



Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination

SHIP LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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06/09/2025

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RFP Part 1: Overview

1.1 General Information

- **Announcement Title:** Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination
- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Program Website:**
- The Grant Request for Proposal can be found here: [Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination Request for Proposals](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html>)
- The Minnesota Department of Health has received federal funding through the [Minnesota Climate-Smart Food Systems Initiative](#) (MCSFS) to fund Regional Food Coordination. The MCSFS Initiative (award # 00E03864) was awarded to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants: Implementation Grants](#).
- **Application Deadline:** ~~Friday, July 11, 2025, at 5 p.m. central time~~
Extended Deadline: Friday, July 18, 2025, at 5 p.m. central time

Important dates

- Monday, June 9, 2025: RFP Released
- Tuesday, June 24, 2025: Informational Webinar
- Friday, June 27, 2025: Questions due to MDH
- ~~Friday, July 11, 2025: Proposals due~~
- Friday, July 18, 2025: Proposals due
- Late August or Early September 2025: Applicants notified of award
- September 2025: Grants awarded
- September 2028: Grants completed

1.2 Program Description

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives (OSHII), through its subaward from the MPCA MCSFS Initiative, is seeking to grant funds to six local public health (LPH) Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) agencies to assist in Regional Food Coordination. There will be one grantee per region. These regions will be determined based on location of qualified awarded applicants; however, our goal is to have a statewide reach with Regional Food Coordination that align approximately with these six regions: Northwest, Northeast, Central, Metro (seven counties), Southwest, and Southeast regions.

The goals and priorities of the overall MCSFS Grant is to fill critical investment gaps and accelerate momentum towards a more equitable, climate-smart food system through inter-agency initiatives to, 1) Implement ambitious measures that will achieve significant cumulative greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and beyond; 2) Achieve substantial community benefits (such as reduction of criteria and hazardous air pollutants), particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC); 3) Complement other funding sources to maximize these

GHG reductions and community benefits; 4) Pursue innovative policies and programs that are replicable and can be “scaled up” across multiple jurisdictions.

Within the larger MCSFS Initiative lead by the MPCA, MDH is leading the food sovereignty and vibrant local food economies initiative, which aims to improve food security, strengthen food sovereignty, and unlock LIDAC economic prosperity by investing in local community-driven climate pollution reduction strategies informed by coordination and collaboration with food systems partners and engagement with LIDACs through Regional Food Networks (RFNs) statewide. The primary goals and priorities of the Regional Food Coordination will be to convene RFNs to build capacity, provide technical assistance, and collaborate with local food systems partners and community members to identify the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to achieve the goals of the MCSFS grant and to help community partners apply for local food systems implementation grants administered by the MPCA to achieve these goals. These efforts will further be aided by two Technical Assistance resources: 1) Minnesota’s Priority Climate Action Plan and 2) a Climate-Smart Food Systems Assessment, which will serve as a technical resource and planning tool for the Regional Food Coordination and RFNs.

1.3 Funding and Project Dates

Funding

This funding will support providing grants to up to six local public health SHIP agencies, under which the LPH agency will dedicate a percentage of their FTE for Regional Food Coordination efforts for three years. Each awarded local public health SHIP agency will receive a total of \$50,985 per year (\$152,955 for three years) for Regional Food Coordination and compensation for community member participation in RFNs.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date, whichever is later.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	\$917,730
Estimated Number of Awards	6
Estimated Award Maximum	\$152,955
Estimated Award Minimum	NA

Match Requirement

There are no match requirements.

Project Dates

This is a three-year grant with anticipated start dates in September 2025 and ending in September 2028, contingent on federal funds availability.

1.4 Eligible Applicants

Only SHIP-funded local public health agencies are eligible to apply to provide Regional Food Coordination. This work must take a collaborative approach with food systems partners and community members to identify the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to achieve the goals of the MCSFS grant, which includes improving food security, strengthening food sovereignty, and unlocking LIDAC economic prosperity. The LPH agencies must partner with those identified in the Collaboration section to convene RFNs. Those providing Regional Food Coordination must also assist community partners in applying for local food systems implementation grants if assistance is needed.

Mandatory Requirements

- Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this RFP.
- Responses must include all required forms and requested documents.
- Responders must be a SHIP-funded local public health agency.

