
MDAR LFPA Plus FAQs – Updated 7/24/2023

- Is there a list of Socially Disadvantaged (SD) farmers available for applicants for outreach purposes?
 - To protect the privacy of farmers who responded to MDAR’s [Self-Identify as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Producer](#) survey, we do not provide the information or list/database of the farmers/producers to outside organizations.
 - We do reach out to our list of SD farmers/producers with periodic communications including the list and contact information for our awardees, what the awardees are seeking product-wise, and MDAR occasionally will hold Grantee/farmer gatherings that serve as a way for farmers/producers to get in contact with grant awardees and share contact information.
 - Applicants are expected to describe their outreach methods for working with SD farmers and understand there is an expectation to work with SD farmers in their region. MDAR serves to only assist with this task, not be the only source of connections to be made.
- Do leases for equipment, vehicles, storage space, etc. need to run for the exact grant period? Or just span the grant period?
 - Leases/rentals of equipment, vehicles, storage space, etc. may only occur within the timeline of the grant period.
 - MDAR cannot reimburse for costs relating to leases/rentals that already are in place.
- What does the timeline for the grant disbursements look like? Specifically, for the second disbursement (40%), will it be disbursed by a certain time?
 - MDAR will offer two advance payment disbursement requests in the amount of 40% of the award, with a final 20% being reimbursed (not paid in advance). To receive the second 40% disbursement and the final 20% reimbursement, all proper expense documentation must be reported and provided to MDAR.
 - MDAR will determine a timeline schedule for the disbursement requests and reimbursement payment and include that timeline in a contract. Awardees may request for those disbursements or reimbursement before the timeline stated in the contract. We also strive to be flexible with this grant funding and can determine a timeline that is most beneficial for the awardee for disbursements/reimbursement.
- Would organizations in the emergency food network who are limited to certain regions/townships be placing conditions on participation?
 - No, that would not be a limitation to participation.
- What is defined as a “common carrier?” Can it be an existing distributor that does this work, and is also the grantee?
 - A grantee can be the existing distributor that completes transportation work.
 - We are seeking clarification on the term “common carrier” from USDA and will update this document as soon as we receive clarification.

- What we do know:
 - Storage and distribution expenses directly associated with food procurement under this program are allowable and can be subsumed in the overall procurement with LFPA Plus funding. Examples of allowable storage and distribution costs under LFPA Plus if directly associated with the food procurement under this program include lease or rental of delivery trucks or other equipment (forklifts, refrigerators, freezers, etc); payments/fees for common carriers for transporting or storing commodities; lease or rental of warehouse space; or supplies used in the storage and handling of commodity products (boxes, pallets, etc).
 - Costs that are not inherent parts of the procurement cannot be covered with LFPA Plus funding. Examples of costs that cannot be covered include separate coverage of utility costs for leased or owned space; employees to pack food or prepare boxes for delivery; or administrative costs for managing storage and distribution.
- Can LFPA Plus funds be used towards transportation or storage costs for infrastructure that is already owned (and therefore does not need a lease/rent agreement)?
 - This question is similar to the one above, we believe it depends on the specific costs that desire to be covered and on the definition of “common carrier.” We will update this answer once we receive clarification from USDA.
- For Personnel Qualifications - is the 1-2 page limit referring to a total page limit? Or 1–2-page resumes for each personnel lead for the project?
 - You may provide 1-2 pages for each project lead.
 - The Personnel Qualifications section does not count toward the page limit.
- Can the distribution of the LFPA product be carried out through an existing distribution program that does not (outside of LFPA purchasing) meet the regional/local benchmarks? To be more specific, a pantry that distributes processed, non-regional food, but could use LFPA funding to connect our network to MA Grown produce and proteins.
 - LFPA Plus funds can only be used to purchase local foods, as defined by USDA. Awardees may use other organizations to distribute products (including organizations that distribute non-local products as defined by USDA), but food products purchased must be local.
- Can an organization that currently has a LFPA grant award apply for LFPA Plus funding?
 - Yes, organizations that currently have an award with MDAR for the first LFPA funding may apply for LFPA Plus funding.
 - Organizations that apply for LFPA Plus funding, are awarded LFPA Plus funding, and currently have a LFPA award, must be able to keep expenses for LFPA and LPA Plus separate for reporting purposes, and to ensure allowable/unallowable costs are accurate.
- If an organization applies for and receives LFPA Plus funding, can other recipients use LFPA+ funding to use that organizations contract trucking services?
 - Awardees must ensure that they are only receiving LFPA Plus funds from their contracted award funding source. In other words, a recipient cannot receive funds from

MDAR and other awarded recipients – because then that organization would be receiving LFPA Plus funds from multiple sources.

