

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**Office of Grants Management**  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

**FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program**

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**Program Summary:** The Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR), in partnership with the Office of Grants Management (OGM), is soliciting grant applications for the County’s FY 2025 School-Based Food Assistance Program from food assistance provider organizations that are currently providing school-based food assistance services at Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) sites. \$1,250,000 in total grant funding is available to support programs that increase food security for students and their families and are co-located at an MCPS school site. Funding may be awarded to new initiatives or expansion or continuation of programs at current or additional sites. All awarded programs through the FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program must:

- Demonstrate past experience with successful operation of school-based food assistance programs in partnership with MCPS;
- Describe a quickly actionable program model for services at new school(s); and
- Identify potential zip codes, capacity, resource needs, and format for expanded services.

Successful applicants will be asked to serve specific MCPS schools identified based on alignment of individual school’s needs with providers’ current programs, experience, and capacity. Awardees will be matched with one or multiple school(s) following the grant review period; the school match(es) will be indicated in grant agreements.

The minimum award that applicants may request is \$40,000 and maximum award is \$300,000. Final award amounts may be lower than \$40,000. The performance period for these grant awards is anticipated to be on/about August 15, 2024 to on/about June 30, 2025.

**Key Program Dates:**

- **Program Opens for Applications:** Wednesday, July 3, 2024
- **MS Teams Live Grant Program Information Session:** Tuesday, July 9, 2024 at 12:00 PM ([Click to join the Information Session OR for an event recording](#))
- **Submission Deadline:** **Friday, July 26, 2024 at 12:00 PM**

**Key Program Resources:**

- **Online Grants Application Platform:** <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/>
- **Program Page:** <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/prog/FY25OFSR-School-Based>

**Grant Program Details, Submissions, and Support:** Application details can be downloaded and an application may be submitted through the Online Grants Application Platform through the links above.

Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management to discuss alternative submission options. Applications that are incomplete, do not meet legal requirements, or are submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. For alternate ADA submission options please contact the Office of Grants Management using the contact information below:

**Ali Hoy**, Program Manager II  
OGM  
(240) 773-3384  
[grants@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:grants@montgomerycountymd.gov)

For any technical questions related to the application, please contact the OFSR using the contact information below:

**Catherine Nardi**, Program Manager  
OFSR  
(202) 816-9083  
[Catherine.Nardi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Catherine.Nardi@montgomerycountymd.gov)

***About the Office of Food Systems Resilience:*** Bill 20-22 established the OFSR as a non-principal office of the County’s Executive Branch. The OFSR works to make the County’s food system more resilient and equitable to improve the health of residents, the economy, and the environment. The Office serves as the liaison between County agencies and community partners with the goal of addressing the conditions which lead to food insecurity for residents. The OFSR will partner with the OGM to administer the FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program.

***About the Office of Grants Management:*** As charged in Bill 36-19, the OGM provides a central point of contact regarding the grants that the County receives or awards. The OGM also develops countywide policies and procedures regarding grants management and ensures these are consistent with racial equity and social justice goals and performs outreach regarding grants offered by the County and other grants functions. For additional information on other Montgomery County grant programs, please visit the OGM’s SM Apply online grants application platform linked on the first page of this NOFO.

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# SECTION I – GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

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## A. Background

The OFSR, in partnership with the OGM, is soliciting grant applications for the County’s FY 2025 School-Based Food Assistance Program from qualified food assistance providers and organizations that offer school-based food assistance programs and services in Montgomery County.

## B. Target Population

For students and families that rely on school meals and/or face barriers to food access related to transportation or otherwise, an in-school pantry or at-school food distribution can help to address nutrition insecurity and provide convenient access to necessary resources. The FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program will award funding to initiatives that will support food access at MCPS school sites throughout the County.

## C. Funding Priorities

The goal of this program is to support projects that address critical gaps in healthy food access for children and families and/or that offer innovative approaches to co-locate food assistance at an MCPS school site. OFSR is partnering with MCPS representatives to identify the school sites that will be prioritized for support based on the level of need within the school community and anticipated impact of new or expanded school-based food assistance programming.