Preferred Skills and Qualifications

MDH prefers a responder who has experience and demonstrated success in participating in or leading a Food Access Network or comparable network, conducting and/or utilizing Community Food Assessments or other relevant assessments for planning purposes, experience engaging with low-income disadvantaged communities, experience addressing health equity, food security, and food sovereignty, and experience collaborating at a multi-county or regional level.

Grant funds are not transferrable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Collaboration

Multi-organizational collaboration is required. Regional Food Coordination must be a collaborative effort occurring at a multi-county, regional level. This will include collaboration with LPH SHIP Coordinators within each region, building off SHIP Coordinators' expertise and relationships with food system partners. Regional Food Coordination will also build off existing community engagement and food systems work, with an emphasis on engaging members of LIDACs. A best practice is to compensate community members for their time.

MDH will facilitate collaboration between those providing Regional Food Coordination, and the University of Minnesota Extension's Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (RSDP), which includes each region's sustainable ag and food systems workgroups. MDH will also facilitate collaboration with the Region Five Development Commission North Central United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Food Business Center (RFBC). These strategic partners will aid in the formation and facilitation of the RFN. These partners bring academic and federal resources to bear on a regional approach. They will help provide education and technical assistance on opportunities for GHG emissions reductions to the RFNs, provide education, outreach, and assist in community engagement, and communicate funding

opportunities to their networks. RSDP operates in five regions, each with its own citizen-led board, but does not cover the Twin Cities metropolitan area. For the Twin Cities metro area, MDH is in the beginning stages of developing a relationship with the Metro Food Justice Network (MFJN), a collaboration of individuals and organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area partnering to advance racial equity by transforming our food system.

In addition to collaborating with these organizations and institutions, those providing Regional Food Coordination will be expected to collaborate with a broad network of food systems partners through the RFNs. These collaborative partners include, but are not limited to community-based organizations, hunger relief organizations, farmers market managers, school foodservice departments, farm to school coordinators, farmers, ranchers, aggregators, distributors, buyers, Health Equity Networks, and community members, with an emphasis on low-income and disadvantaged communities.

1.5 Questions and Answers

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email or phone to health.healthyeating@state.mn.us or 651-201-5680.

Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), on Friday, June 27, 2025.

Questions and answers are expected to be posted by July 2, 2025, and can be viewed at:

[Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination Request for Proposals](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html>)

To ensure the proper and fair evaluation of all applications, other communications regarding this RFP including verbal, telephone, written or internet initiated by or on behalf of any applicant to any employee of the Department, other than questions submitted to as outlined above, are prohibited. **Any violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

RFP Information Meeting

An informational webinar will be held on Monday, June 24, 2025, from 11 – noon. The webinar will be hosted on Microsoft Teams. All prospective applicants are urged to attend. Questions from the meeting will be posted for public access here: [Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination Request for Proposals](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html>)

RFP Part 2: Program Details

2.1 Priorities

Health Equity Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

The grant funding for Regional Food Coordination supports the overall goals and grant funding purpose of the larger Minnesota Climate-Smart Food Systems (MCSFS) grant, which is a transformative initiative to decarbonize the state's food system, advance economic opportunity, and support the health and wellbeing of all Minnesotans and future generations. Five state agencies will unite with Tribal Nations and communities statewide to develop a clean circular economy from food production to food waste, achieving significant GHG emissions reductions and benefiting low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs). By empowering growers, makers, processors, partners, and local communities as change agents, Minnesota will fortify its role as an influential national leader in the food and agricultural sectors, showcasing the power of innovation and catalyzing a transition toward a sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient food system.

The state's food system represents an unparalleled opportunity to reduce climate pollution and advance environmental justice, as evidenced by extensive engagement and GHG analysis. Food production in Minnesota is responsible for most nitrous oxide and methane emissions; nitrous oxide emissions from crop agriculture are on the rise, and food waste is responsible for an estimated 58% of methane emitted by landfills. Meanwhile LIDACs throughout the state struggle with food deserts and hunger, and climate change increasingly threatens farming, local economies, food security, and Tribal food sovereignty. The strategies in this proposal effectively link climate pollution reduction to climate justice to promote fair distribution of the costs and benefits of action and ensure meaningful participation in planning. MCSFS will target health, environmental, cultural, and economic benefits to LIDACs. Measures will improve air and water quality, improve food security, increase resiliency to flooding and drought, reduce exposure to environmental harms, strengthen Tribal food sovereignty, mitigate wildfire risk, improve economic opportunity, and protect culturally important fisheries, wildlife, and plant species. MCSFS invests in Tribal- and community-driven grants to ensure projects advance LIDAC priorities and maximize benefits. MCSFS will strengthen and expand existing relationships with LIDACs while exchanging information on health equity and environmental justice. The proposal dedicates resources to meaningful LIDAC participation, LIDAC grantmaking, and tracking the distribution of funding and benefits in LIDACs.