- What would be needed in terms of paperwork to have a lease included in the grant?
 - Applicants should provide an outline of the expected costs of a lease agreement and provide as much detail as appropriate regarding the lease or rental agreement. Applicants can include supporting documents if preferred, but it is not required.
- The RFR says the sections of the narrative need to be in paragraph form. Can the timeline and workplan be in chart form for readability?
 - Yes, timeline and workplan may be in chart form.
- The RFR says that “The application must include the following sections, which must be combined in the order listed below.” [Referring to “Project Details”] Do we need to answer sub-question by sub-question in each section, or can we organize the section as we see fit as long as we follow the order of the major headings?
 - Applicants may organize the sections as they please – the RFR notes that applying organizations may not be able to meet all considerations or may have additional considerations they would like to include.
- From evaluation criteria: “The extent to which the budget meets needs based on regional dispersion and equitable dollar sharing.” Is another way of putting this that MDAR wants to disperse the money in the priority geographies and wants to share the available money “equitably” across the state? This seems to be an evaluation criterion that applies to the overall applicant pool, rather than any one applicant. Is that an accurate interpretation?
 - Yes, that is correct – we want to ensure funds are shared equitably across regions within the state.
- As long as we stay within the 20-page maximum, may we use line spacing that is greater than single space? We think this would be more readable for reviewers. We understand that you may want to have uniform presentation across all applications.
 - Applicants may use greater than single space if preferred, as long as the narrative still fits within the 20-page limit.

LFPA Plus July 11 Webinar questions:

- **Could you describe the allowable costs around transportation and storage of produce?**

With LFPA+ funds, costs related directly to the transportation or storage of produce are allowed. These include packaging costs, lease or rental of delivery trucks, payments/fees for common carriers transporting or storing goods, supplies used in the storage and handling of products, and fuel. Unallowable costs in this regard include personnel, electric/utilities, capital purchases, or leases/rentals that extend beyond the life of the grant.
- **Can you clarify what “No food instruments – such as coupons or vouchers” means?**

This highlights the stipulation that there can be no conditions for participation. Conditions for participation include, but are not limited to, signing up to receive a voucher, purchasing (i.e. buy-one-get-one), or disclosing personal information.
- **Are fresh herbs an allowable purchase?**

Yes, as long as they meet the purchase requirements of produce.

- **How can recipients of the grant get in touch with socially disadvantaged farmers?**
Part of the application should include some steps you as an organization are going to take to conduct outreach and connect with farmers. MDAR will assist in this outreach through email blasts, hosting webinars, and phone banking. For privacy reasons, MDAR will not share the list of self-identified farmers.
- **What is MDAR looking for in the letters of support?**
These letters are to show the project will be a collaborative effort with a regional impact. Letters do not need specific statistics, though more information is always welcome. If there are continuing partnerships from previous grants, you may reuse the same letters of support. Letters from farmers are to show you have a network of producers you are able to buy from and that you are dedicated to working with socially disadvantaged farmers.
- **Is it OK to recycle language in an application from a previously awarded grant?**
Yes certain language is ok to be recycled but MDAR is most interested in seeing how the organization will respond to the changes in the LFPA Plus RFR.
- **Can you clarify the limitations on consultant and contractual costs?**
While there are no hard limits to budget categories, there is a hard minimum that at least 51% of funds must be for food purchases. Consultant and contractual costs may be included in food purchases, but administrative costs such as personnel are not allowed.
- **Is it OK to work with non-socially disadvantaged farmers or farmers out of state?**
Yes you may buy from any farmer that meets the criteria for local, but priority will be given to applicants that focus on buying from socially disadvantaged farmers and farmers within Massachusetts. If purchases are made from out of state, there must be provisions to show a large portion of the funds are going to MA farmers.

If you have any questions regarding the LFPA Plus program or application, please contact LFPAGrant@mass.gov
