassGrown Exchange Platform, which will be one of the ways that buyers in this program will partner with participating farms. In addition, awarded organizations will be announced via press release and the Farm and Market Report. Interested farmers and producer can reach out directly to those awarded organizations.

I see the project duration is listed from December 1, 2022 through May 31, 2024. Is preference given to projects that span that entire duration, or year-round projects? Or does a project just need to be within that timeframe?

The grant period may begin on December 1, 2022 or later. Projects must be completed within 17 months of contract execution, and no later than May 31, 2024. The Evaluation Criteria outlines the scoring, and additional points are provided for projects which present a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project during the award project period.

Can you define "farm-level commodity prices" as seen in number 3 of the project details on page 11 of the RFP? Is this referring to retail prices that farmers receive for their products? Or wholesale pricing? Or USDA produce terminal pricing?

Prices should be negotiated between the distributing organization and farmers and producers. Prices should reflect fair retail value.
Our program provides gratis CSAs to food-insecure families. The farm shares are choice-based, not pre-made boxes. The farm shares offer items in all 5 food groups, sourced from small MA growers and producers. Historically, we've had families fill out a one-page application (self-attesting to income-level & primary residence) to participate. Would this be an eligible project?

Eligible beneficiaries to receive the food are those members of communities in need of food. Agreement holders cannot place any additional conditions on receiving food, such as income-level and primary residence.

Is it possible for you to tell me what the contract code on this grant will be for tax purposes? Either M03, or MM3?

The code used will most likely be M10.

I was wondering if it was acceptable to apply for this grant if we were awarded funds through the Specialty Crop grant but have not received funding yet.

Organizations may apply for the LFPA program even if they have current or ongoing awards from other MDAR grants including the Buy Local Grant Program, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Food Ventures Program, etc. Other current or prior MDAR award contracts do not preclude applicants from submitting a proposal.

Can an organization that will be making its own application for an LFPA grant also be a subcontractor on another LFPA grant application?

Organizations may not receive funding through multiple awards or contracts. Awarded applicants may not be paid as contractors through another proposal. Applicants are encouraged to foster partnerships and regional collaboration.

Can a food hub or producer provide food to multiple applicants?

A producer that did not apply and/or does not receive an award for LFPA may provide food to multiple awarded organizations.

Can a food hub that is applying for an LFPA grant also provide food to other applicants?

An organization may provide food at no cost to other awarded organizations, but should not receive LFPA funds from multiple sources, only the sole awarded contract.
The RFR states that "Proposals that require participants to sign up or have conditions for participation" are not allowed. Just wanted to confirm how "sign up" is defined, as we typically register individual participants for our programs for program communication and tracking purposes. Is registering participants allowed, and if so what information can be collected?

Registration may not be a limitation or condition to receiving the benefit of the project. An organization may collect information to gauge interest and participation for outreach purposes and must be done in a fair and equitable way.

Ex: if an electronic sign-up is the only way community members can receive the awarded organizations benefit, that may be prohibitive to those who do not have internet.

Applicant may distinguish a fair and equitable way to reach all community members regarding the benefit and utilize it for program communication purposes.

If conditions on program participation are not allowed and/or limited information can be collected on program participants, is there any kind of process needed to verify or quantify whether those receiving food meet the criteria for belonging to underserved communities?

An awarded organization may ask participants if they are socially disadvantaged or belong to an underserved community. This information will be gathered utilizing the tracking template MDAR will provide to awarded organizations. MDAR understands that not all participants may consent to offering that information. The awarded organization should track that information to the best ability.

MDAR plans to provide resources to awarded organizations on data tracking after contracts are executed.

Can participants pay for a portion of the food provided through the program (e.g. with SNAP/HIP) or does the food need to be provided for free?

All food distributed through the LFPA program must be free to the end users receiving the food. LFPA funds cannot be used for SNAP/HIP program costs.

Can farms that are run by non-profits self-identify as socially disadvantaged based on demographics of the staff?

The goal of LFPA is to purchase food from socially disadvantaged farmers and producers and to distribute the food to underserved communities. Farms, including farm staff, may self-identify as socially disadvantaged within an application based on the USDA definition of Socially Disadvantaged provided in the RFR.