Reducing GHG emissions at the local and regional food systems level requires planning, coordination at multiple levels, technical assistance, community engagement, education, and access to funding. The goals and grant funding purpose for the Regional Food Coordination

funds sub-awarded to MDH is to support six LPH SHIP agencies for Regional Food Coordination to convene and facilitate six RFNs that cover the entire state to build capacity and support community partners in their applications for local food systems implementation grants administered by the MPCA that improve food security, expand local food economies, strengthen food sovereignty, and reduce climate pollution. These RFNs build off existing community engagement and food systems work, with an emphasis on engaging members of LIDACs who will be compensated for their time. This framework leverages SHIP staff's expertise and relationships with food systems partners while embedding a focus on reducing GHGs within local food systems work and building knowledge to inform future work.

This grant will serve:

- All residents of Minnesota will be served with an emphasis on serving low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Grant outcomes will include:

- LPH SHIP agencies will provide Regional Food Coordination for three years.
- LPH SHIP agencies will convene RFNs on a regular basis for three years.
- LPH SHIP agencies will seek involvement from community members in the RFNs, with an emphasis on low-income, disadvantaged communities.
- The grant will measure performance in serving diverse populations through evaluation efforts described in the Evaluation Requirements section.

2.2 Eligible Projects

SHIP-funded LPH agencies are eligible to apply. The LPH agencies must partner with community members, community leader(s) and/or community organization(s) to provide regional food coordination through RFNs to identify the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to achieve the goals of the MCSFS grant, improve food security, strengthen food sovereignty, and unlock LIDAC economic prosperity. When needed, those providing Regional Food Coordination will also assist community partners in applying for local food systems implementation grants administered by the MPCA to achieve these goals.

Multi-year Funding Commitment

The Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination grant will support providing funding to up to six local public health SHIP agencies, under which the LPH agency will dedicate a percentage of their FTE for Regional Food Coordination efforts for three years. Each local public health SHIP agency will receive a total of \$50,985 per year (\$152,955 for three years) for Regional Food Coordination and compensation for community member participation in RFNs, with an emphasis on seeking input from low-income and disadvantaged community (LIDAC) members.

Building on Existing Food Access Network or Related Strategies

The Regional Food Coordination work requires that LPH agencies build on existing Food Access Networks, Community Food Assessments and Planning, and other relevant community food

systems projects supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grant. The LPH agency can build on lessons learned, relationships, results and/or other assets identified or strengthened by this work.

Acting on Social Determinants of Health through partnerships

This project requires LPH agencies to build a willingness to act on multiple determinants of health and the root causes of health inequities, including food insecurity, food sovereignty, oppression, and power imbalances.

Throughout the Regional Food Coordination, LPH agencies will:

- Acknowledge, articulate, and amplify the values that community members, local public health departments, and local food systems partners hold in common.
- Invest the time and resources to support community members to identify the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to address food security and food sovereignty, while also achieving the overall goals of the MCSFS grant.
- Assist community partners with applying for local food systems implementation grants, administered by the MPCA, to achieve these goals.

Participate in the Regional Food Coordination Learning Cohort.

All LPH SHIP agencies providing Regional Food Coordination will participate in a learning cohort. The advantages of a learning cohort are that it enhances problem-solving skills, inspires critical thinking, promotes cross-grantee learning and creates a supportive environment for peer-to-peer learning.

Below is a general overview of the anticipated structure:

- Year 1: MDH's Food Systems Coordinator will facilitate bi-monthly calls with all staff providing Regional Food Coordination in the first year of the grant. These calls will be hosted using the Microsoft Teams platform and will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes depending on the need. Those providing Regional Food Coordination will also receive ongoing coaching and support from OSHII staff.
- Years 2 and 3: MDH's Food Systems Coordinator will facilitate quarterly calls with all staff providing Regional Food Coordination in years 2 and 3 of the grant. These calls will be hosted using the Microsoft Teams platform and will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes depending on the need. It is expected that in years 2-3 that the group meetings will be more focused on peer-to-peer sharing. Staff providing Regional Food Coordination will continue to receive ongoing coaching and support from OSHII staff.