Applicants will provide details within the Strategy Narrative regarding the scope of services they are capable of providing, and **successful applicants will be asked to serve specific MCPS schools that have been identified based on alignment of individual school’s needs with providers’ current programs, experience, and capacity.** Awardees will be matched with one or multiple school(s) following the grant review period; the school match(es) will be indicated in grant agreements.

The range of programming allowed under this grant is intentionally very flexible. Examples of project models that will be considered for funding include, **but are not limited to:**

- Choice pantry at the school site, offering school community members a choice model with access to a variety of culturally relevant, healthy shelf-stable and fresh food items including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and eggs;
- Pre-packed box/bag distribution for students that includes healthy, locally sourced produce options;
- Delivery of nutritious, medically and/or preference-tailored prepared meals to school populations with unique needs; and

- Grocery Gift Cards distributed to school families that allow for flexible food purchasing and delivery options for families that experience transportation or other barriers to food access.

Applicants are **not** limited by the list above and are highly encouraged to incorporate data-driven recommendations into their proposals that demonstrate an understanding of community needs and that will have the greatest impact for the target population.

#### **D. Eligible Organizations**

Lead applicants may only submit one application, and must meet all of the following conditions:

- The organization must be a **food assistance provider** based in Montgomery County that has provided food assistance services over the past calendar year in at least one MCPS site, as demonstrated through attached documentation (ex: email documentation, formal contract or Memorandum of Understanding, or signed letter of support from an administrator at the school site);
- The organization must be currently registered and in Good Standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT);
- The organization’s principal place of business must be located in Montgomery County; if a national or regional organization, it must have a location in Montgomery County through which it provides related services;
- All activities and expenditures under this grant program must be provided in Montgomery County and/or be exclusively for Montgomery County residents;
- The proposed project in the application must not exclude any potential beneficiaries and/or participants based on their race, ethnicity, gender, or any other protected class;
- Current Montgomery County contract or grant award winners must be current on all reporting obligations for other awards and those reports must reflect substantial progress towards the goals of their awards; and
- Proposed expenses must be for a new activity, expansion of existing activities, or a combination of both. Grant funding **cannot** be used for any purchase which has already been made; purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Montgomery County; prior obligations of and/or fines; debts and penalties imposed on the grantee; lobbying expenses; alcoholic beverages; or supplanting (replacing) other funds.

**Note: MCPS sites should not directly apply for this Grant program.** MCPS partners interested in this opportunity can contact Catherine Nardi, Program Manager ([catherine.nardi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:catherine.nardi@montgomerycountymd.gov)) to inquire about partnership opportunities.

#### **E. Award Amounts and Duration**

Award sizes will vary and will be determined by program format and the total number of schools and students/families that the applicant indicates they can support with the

requested funding amount. Applicants may request a minimum of \$40,000 and a maximum of \$300,000; final funding amounts may be lower than \$40,000. The grants are anticipated to have a 10-month performance period from on/about August 15, 2024, through on/about June 30, 2025. Programs must be run and evaluated during this period. This grant program does not commit Montgomery County to make an award.

#### **F. Application Review & Awards**

The OFSR will recruit an independent Review Committee that will develop and submit recommendations for funding based on their review of applications. The Review Committee will be composed of neutral, qualified individuals from Montgomery County Government and possibly the broader Montgomery County community, selected for their experiences in the grant program's subject area, grants administration, project management, and/or ability to analyze programs from a Racial Equity and Social Justice lens. The panel members will review and score applicant proposals based on the criteria outlined in this NOFO and submit recommendations for awards. Final decisions will be made based on the scores and such other factors and considerations as the County deems relevant at the time of award. These may include the expert opinion of grant administrators with prior experience with applicants, updates to priorities, or other factors.

#### **G. Award Notification**

Award notification letters are expected to be released via email roughly one month after the application deadline. For successful applicants, the Grant Agreement will contain the total amount awarded and funding restrictions; programmatic, administrative, and policy requirements; reporting requirements; and payment terms.