Can an organization that is a producer and distributor buy its own produce?
The goal of LFPA is to purchase food from socially disadvantaged farmers and producers and to distribute the food to underserved communities. An organization purchasing its own produce to distribute does not appear to be unallowable by USDA terms for LFPA, but MDAR will follow up if USDA notifies MDAR otherwise.

- The RFR states that applicants may not receive funds through multiple proposals or contracts. Our organization is considering submitting our own application, but we have also been approached by other Food Pantries and food access organizations to be included in their proposals (e.g., they would buy food from our farmers via our organization). Before I get too far into the planning with the partners, would this violate the “receiving funds through multiple contracts/proposals?” We would not be submitting multiple proposals ourselves, but we may submit an application with xx number of partners and then other organizations may submit separate applications and have as part of their purchasing mix sourcing food from our organization. Is that OK?

Organizations may not receive funding through multiple awards or contracts. Awarded applicants may not be paid as contractors through another proposal. Applicants are encouraged to foster partnerships and regional collaboration.

An organization may provide food at no cost to other awarded organizations, but should not receive LFPA funds from multiple sources, only the sole awarded contract.

- Are farmers eligible to apply for this grant?

Farmers are eligible to apply. Applicants are encouraged to foster partnerships and regional collaboration.

- Can purchases of food and farm products include CSA Shares?

Purchases of food and farm products may include CSA Shares.

- Given that “local” is 400 mile radius, what prevents out of state producers and farmers from taking advantage of this opportunities?

Proposals with a higher percentage of Massachusetts grown food will receive priority scoring during the evaluation period.

- If farms have not yet self-identified as Socially Disadvantaged but meet one or more of the criteria, will their involvement count in the proposal evaluation process?

This question is referring to the Self-Identify as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form.

The purpose of the Self-Identify as a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form is to ensure that self-identified farmers are kept informed of the opportunity to provide produce to
the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) Program, and other Department initiatives, by email and other communication methods. The final question on the Self-Identify as a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form allows farmers and producers to provide more information on their socially disadvantaged status. MDAR encourages any farmer who self-identifies as socially disadvantaged, and who is interested in receiving communications on the LFPA Program, and other Department initiatives, to complete the self-identification form.

Filling out this form is not a requirement for submitting a proposal and is separate from the proposal evaluation process.

For LFPA application submission purposes, please refer to the RFR definition of Socially Disadvantaged farmer.

➢ Are producers who are subject to discrimination on any of these bases [listed in the RFR definition of Socially Disadvantaged] (including those listed after “where applicable”) equal priorities for funding in Massachusetts?

Purchasing produce from socially disadvantaged farmers and/or producers as defined in the RFR is a funding priority.

➢ Is the SDP commitment described in Attachment A required by AGR-LFPA-2023? If so, can it be met by purchasing from Socially Disadvantaged producers even if they are not SDO Certified?

The language in Attachment A of the RFR is standard language that must be included with each RFR the department competitively posts. Most of the language within this Attachment A refers to protocol for competitive procurements of goods and services. Grant opportunity RFRs, like LFPA, have greater flexibility in evaluation and are not held to the same requirements as goods and services procurements. SDO Certification is not a requirement nor a priority for proposal evaluation.

➢ May food be purchased prior to the end of the project term for distribution later in 2024/after May 31, 2024?

All activities relating to LFPA funding, including food distribution, must be completed by the project end date of May 31, 2024.

➢ Will MDAR publish the list (names and contact info) of socially disadvantages farmers and producers to make connecting and collaborating easier?

The purpose of the Self-Identify as a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer Form is to ensure that self-identified farmers are kept informed of the opportunity to provide produce to the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) Program, and other Department initiatives, by email and other communication methods.
The names collected through this form will not be published by MDAR.

➢ By “seafood production” does that include fisheries?
   Yes.

➢ Which budget category should we use for food and farm product purchases? Supplies? Contracts?
   This may be dependent upon multiple factors within an individual proposal. For questions regarding allowable/unallowable expenses and general cost category questions, please feel free to reach out to Keri Cornman at Keri.Cornman@mass.gov.