Participate in Regular Check-Ins with MDH Staff

All LPH SHIP agency staff providing Regional Food Coordination will participate in monthly check-ins with MDH's Food Systems Coordinator who will provide technical assistance and be responsive to the needs of the coordinators. Having regular check-ins will help determine additional training and bring in additional technical assistance providers as needed. Staff providing Regional Food Coordination and MDH OSHII staff will meet virtually, with one in-person site visit over the course of the grant.

Key Activities. It is anticipated that during the first six months to year, LPH Regional Food Coordination will:

- Convene the RFNs monthly, share resources, technical assistance, and participate in evaluation efforts to meet the overall goals and objectives of the grant.
- Collaborate with the University of Minnesota Extension's Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (RSDP) and the Region Five Development Commission, Metro Food Justice Network (MFJN) (metro area only), and other food systems partners to convene the RFNs and provide TA and resources at RFN meetings.
- Collaborate on the Climate-Smart Food Systems Assessment, which will be conducted by a contractor selected through an RFP process. This assessment will be a collaborative process in which the contractor will work alongside the RFNs to create a GHG inventory of local and regional food systems and identify opportunities to reduce GHG emissions within those food systems, culminating in a written report. This assessment process will incorporate community education and engagement and serve as a resource and planning tool for Regional Food Coordination and RFNs. This assessment is anticipated to occur during the first year.
- Utilize two Technical Assistance resources: 1) Minnesota's Priority Climate Action Plan, and 2) a Climate-Smart Food Systems Assessment, which will serve as a technical resource and planning tool for Regional Food Coordination and RFNs.
- Work with community members, with an emphasis on low-income disadvantaged communities, to identify the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to address food security and food sovereignty, while also achieving the goals of the MCSFS grant.

During the mid-latter part of the project, LPH agencies providing Regional Food Coordination, RFNs, and OSHII staff will continue to support community members and community partners in identifying the most impactful opportunities in local and regional food systems to apply for local food systems implementation grants that will be administered by the MPCA.

Evaluation Requirements

LPH SHIP agencies providing Regional Food Coordination must participate in the evaluation of the activities of the Regional Food Coordination and RFNs. MDH will work with LPH SHIP participants to assure the approach meets the needs of the LPH agency, community and MDH. The evaluation plan will measure the outcomes and effectiveness of leveraging Regional Food Coordination to convene and support RFNs to engage with Low-Income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs). The evaluation will focus on assessing the convening, capacity-building, and community engagement activities carried out by the Regional Food Coordination, the outcomes of the RFNs, and the implementation of local and regional strategies based on the Climate-Smart Food Systems Assessment.

Communication Requirements

LPH SHIP agencies and community partners must work closely with MDH SHIP communications staff to create and carry out a communications plan.

Budget

Over the course of the grant, it is best practice that LPH SHIP agencies compensate community members for participation in the RFNs, with an emphasis on seeking input LIDAC members to help identify the most impactful local food systems projects to apply for implementation funding. Each LPH agency may use a portion of the overall grant to compensate community members but can compensate from other eligible funding sources if allowable as well. LPHs are encouraged to increase the amount of funding distributed to their community partners as the grant project progresses if funding allows, which can include SHIP funds.

Use of Funds

SHIP LPHs can spend grant funds on:

- Staffing for Regional Food Coordination.
- Compensation for community member participation in RFNs.
- Expenses related to convening the RFNs.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Solicitating donations
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds

2.3 Grant Management Responsibilities

Grant Agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant agreement. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. The grantee is expected to read the grant agreement, sign, and comply with all conditions of the grant agreement. Grantee should provide a copy of the grant agreement to all grantee staff working on the grant.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place.

A sample grant agreement, ***Grant Agreement Template CHB Federal (Oct 2024)***, can be found on the RFP webpage: [Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination Request for Proposals](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html>)

Applicants should be aware of the terms and conditions of the CHB grant agreement template in preparing their applications. Much of the language reflected in the CHB grant agreement template is required by statute. If an applicant takes exception to any of the terms, conditions or language in the sample grant agreement, the applicant must indicate those exceptions, in

writing, in their application in response to this RFP. Certain exceptions may result in an application being disqualified from further review and evaluation. Only those exceptions indicated in an application will be available for discussion or negotiation.