#### **H. Submission Guidelines**

Applications must be submitted through the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform through the links posted on the first page of this document. Once the applicant clicks on the link, they will be prompted to create a SM Apply account, select the FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Program, and then will be able to access the grant application. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact OGM (contact listed on the first page of this document) to discuss alternative submission options.

**Applications are due no later than Friday, July 26, 2024 at 12:00 PM.** All applications will be recorded upon receipt. Applications received after the deadline will be disqualified and will not be forwarded to the Review Panel for funding considerations. Any additions or deletions to an application, unless requested by the Office of Food Systems Resilience, will not be accepted after the deadline. Applications with incomplete, illegible, or corrupted digital materials will not be considered.

#### **J. Terms and Conditions**

- The County reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the County determines it is in the best interest of the County to do so. The County shall notify

the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The County reserves the right to suspend or terminate an outstanding Grant Program;

- The County reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the posting of a Grant Program;
- The County shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the Grant Program. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility;
- The County may conduct pre-award on-site visits or request additional information to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services proposed; and
- The County may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revisions for the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations. The County shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant; all applicable federal, State, and County regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by federal, state, or County law and/or the granting department; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee. If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the Grant Program and any applicable federal, State, or County law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

## **SECTION II – APPLICATION TASKS**

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Applicants are required to follow the content requirements and submission instructions listed within the online application platform and NOFO document. Document uploads should ideally be submitted as PDF documents with budgets uploaded as MS Excel file. **Please do not submit Mac formatted documents (i.e. Pages, Numbers, and Key Note). Applications will be considered incomplete if any part of any section is missing.**

### **A. Applicant Information (Reusable) Task**

Organizations must provide the following information and documents using data entry fields or uploads. The document uploads will be used to assess legal eligibility for the Grant Program and data fields will be used to populate any resulting grant agreement. Applicants should fill out this information as if they were drafting a contract using specific and exact information.

- Legal Name of Applying Organization as registered with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT)
- Organization’s Maryland SDAT Department ID Number - Verify SDAT status via this link: <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch>
- Organization’s Federal Tax Identification Number
- Organization’s Montgomery County Central Vendor Registration Service (CVRS) Vendor ID
- Organization’s mission statement
- Organization’s website (optional)
- Contact Information for **two** of the proposed project’s point-of-contacts (POC)
- Description of Organization's Grant and Financial Management Practices
- Description of Organization’s Data Collection and Management Practices
- Upload of IRS Tax Exempt Determination Letter for Nonprofit Organizations as applicable
- Upload of Most recent IRS 990 Form for Nonprofit Organizations or an explanation of why your organization is exempt from filing 990s
- Upload of Current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (optional)
- Upload of Current board list with names, affiliation, and contact information as applicable
- Upload of Public Copy of Most Recent Independent Audit Report, Financial Review, Agreed Upon Procedures. If not available, please submit a brief statement of explanation.
- Upload of Most Recent Annual or other Organization Reports (optional)

The County is required to check applicants’ status of Good Standing (or equivalent status) with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) at the time of



application review, finalization of grant agreements, and for payments during the life of a grant agreement. Although proof of Good Standing is not required as a component of the application, it is critical that applicants remain registered and in Good Standing with SDAT as applicants will be disqualified from a grant competition, delay or even lose a grant award, and/or face delays in grant payments if they are not in Good Standing.

### **B. Applicant Background (Reusable) Task**

The Office of Grants Management collects data through this Task for post-award analysis to understand application and award trends as well as how to support the diverse communities in Montgomery County. Data collected through this Task will **not** be visible to Review Committees and will **not** be used in evaluation and scoring of applications.

In line with Montgomery County's Racial Equity & Social Justice goals, the Office of Grants Management is collecting the racial and ethnic information on the leadership of nonprofit organizations. The structure of this portion of the survey is based on federal standards for collecting racial data. Given the County's significant diversity, this survey is also collecting ethnic data. Note that the information entered should be based on how the person identifies themselves.