➢ Can you provide an example of Special Purpose Equipment?
   Special Purpose Equipment is equipment used only for research, scientific, or technical activities.

   Special Purpose Equipment is only allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criteria are met:

   1) Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement;
   2) Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible;
   3) The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization;
   4) Acquired in accordance with organizational practices;
   5) Must be used solely to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement;
   6) More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment;
   7) Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and
   8) Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable.

➢ How is "signing up" defined in situations such a box delivery, where it is necessary to collect information such as an address or contact method?
   Collecting information necessary to provide deliveries for the distribution of the food benefit is allowable. The process must ensure that all community members have a fair and equitable way
to participate in receiving the benefit. Agreement holders cannot place any additional conditions on receiving food.

- **Based on this definition of local, is it disallowed to use items such as rice in prepared meals?**

  Food can be purchased and used in meals that are distributed through the LFPA program, however all meal components must meet the definitions for domestic and local, as defined in the RFA. Minor ingredients (spices, oils, sweeteners, etc.) used in meal preparation must meet the definition of “Domestic Food” outlined in the RFA. Meal preparation must also be performed locally.

- **The RFR specifically allows for processed foods, value-added products, and seafood. Are meat, dairy, and eggs eligible?**

  Yes, meat dairy and eggs are eligible.

- **Will a budget template be provided?**

  A budget template is not provided for the LFPA application process. General instructions are included on page 12 of the RFR.

- **For CSAs, they usually require some form of payment before receiving the boxes. Is prepayment not possible?**

  Food purchased through the LFPA program should be distributed to the community, with an emphasis on serving underserved communities, at no cost.

  Payment will be made to awarded applicants using the following payment schedule:

  - Disbursement of 40% of project funds upon contract signing and approval of a disbursement request.
  - Disbursement of 40% of project funds after proper documentation and reporting is approved from the first disbursement and approval of a second disbursement request.
  - The remaining 20% of project funds will be reimbursed upon project completion and submission of final report. Please note that the burden of this remaining 20% must lie with the contract holder and cannot be at the expense of producers and/or vendors.

- **Are food producers, who are also their own distributors, allowed to apply? And if they are, are production expansions allowed?**

  Food producers that are also their own distributors are eligible to apply. Applicants are encouraged to foster partnerships and regional collaboration. General construction and infrastructure costs are unallowable. Food storage and packaging costs are eligible expenses if
they are part of distribution expenses. Rental of equipment (such as cooler/warehouse space, vehicles, etc.) are allowed during the lifetime of the grant.

- In my opinion, the ineligible uses [expenses]—specifically about establishing new ventures, purchasing versus renting equipment, and the non-advantage clause for nonprofits (in these particular circumstances) are going to limit the impact of any [removed]-County based application. The question here is; would MDAR consider on an application by application basis revising those ineligible uses?

  MDAR must follow federal USDA Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) Terms and Conditions. MDAR will not consider any unallowable expenses.

- If outreach is fair and equitable and there are no conditions on participation, is it allowable to have participants register and to collect info like address, phone, etc. for purposes of communication and possible delivery?

  Yes.

- Is it expected that this RFR will be issued again in 2023 (for the 2024 season) or are these one-time funds?

  This is a one-time posting of funds to be distributed.

- Is it required for the applicant to identify the specific farmers that will supply the products in the proposal, or can farmer/producer recruitment be a part of the process?

  Either option described in the question may be utilized in an applicant’s proposal.

- If we are a minority-owned farm, can we source the produce from ourselves and pay our farm for the produce we give away?

  Food producers that are also their own distributors are eligible to apply. Applicants are encouraged to foster partnerships and regional collaboration.

- Is it permissible to do outreach for this program in collaboration with community partners (for example a partner that serves a refugee or immigrant population)? Does that meet the criteria for fair and equitable outreach? In addition, if we work with a community partner, may we subcontract with them for their time doing outreach and pay them with grant funds?

  The LFPA Program encourages partnerships, especially partnerships that will further community engagement. Outreach and program development costs are allowable expenses, however, the costs associated with outreach and program development must directly relate to LFPA program activities and goals. 51% or more of awarded funds must be used for food purchasing.