The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Accountability and Reporting Requirements

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

For this funding, MDH staff will be responsible for reporting to the MPCA. LPH SHIP agencies must submit necessary reporting information to MDH that align with the due dates as determined by the MPCA. The reporting schedule includes:

- Semi-annual reports
- One-year reports
- Final report

Grant Monitoring

Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 and Policy on Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants over \$50,000
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants over \$250,000

The monitoring schedule for this funding opportunity will be:

- One monitoring site-visit will be required during the grant period.
- The specific date and location will be determined between MDH and the LPH SHIP grantee.

Technical Assistance

LPH SHIP agencies providing Regional Food Coordination will receive technical assistance from MDH, MPCA, and other participating state agencies, which will provide information, resources, and education which can be shared with the RFNs. MDH's Food Systems Coordinator and other relevant staff will provide the following Technical Assistance:

- Monthly check-ins with each LPH SHIP agency providing Regional Food Coordination to provide technical assistance and support the efforts of the RFNs.
- Quarterly collaborative learning calls with all six LPH SHIP agencies providing Regional Food Coordination to facilitate statewide collaboration and learning.
- Planning and TA support for conducting evaluation of the RFNs.
- Additional TA on an as-needed basis.

In addition to TA provided by MDH and other participating state agencies, MDH will contract out to conduct a Climate-Smart Food Systems Assessment, which will serve as a technical

resource and planning tool for the Regional Food Coordination and RFNs. This collaborative assessment process will also serve as a way to engage with community and provide education about opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in local and regional food systems. Minnesota's Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) is an additional technical assistance resource.

Grant Payments

Per [State Policy on Grant Payments](#), reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless MDH has given the grantee a written extension.

The invoicing and payment schedule will be:

- MDH will promptly pay Grantee after Grantee presents an itemized invoice for the activities performed and MDH's Authorized Representative accepts the invoiced activities. Invoices must be submitted at least quarterly or according to a schedule agreed upon by the Parties. The final invoice is due 30 calendar days after the expiration date of the grant agreement. A standard invoice template will be provided to grantee.

2.4 Grant Provisions

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Requirements for all Grantees

The grantee agrees to comply with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination.

Minnesota's nondiscrimination law is the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) ([Minn. Stat. § 363A](#); See e.g. [Minn. Stat. § 363A.02 \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A.02\)](#)). The MHRA is enforced by the [Minnesota Department of Human Rights \(https://mn.gov/mdhr/\)](#). Some, but not all, MHRA requirements are reflected below. All grantees are responsible for knowing and complying with nondiscrimination and other applicable laws.

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified.

The grantee agrees not to discriminate in public accommodations because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

The grantee agrees not to discriminate in public services because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance.

The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minn. Rules, part [5000.3550](#).

Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#), subd. 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Conflicts of Interest

MDH will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and the Office of Grants Management's Policy 08-01, "Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making."

Applicants must complete the Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure form (Attachment D) and submit it as part of the completed application. Failure to complete and submit this form will result in disqualification from the review process.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in performing the grant work is or might be otherwise impaired.
- A grantee or applicant has an unfair competitive advantage.

Individual conflicts of interest occur when:

- An applicant, or any of its employees, uses their position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to MDH's time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, prestige, or influence
- An applicant, or any of its employees, receives or accepts money, or anything else of value, from another state grantee or grant applicant with respect to the specific project covered by this RFP/project.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, has equity or a financial interest in, or partial or whole ownership of, a competing grant applicant organization.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, is an employee of MDH or is a relative of an employee of MDH.

In cases where a conflict of interest is perceived, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Non-Transferability

Grant funds are not transferrable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Public Data and Trade Secret Materials

All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the State. In accordance with [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), all applications and their contents are private or nonpublic until the applications are opened.

Once the applications are opened, the name and address of each applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process, which is defined by statute as when MDH has completed negotiating the grant agreement with the selected applicant.

After MDH has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), subd. 1(b). A statement by an applicant that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application or its contents. ([Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), subd. 3(a)).