- Organization estimated staffing size serving Montgomery County in a given year
- Organization estimated budget, including by funding source, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives in a given year
- Organizational leadership, including CEO or Executive Director and Board Members (if applicable), race and ethnic information

Responding to these questions is **optional** and will have no impact on application reviews.

### **C. Project Strategy Task**

The Project Strategy section asks for several data components related to the proposal. The following data fields must be completed by each applicant:

- **Project Title** – If awarded, the Project Title will become the grant agreement name
- **Project Overview** – Brief description of the project (100 words maximum)
- **FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Project Funding Request** – Total amount requested through this grant proposal
- **Total Project Cost** – Total cost of project from all funding sources
- **Format of Food Assistance** *Select all options that apply to your organization's possible offerings* – Family Market, Choice Pantry, Pre-packed Box/Bag Distribution, Home Delivery, Grocery Gift Cards, Other
- **Food Type(s) Offered** *Select all options that apply to your organization's possible offerings* – Shelf-stable goods, Meat/Dairy/Eggs, Produce (Fruit/Vegetable), Prepared food/meal, Other

- **Frequency of Services** *Select all options that apply to your organization's possible offerings* – Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Other
- **Zip Code(s) Preferences** – Zip codes that your organization prefers to serve, if awarded funding through this grant program. The applicant does not need to identify specific school sites that would be within their service area. Awardees will be matched with school sites by the OFSR.
- **Zip Code(s) Capacity** – Zip codes that your organization is able to serve, if awarded funding through this grant program.
- **Has your organization worked with an MCPS school in the past calendar year?** (Yes, No)
  - If yes, please list the schools that your organization worked with.
  - If yes, please list the schools that your organization is interested in being matched with for FY25.
- **Capacity, Number of Schools** – The maximum number of schools that your organization could support with funding from this grant program.
- **Capacity, Number of Students per School** – Include the *minimum and maximum number of students per school* that your organization could support with funding from this grant program.
- **Capacity, Number of Households per School** – Include the *minimum and maximum number of households per school* that your organization could support with funding from this grant program.

The **Strategy Narrative** is a separate document upload that should answer the following questions. If a question below does not apply to your proposal, please indicate that it is not applicable within the Strategy Narrative. **(3 page limit, PDF format preferred)**

A [Strategy Narrative template](#) is available to download and use in your application.

- **Service Delivery:** Outline how the program service delivery will work from start to finish, specifically addressing:
  - The food assistance format the organization is best positioned to provide;
  - The food types that will be offered through the proposed project;
  - The frequency of services that the school site(s) will receive;
  - The anticipated number of students and households served per school;
  - Any onsite infrastructure needed to carry out the proposed program, including refrigeration, storage space, shelving, etc.; and
  - Data collection, reporting, and privacy considerations, including coordination with school-based point of contact to collect all data requirements listed in Section II, H: Performance Plan as applicable.
- **Zip Codes Served:** What specific zip code(s) your organization would be willing to serve with additional funding from this grant program? Describe your relationship to the population/geographic community in these zip codes.

- Primary Need: What is the primary need that this proposal will address? How will the proposed project address this issue or need?
- Community Engagement: How will your organization ensure that the proposed project is specifically reaching the target population?
  - What is your organization’s plan to implement this project in a culturally, linguistically, and/or technically proficient way for children and families?

**D. Project Budget Task (No page limit, MS Excel format preferred)**

The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, preferably in MS Excel format. The budget for this proposal should contain:

**Expenses:** Detailed itemized cost information for all proposed expenses, including quantities and prices, plus any indirect costs.