- Will you accept proposals that are below or beyond the suggested amounts listed in the RFR?
The RFR has suggested award amounts of between $50,000 and $750,000. These are suggested amounts and not explicit limits for LFPA project budgets. MDAR may remove unallowable costs or lower award amounts to awarded projects that score highly, to accommodate impact of regional dollars spent. All proposals submitted will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFR, utilizing the evaluation scoring rubric.

- Can an organization that is also applying for LFPA funds act as a non-funded partner organization to distribute produce for another sub-recipient?

  Yes, this would be allowable. One organization may not receive LFPA funds as a lead organization, and as a contractor through a separate LFPA award.

- For application purposes, can we have one common letter of support from farmers to sign and date individually (multiple signatures on the same document)? Is an informal e-mail from partners saying they are interested acceptable?

  Yes, this would be acceptable. Applying entities must determine how to demonstrate farmer and community support for the proposed project.

- Will the data we have on hand re: #s served at food pantries, # of socially disadvantaged farmers we plan to work with be enough, or do we need to do a specific survey NOW, in advance of submitting grant proposal?

  MDAR will be providing templates to awarded organizations to report on program metrics, including the number of socially disadvantaged farmers and producers engaged with throughout the project period. Proposals that demonstrate clear engagement and knowledge of the community the project serves will receive priority scoring.

- What if collaborators are purchasing local food from a food hub (which is aggregating and selling from multiple farmers - the money gets passed through the food hub directly to the farmers)? Can the food hub entity be written into multiple applications to source food directly from farmers?

  If the food hub is a listed contractor within a budget on an LFPA proposal, they cannot also be an awarded entity receiving LFPA funds.

- Are both the OAA (Older Americans Act) elderly nutrition program and seniors eligible for this product if produced from this grant funding source? Can we use the funding to produce bread as a portion of the meals (funded by HHS) or would we have to give it to seniors as a supplement?

  This will depend on the details of the existing program and the way in which funding is used. Applicants who intend to use LFPA funding for existing efforts must demonstrate clearly in their proposal how LFPA funds will supplement (e.g. by increasing or expanding) existing food procurement and food distribution activities. The applicant must also demonstrate how funds
will be used to align existing activities with LFPA program goals, objectives, outcomes, and reporting requirements.

Food can be purchased and used in meals that are distributed through the LFPA program, however all meal components must meet the definitions for domestic and local, as defined in the RFA. Minor ingredients (spices, oils, sweeteners, etc) used in meal preparation must meet the definition of “Domestic Food” outlined in the RFA. Meal preparation must also be performed locally.

- Our project will be implemented by three partners. Should each partner’s costs be spread out among the cost categories, or should the total be shown under “Contracts/Consultants?” Should we show each partner’s budget details individually in addition to the total budget costs?

Each partner’s costs should be reflected in the budget, however, it is up to the organization if they would prefer to create three different budgets, or one large budget. Budgets should be clear, realistic and appropriate to the program goals.

- Our practice has been to negotiate wholesale prices for produce and products based on farmer input – and we incur the costs of aggregating and delivering the food to local food access organizations. The RFR and FAQs state that “Prices should be negotiated between the distributing organization and farmers and producers. Prices should reflect fair retail value.” Using retail pricing as fair market value, as opposed to wholesale, it will likely double the $ amount paid to farmers, but it will decrease the amount of food that we will be able to provide to socially disadvantaged populations in our region. May our proposal reflect our practice of negotiating fair wholesale prices, or is retail pricing a requirement of grant funding?

The goal of this program is to purchase food from socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and to serve underserved communities. You may reflect your pricing strategy in your proposal, as long as it is explained to evaluators.

- Section H., Application Submission Instructions, requests information regarding “expected benefit level” of recipients of food but this is not defined. Can you provide guidance on the metrics grantees are expected to measure (e.g. number of individuals or households receiving food – duplicated or unduplicated)? How should we express expected benefit levels if our partners and/or recipient organizations use different measures?