If an applicant submits any information in an application that it believes to be trade secret information, as defined by [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), the applicant must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its application at the time it is submitted,
- Include a statement attached to its application justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and
- Defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless MDH and the State of Minnesota, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense.
- This indemnification survives MDH's award of a grant agreement. In submitting an application in response to this RFP, the applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of MDH. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

MDH reserves the right to reject a claim that any particular information in an application is trade secret information if it determines the applicant has not met the burden of establishing that the information constitutes a trade secret. MDH will not consider the budgets submitted by applicants to be proprietary or trade secret materials. Use of generic trade secret language encompassing substantial portions of the application or simple assertions of trade secret

without substantial explanation of the basis for that designation will be insufficient to warrant a trade secret designation.

If a grant is awarded to an applicant, MDH may use or disclose the trade secret data to the extent provided by law. Any decision by the State to disclose information determined to be trade secret information will be made consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act ([Ch. 13 MN Statutes](#)) and other relevant laws and regulations.

If certain information is found to constitute trade secret information, the remainder of the application will become public; in the event a data request is received for application information, only the trade secret data will be removed and remain nonpublic.

2.5 Review and Selection Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing subject matter experts at MDH. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

MDH will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. **The award decisions of MDH are final and not subject to appeal.** Additionally:

- MDH reserves the right to withhold the distribution of funds in cases where proposals submitted do not meet the necessary criteria.
- The RFP does not obligate MDH to award a grant agreement or complete the project, and MDH reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest.
- MDH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or request additional information to further clarify or validate information submitted in the application, provided the application, as submitted, substantially complies with the requirements of this RFP. There is, however, no guarantee MDH will look for information or clarification outside of the submitted written application. Therefore, it is important that all applicants ensure that all sections of their application are complete to avoid the possibility of failing an evaluation phase or having their score reduced for lack of information.

Selection Criteria and Weight

The review committee will be reviewing each applicant on an overall scale of 100 points. A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the selection criteria.

The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on organizational capacity, preferred skills and qualifications, work plan / project narrative, budget and budget justification. The scoring rubric can be seen in Attachment C – Grant Application Score Sheet Guide.

Grantee Past Performance and Due Diligence Review Process

- It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them.

Notification

MDH anticipates notifying all applicants (successful and non-successful) via the email provided on their application of funding decisions by late August/early September.

RFP Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions

All applications **must** be received by email to MDH no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time, on ~~Friday, July 11, 2025.~~ Friday, July 18, 2025.

Late applications will not be accepted. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to allow sufficient time to address all potential delays caused by any reason whatsoever. MDH will not be responsible for delays caused by mail, delivery, computer, or technology problems.

Acknowledgement of application receipt. MDH will "reply all" to the email address that submitted the application to acknowledge receipt of your application within one business day of the receipt of an application. If you do not receive an acknowledgment email within that time frame from when you submitted the application, it means MDH did not receive your application/documents. Please email health.healthyeating@state.mn.us after that time frame for further instructions.

3.1 Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted by email to: health.healthyeating@state.mn.us.

3.2 Application Instructions

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete. Please complete all sections of the Application (Attachment A):

1. Application (Attachment A)
 - a. Organizational Capacity (30 Points)
 - b. Workplan (50 Points)
 - c. Budget spreadsheet (20 Points) - Do not include the costs for additional tasks beyond the scope requested on the budget spreadsheet (Excel format form provided – Attachment B)

For items 1a, 1b, and 1c see the Grant Application Score Sheet Guide (Attachment C) for further details on how these sections will be scored. Items 2 - 5 are required but will not count toward the scoring of the application. Item 4. Attachment E. Sample Grant Agreement Template CHB Federal is for your information only.

2. Attachment C: Grant Application Score Sheet Guide
3. Attachment D: Applicant Conflict of Interest Form
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf>)
4. Attachment E: Sample Grant Agreement Template CHB Federal (Oct 2024)
5. Letter(s) of Support from LPH Director and/or CHB Administrator

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated.

Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be

considered nor evaluated. **MDH reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.**

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the applicant.

RFP Part 4: Attachments

Supplemental materials can be found on the [Climate-Smart Food Systems: Regional Food Coordination Request for Proposals](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/rfp/index.html>)

4.1: Attachment A: Application Form (word doc)

4.2: Attachment B: Budget Form (Excel Document)

4.3: Attachment C: Grant Application Score Sheet (PDF)

4.4: Attachment D: Applicant Conflict of Interest Form (PDF)

4.6: Attachment E: Sample Grant Agreement Template CHB Federal (PDF)