- Include staffing and fringe costs (as applicable) as well as program expenses including food purchases, transportation, infrastructure like refrigeration or shelving, and all additional operational costs for this program.
- The OFSR *recommends* that applicants estimate food costs using the following ranges, or include clear budget justification for food costs based on the proposed service format:
  - Choice pantry/market: \$1250 per occurrence, serving ~150 households
  - Pre-packed bag/box, with shelf-stable food only: \$20-25/box
  - Pre-packed bag/box, with mix of fresh and shelf-stable food: \$25-30/box
  - Pre-packed bag/box, with fresh foods only: \$30-35/box
  - Prepared meals: \$10-12/meal
  - Gift cards: \$35-50 per household/month
- Program Budgets may also include indirect costs. Indirect costs may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, etc. If applicants have a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), then they must use that rate within the application and include supporting documentation. Applicants without a NICRA may use an indirect cost rate of up to 15%.
- The OFSR recommends providing budget details in the following format:

School 1	Format Type	Price per unit	Estimated households served	Frequency per Month	Total Cost Per Month
School 2	Format Type	Price per unit	Estimated households served	Frequency per Month	Total Cost Per Month
					<b>Total Cost</b>

**Revenues:** include the value of any cost-shares such as donations, other grants received, and in-kind or pro bono services that you anticipate being donated and that are related to this proposal.

In addition to other limitations set in this program, program funds **cannot be used:**

- For lobbying;
- To cover any expenses made prior to the grant award;
- To supplant (replace) funds from other grant sources; or
- To provide services that wholly occur outside of Montgomery County.

#### **E. Budget Narrative/Justification (2 page limit, PDF format preferred)**

In addition to a Program Budget, the proposal must include a Budget Narrative/Justification that briefly describes how the proposed costs were calculated and their justification. If an organization wishes to include quotes or back up for prices listed in the budget, they may upload these items in the Other Supporting Materials section of the application.

A [Budget Narrative template](#) is available to download and use in your application.

- Outline the purpose of the expenditures and an explanation of how costs were calculated.
- Specify how your project would be affected if total funding awarded were less than the amount requested. State whether your project could be completed with a smaller amount and how your projected outcomes would be affected by any funding reduction.
- Describe how the proposed program will align with your current programs. How will this create new and/or expanded services for your clients?
- If your organization provides services outside of Montgomery County, please describe in detail how your organization will ensure that funding provided through the School-Based Food Assistance grant will exclusively benefit Montgomery County residents.

#### **F. Project Staffing Plan Task (2 page limit, PDF format preferred)**

This section should detail the staff assigned for the program, staff positions, and percentage (%) of time spent on the program. If applying as a collaboration, please note the organizational affiliation of each staff member.

The Staffing Plan should detail at a minimum for the staff member(s) and/or contractor(s) to be supported by the project. If the organization does not have paid staff, please provide the following information for volunteers in leadership positions:

- The position title;
- Expected salary or hourly rate for the position or indicate “volunteer;”
- Fringe rate and summary of benefits provided or indicate "volunteer;”
- Percentage of staff time, in what phase of the grant period, will be dedicated to the proposed project;
  - If an employee is 100% dedicated to this project and fully funded through grant funds from this program, all of their professional time, over and above

routine administrative tasks, must be devoted to the proposed program's eligible work. If the staff will at times contribute to organizational efforts outside the grant project, be sure to include only partial salary for that person in the staffing and budget proposals.

- Do not double count staff time paid for by other Montgomery County, Federal, State, District of Columbia, or private foundation grants.
- Any relevant degrees, licenses, certifications, or other professional credentials related to the project;
- Outline of language skills and/or cultural competencies; and
- Description of the position role in relation to the proposed project.
- Resumes of incumbents in the positions and/or position descriptions of these positions may be uploaded as Other Program Materials if desired.

### **G. Project Work Plan/Timeline Task (1 page limit, PDF format preferred)**

This section should outline the implementation schedule of the proposed program over the 10-month grant performance period. The Project Work Plan/Timeline must match performance period of the Grant Program listed on page 1 of this NOFO.

The implementation schedule over the performance period should list:

- The program's objectives and related activities;
- Timeline for implementation and completion; and
- Responsible staff (noting organization affiliation if applying as a collaboration).

### **H. Performance Plan (2 page limit, PDF format preferred)**

The Performance Plan outlines how you will measure success for your proposed project. This Grant Program **requires** reporting on specific metrics and evaluation mechanisms. Organizations should expect mid-cycle (5 month) and end-of-cycle (10-month) financial and performance reporting on the metrics outlined below.