Expected benefit level is the value, and frequency, of the food that is being provided to members of underserved communities. For example, if LFPA funds are being used to deliver meals to underserved communities, the expected benefit level describes the frequency and the quantity of food being delivered to each individual served (i.e. 1 meal provided per individual, per month, for 6 months).
MDAR will be providing templates to awarded organizations to report on program metrics, including the number of socially disadvantaged farmers and producers engaged with throughout the project period. Proposals that demonstrate clear engagement and knowledge of the community the project serves will receive priority scoring.

- One of the farms that has expressed interest in participating as a producer in our project may also participate as a consultant on another project providing training services. May we still purchase farm products from them as part of our grant?

Costs associated with food production activities, or costs associated with general purpose development or training are unallowable. In addition to food purchases, State and Tribal governments may propose direct costs for outreach, program development, program administration, food storage, and distribution expenses.

A producer that did not apply and/or does not receive an award for LFPA may provide food, or be funded as a consultant, to multiple awarded organizations.

- Our practice is to use sub-regional food storage for aggregating produce and product for distribution locally. The RFR states that “Food storage and packaging costs are eligible expenses if they are part of distribution expenses.” May we include transportation, rental and/or utility costs associated with this approach? For example, may we include the cost of utilities to run a walk-in cooler/freezer that is used for the purpose of storing farm products for our program? If so, where should we put those costs in the budget – under Other?

Utilities are indirect costs. Indirect costs may not comprise more than 10% of the project budget.

Rental costs of vehicles and general purpose equipment are allowable for the duration of the project period.

- As of July 1, 2022, the IRS raised the standard mileage rate from $0.585 to $0.625 per mile. Has Massachusetts updated its rate from $0.585? Which rate should be used in developing our budget?

Please use the federal mileage rate, as provided on IRS website, in your budget development.

- Please clarify the local requirements for prepared meals being produced by a partner. For example, do fully prepared meals need to have all ingredients sourced from within 400 miles or do they need to be prepared with 51% or more ingredients sourced from within 400 miles (for example, could a chicken and rice dish be prepared with locally sourced chicken, vegetables, herbs but with rice from out of state.) Are the rules any different for a partner or a formal subcontractor?
Food can be purchased and used in meals that are distributed through the LFPA program, however all meal components must meet the definitions for domestic and local, as defined in the RFA. Minor ingredients (spices, oils, sweeteners, etc.) used in meal preparation must meet the definition of “Domestic Food” outlined in the RFA. Meal preparation must also be performed locally.

As a partner producer, can we purchase raw ingredients from a local SDO farm that also might be a grant recipient for a different project?

A producer that did not apply and/or does not receive an award for LFPA may provide food, or be funded as a consultant, to multiple awarded organizations If a producer is a listed contractor within a budget on an LFPA proposal, they cannot also be an awarded entity receiving LFPA funds.

Is there a goal for the number of food insecure individuals/families served?

The goal of the LFPA is to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency through the purchase of domestic food from local and regional producers, by targeting purchases from Socially Disadvantaged farmers/producers and distribution to underserved communities. It is the applicant's responsibility to describe their plan/strategy to serve underserved communities.

Do prepared meals or processed foods need to follow any specific nutritional guidelines?

One of the main goals of LFPA is to establish and broaden partnerships with farmers/producers and the food distribution community, and local food networks, including non-profits to ensure distribution of fresh and nutritious foods in rural, remote, or underserved communities. USDA has provided no specific nutritional guidelines for this particular program.

If our organization is a partner/subcontractor for prepared meals, can we purchase the ingredients directly from our local sources, or does the primary applicant need to make the purchases? Do the prepared meals/processed foods (purchased by an applicant, prepared by a partner or subcontractor) need to follow the budget guidelines of 51% or more spent on food ingredients?

The budget and budget narrative must outline the roles and costs associated with subcontractor services. At least 51% of all project funds must be spent directly on food purchases.

My proposal may also focus on purchases of seafood and I’m wondering about what counts as "local." The company I want to partner with, sources fish from all over the Atlantic, not just from within 400 miles. To be "local," must the fish actually have been harvested within 400 miles, or is the location of the producer's base of operations what matters?

Locally and Regionally Produced Food means food, including seafood, that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is
marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same State, territory, or tribal land.