Please use the information in the tables below to develop a Performance Plan that outlines the anticipated outcomes for your organization if awarded funding through this program. Please include any evaluation methods your organization will be using to measure the impact of the proposed program on the target population.

Note that award winners will be required to submit mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reports **separately for each school** where the organization provides services using a platform provided by the OFSR.

The **required reporting metrics** for this program outlined in the table below.

Section	Metrics
Participation and Implementation	School Name Total receiving food assistance ( <i>by the mid-cycle report and at the end of the grant period</i> ) Total number of students (duplicated counts) Total number of households (duplicated counts)
Food Service	Service Format (include all that apply) Family Market or Choice Pantry - (total pounds) Pre-Packaged Box/Bag - (total pounds) Pre-Packaged Box/Bag - (total box/packages) Prepared Meals- (total meals) Gift Cards - (total dollar amount) Other Food Type Offered (include all that apply): Shelf-stable, Meat/Dairy/Eggs, Produce, Prepared food/meal, Other Do you accommodate cultural or medically-tailored diets? (Y/N)
Narrative Feedback	Narrative feedback about the implementation or experience facilitating this program, including unexpected challenges and/or success stories. Narrative feedback about the grantee’s efforts to ensure cultural proficiency, inclusivity of underserved community members, and the use of a racial equity lens in providing services.

The **recommended metrics** are outlined in the table below.

Participation and Implementation	Total receiving food assistance ( <i>by the mid-cycle report and by the end of the grant period</i> ): Total number of students (unduplicated counts) Total number of households with children 0-5 (duplicated counts) Total number of households with children 0-5 (unduplicated counts) Total number of households (unduplicated counts) Total number of households grouped by household’s zip codes
Communication and Partnership	Self-assessed score (1-10): how would you rate the effectiveness of communication and collaboration with the school? ( <i>This answer will NOT be shared with any schools</i> ). Please provide additional comments on your score provided.

In addition, grantees must submit one **mid-cycle and end-cycle Financial Report**, including the metrics below:

<b>Budget and Sourcing Metrics</b> (Required)	Percentage of the grant budget spent to date. Please provide additional comments on the percentage spent. Percentage of food sourced from County farms, DMV-region farms owned by people of color, and/or locally owned retailer(s) Total value of food sourced from County farms, DMV-region farms owned by people of color, and/or locally owned retailer(s)
<b>Financial Uploads</b> (Required)	Receipts, Proof-of-Payment, and/or other relevant proof of project costs incurred Financial Report Narrative

**Milestone Estimates:** Applicants are asked to estimate the following figures at 5 months (mid-cycle) and 10 months (end-cycle) of program implementation as part of their grant proposal. Applicants must provide estimates for each metric **per school**, and provide one estimated total based on the maximum number of schools indicated in the Strategy Narrative. The totals to be provided are below:

- 1) Number of students (duplicated) receiving food assistance; and
- 2) Number of households (duplicated) receiving food assistance.

Applicants must include and clearly outline these estimates in their submitted performance plan. If awarded funding, milestone estimates will be revised within the grant agreement to align with the actual number of school partners assigned.

### **I. Performance History (2-page limit, PDF format preferred)**

The Performance History is a separate document that focuses on outcomes already achieved as evidence that the proposed project will have a meaningful impact on the target population. The central question to be answered is:

- How do the outcomes achieved in the past provide evidence that your proposal will achieve these outcomes in the future?

The outcomes described in the Performance History may be the result of projects funded by previous County Grants, other funding sources, initiatives outside of the County that your proposals seek to emulate in the County or be based on research and/or other best practices.

The Performance History must also include the following data components related to the proposal:

- Organization's paid staff size serving Montgomery County in 2024 (in total FTEs)
- Organization's estimated total volunteers serving Montgomery County in 2024 (in total FTEs)
- Upload of Previous fiscal year budget to actuals
- Upload of Organization total current-year budget (revenues and expenses), including funding sources, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives
- Upload of documentation of an existing partnership with at least one MCPS school (e.g., email documentation, formal contract or Memorandum of Understanding, or signed letter of support from an administrator at the school site) **(required)**.

### **J. Supporting Documents to be Uploaded Task**

- Collaborative partner materials, if applicable (optional)
- Program Related Materials (optional)
- Other Supporting Materials (optional)

## **SECTION III – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS**

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### **Scoring Criteria**

Applicant’s proposal submissions will be evaluated using the following confidence ratings based on the below weighted criteria. Confidence ratings are another form of objective rating that allow evaluators to assign ratings more holistically. Confidence ratings provide evaluators the ability to look more holistically at the strongpoints and weak points of a proposal to capture raters’ overall confidence in the applicant’s likelihood to succeed, helping smaller organizations who may be stronger overall than some more seasoned larger organizations. Confidence ratings are identified by the federal government as an innovative practice that may help with reducing the lead time from solicitation to award.:

3 – Confident	The Reviewers are confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
2 – Somewhat Confident	The Reviewers are somewhat confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
1 – Not confident	The Reviewers are not confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.

Additionally, each criterion is attributed a specific weight out of a total of 100 points.

### **Criterion A: Project Goals and Grant Program Priorities (1-3 rating; weighted at 25/100 points)**

In line with the priorities for the FY25 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program, the proposal:

- Demonstrates a strong understanding of their target population’s/community’s needs and an effective program strategy to effectively meet these needs (5 points);
- Clearly identifies the minimum and maximum number of schools/students/families that could be supported by the funding request, including details on the format, types, estimated amounts, and frequency of food assistance that would be provided (15 points); and
- Demonstrates technical, cultural, and/or linguistically proficient services, inclusivity of underserved community members, and the use of a racial equity lens in providing services within this proposal (5 points).



**Criterion B: Sound Fiscal Management and Budget (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)**

- Applicant demonstrates sound grant and fiscal management practices and will be able to submit financial reports and back-up documentation to meet administrative and audit requirements;
- Expenses listed in the Budget and Budget Justification are consistent with the Project Strategy, Staffing Plan, and other parts of the proposal; and
- Applicant's Budget and Budget Justification reflect reasonable and realistic costs needed to implement the proposal, are based upon robust research on a sourcing strategy, and
- Applicant demonstrates that they will achieve the stated outcomes for the target population/community.

**Criterion C: Organizational Capability and Relevant Experience (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)**

- Applicant demonstrates the expertise to deliver the proposed outcomes to the target population;
- Applicant has demonstrated the capability to effectively collaborate with an MCPS partner, including communication with a school-based point(s) of contact to coordinate regular food distributions and/or delivery, as evidenced by previous experience working with at least one school site; and
- Applicant demonstrates a strong history of serving Montgomery County children and families and can effectively perform outreach to promote, engage, and/or connect the target population with the proposed project.

**Criterion D: Performance Plan and Performance History (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)**

- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Plan a clear process to measure/evaluate its project and comply with the required metrics and evaluation of participants;
- Proposal's choice of KPI's/metrics, milestones, other evaluation methods, and ultimate outcomes fit the project strategy and Grant Program's goals;
- Performance History provides strong evidence that the project strategy will have the desired outcomes for the target population/community; and
- Performance History provides a strong justification for the Performance Plan's choice of KPI's/metrics, milestones, other evaluation methods, and ultimate outcomes.

**Criterion E: Soundness of the Overall Proposal (1-3 rating; weighted at 15/100 points)**

- Proposal clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of proposed activities and, if funded, will result in the accomplishment of their stated outcomes;
- The implementation plan within the proposal is realistic and achievable based on the proposed timeline; and
- Proposal' contingency plans for a lower than requested funding amount is realistic and still results in desired outcomes albeit at a lower level.

**Added-Value Proposal Characteristics (1-3 rating; weighted to a maximum 15 additional points)**

- Demonstrate administrative capability to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the assigned school partner(s) and to maintain regular communication with the school-based point(s) of contact (3 points);
- Support the local food economy through purchasing partnerships with County farms, locally-owned retailers, and/or DMV-region businesses owned/operated by individuals representing historically underserved communities (4 points);
- Leverage additional resources to support this program, including in-kind contributions, direct organizational investment, non-county public dollars, and secured outside grant funds (4 points); and
- Align with the OFSR's [core values](#) of equity, systems-based, innovation, and data-driven (4 points).

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- Those persons scoring the proposals on the Review Committee will confirm that they have no conflicts of interest.
- Neither the County Executive nor any elected official will be involved in the scoring of grants or determining winners and amounts of awards.
- Scores and award amounts are non-appealable.
- Scorers' comments and the scores themselves are deliberative and privileged and will not be released. However, applicants may request a feedback report from the Office of Grants Management summarizing the Review Committees feedback. Winners will be announced publicly, and successful grant applications and award letters may be subject to release (with redactions as allowed by law).
- County officials may decline to debrief with unsuccessful applicants why their proposal was not granted or their funding request was not granted in full.

## **SECTION IV – CERTIFICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, AND ASSURANCES**

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The applicant shall complete and return the Certifications, Acknowledgements, and Assurances listed with the application submission provided in the Application Certification section of the application in SM Apply online grants application portal. The specific items in this section are listed below:

### **Montgomery County Ethics Questions**

Note that individuals employed by partner agencies such as Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and WorkSource Montgomery do not count as Montgomery County Government employees for the purpose of this Grant Program. If you are unsure if a position applies please contact the Office of Grants Management for clarification.

Does your organization employ current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies for employees that are paid by your organization but are also paid by Montgomery County Government.

Does your organization's Board of Directors include current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies to volunteer board of director positions.

If you answered yes to either question, please describe the employee(s) role and function as it applies to your nonprofit organization. Answering “yes” to either question does **not** exclude your organization from being eligible to apply. Instead, we would like to receive this information upfront so that we can allow adequate time for the Ethics Commission to review.

### **Acknowledgements Agreed to by All Applicants**

- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that this grant application may not be revised or altered after submission.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that if funding is awarded, the organization will enter into a non-competitive contract or grant with the County.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that awards may not be distributed as a lump sum, but may be reimbursed or provided on a fixed schedule after sufficient documentation is submitted to the administering County agency.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that any funds submitted for reimbursement must be spent AFTER the contract is finalized and a Notice to Proceed is secured.
- ✓ Applicant has cited in this application all individuals affiliated with the organization and this program who are employed by Montgomery County.

## **Assurances Agreed to by All Applicants**

If the grant is awarded, the applicant assures that:

- ✓ The applicant will administer all awarded funds through this Grant Program.
- ✓ Funds received will be used solely for the documented activities within the submitted proposal.
- ✓ The applicant has read and will conform to the program guidelines and any other conditions imposed by the County in connection with the grant.
- ✓ The applicant organization intends to comply with the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, indicating that no person will be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of any program, activity or service on the basis of race, sex, sexual preference, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, or handicap. The applicant further agrees to make every attempt to ensure that the program is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Please note that applications are subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) (found at Md. Code Ann., State Gov't., §10-611 through -628 (MPIA) and the County must comply with the disclosure requirements of the MPIA when a request for documents is received.
- ✓ The applicant understands that all grantees that receive awards under this Grant Program must show proof of insurance prior to receiving the funds., when requested, must be able to show proof of all insurance coverage required by law.
- ✓ The applicant agrees that any time before final payment and three (3) years thereafter, the County may have the grantee's expenditure statements and source documentation audited.
- ✓ If there are any changes that need to be made to the grant application after submittal or if the organization ceases operations or becomes a subsidiary of another organization, you have the responsibility of notifying the appropriate County administrator.
- ✓ The filing of this application is made by the undersigned individual, officially authorized to represent the applicant organization by its governing board.
- ✓ I hereby certify that information submitted in the grant application is a true and correct statement of facts. I, as a designated legal representative of the Organization, further certify that this Organization shall abide by and be subject to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations pertaining to any subsequent grant that may be issued.