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

FY26 Community Food Assistance Grant Program

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 2026 Community Food Assistance (CFA) Program from currently active 501(c)(3) food assistance provider organizations that have provided regularly scheduled, no cost services to Montgomery County residents at County-based sites at least once per month for a minimum of one year. Roughly \$3,500,000 in total funding is available for awards of direct funding to purchase and/or Manna Food Staples credits to order food for distribution, and funding to support operational expenses.

The minimum award that applicants may request is \$10,000 and maximum award is \$300,000. Final award amounts may be lower than \$10,000. The performance period for these grant awards is anticipated to be on/about October 31, 2025 to October 31, 2026. Awards will be eligible for renewal, pending successful performance outcomes, grant administration compliance, and appropriation of funds, for an additional one-year grant period of November 1, 2026 - November 1, 2027 (dates are approximate and subject to change).

Key Program Dates:

- **Program Opens for Applications:** Friday, August 15th
- MS Teams Live Grant Program Information Session: Thursday, August 21st at 12:00 PM EST (FY26 CFA Information Session OR see an event recording)
- Submission Deadline: Friday, September 12, 2025 at 11:59 PM

Key Program Resources:

- Program Page: https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/vvw25fx613x
- Information Session Link: FY26 CFA Information Session on Thursday, August 21st at 12:00 PM EST OR see an event recording
- OGM Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template
- FY26 CFA Standard Budget template
- FY26 CFA Performance Reporting Requirements attachment for awarded applicants

Grant Program Details, Submissions, and Support: Application details can be downloaded, and 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:

Gregory Weissman, Program Manager II OGM (240) 773-3384 grants@montgomerycountymd.gov

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

Catherine Nardi, Program Manager II OFSR (202) 816-9083 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 FY26 Community 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

A. Background

The OFSR, in partnership with the OGM, is soliciting grant applications for the County's FY 2026 Community Food Assistance Program from qualified, active food assistance providers that have provided regularly scheduled, no cost services to Montgomery County residents at County-based sites at least once per month for a minimum of one year.

The FY25 Community Food Assistance (CFA) Grant Program was established following the passage of Special Appropriation 24-37, which was unanimously approved by County Council in December 2023 to implement the recommendations of the County's Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger. The goal of this grant program is to provide funding to community-based organizations that supports continuity of existing critical community food assistance services, while also closing service gaps, enhancing program impact, standardizing data collection, providing greater flexibility and transparency in funding processes, and strengthening the capacity of the provider network and resilience of the local food system.

Last year, 52 eligible organizations submitted applications totaling \$7,355,821 in funding requests. The FY25 CFA Grant Program awarded a total of \$3,699,500 to 49 food assistance provider organizations. Within the first six months of program implementation, data indicates that this funding has enabled grantees to distribute more than 4.3 million pounds of food to approximately 193,000 County households. Federal funding shifts have impacted food security in the County, resulting in a greater demand for food assistance services since January 2025. In April 2025 the OFSR launched a new strategy to address this growing need, increasing food recovery efforts in the County through investments in infrastructure, coordination, and food rescue operations through three OFSR grant programs. The FY26 CFA grant program includes a new option for applicants to request funding for food recovery programs.

The FY26 Approved Operating Budget for the OFSR includes \$3.5M for the continuity of the Community Food Assistance Grant Program to support established food assistance provider (FAP) organizations, in order to fund their procurement and distribution of shelf-stable, fresh food, and/or prepared meals to Montgomery County residents.

B. Target Population

The target population served by this grant program is Montgomery County households in underserved communities that are currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing food insecurity. According to the **Capital Area Food Bank's 2024 Hunger Report**, an estimated 34% of households in Montgomery County households are experiencing food insecurity. In alignment with Montgomery County's **Community Equity Index**, this grant prioritizes efforts that reach residents that are experiencing food insecurity and living in areas with high levels of social and economic disparities. These households likely do not have sufficient resources to support access to nutritious diets and meet other health-related needs and could benefit from accessing community-based food assistance services.

C. Funding Priorities

This grant program supports projects that close critical gaps in healthy food access for Montgomery County residents experiencing food insecurity. Funding will be prioritized to support proposals that demonstrate:

- Diversified food sourcing strategies to include locally produced food (food that is sourced directly from a Montgomery County based farm, a Washington Metropolitan/DMV-region farm representing underserved communities; <u>AND/OR</u> Food purchased from a Washington Metropolitan/DMV-region based retailer or wholesaler that sources from County or DMV region farms), culturally relevant food items, <u>AND/OR</u> recovered food items that prevent food waste;
- Collaboration with other Montgomery County-based service providers, including through incoming and outgoing referrals and to coordinate service offerings that avoid duplication and maximize community reach;
- Flexible service models that offer an element of choice, facilitating participant access to a variety of culturally relevant, healthy shelf-stable and fresh food items including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and eggs;
- Continuity of food assistance services for residents at present levels of scale and scope;
- Leveraging additional resources to support this program, including in-kind contributions, direct organizational investment, non-county public dollars, and secured outside grant funds:
- A strong plan for data collection and program evaluation, including clear methods to track unduplicated households served, food quantities distributed, and client satisfaction;
- Engagement in opportunities for implementing operational best practices and collaborative service models, including through participation in Peer Learning Circles and trainings offered through the Montgomery County Food Council; and
- Strategies to increase access to food assistance services in underserved communities and zip-codes (as identified by Montgomery Planning's <u>Community Equity Index</u>), including considerations for improving language accessibility and cultural relevance of services provided.

The range of programming allowed under this grant is intentionally very flexible. Examples of project models that will be considered for funding include various types of community food distributions using purchased and/or recovered food, through formats such as:

- Choice pantry model, offering participants 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 that includes healthy, locally sourced produce options;
- Home delivery and/or public distribution of nutritious, medically and/or preference-tailored prepared meals to households with unique needs; or
- Appointment-only food assistance

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 in increasing access to high-quality, nutrient-dense foods.

D. Eligibility Conditions

Organizations may only submit one application, and must meet all of the following Grant Program and Montgomery County eligibility conditions:

Grant Program Eligibility Conditions

The organization must be a 501 (c)(3) non-profit food assistance provider based in Montgomery County that has provided regularly scheduled, no cost services to Montgomery County residents at County-based sites at least once per month for a minimum of one year. Documentation of services that align with these conditions is required for organizations that were not funded through the Office of Food Systems Resilience's FY25 Community Food Assistance Grant Program. Organizations designated as Service Consolidation Hubs in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services are not eligible to apply.

All activities and expenditures funded through this grant program must:

- Be provided exclusively for Montgomery County residents;
- Be provided free of charge (this includes a prohibition on requesting donations and use of County resources for fundraising); and
- Not be provided in promotion of a particular religion, political party, etc. or with a requirement of service or program attendance.

All awardee organizations will be required to:

- Participate in a **minimum** of one Food Assistance Provider (FAP) Peer Learning Circle **per quarter**;
- Be available for one site visit with OFSR staff during the grant period, scheduled at a mutually beneficial day and time;
- Comply with the performance reporting requirements outlined in this NOFO;
- Respond to the 2025 Food Assistance Provider Census;
- Publicize grant-funded services in the Montgomery County Food Resource Calendar; and
- Participate in a **minimum** of one OFSR Emergency Food System Response Community Meeting.

Grant funding cannot be used for:

- Gift cards;
- Capital expenses (one-time purchases of infrastructure, equipment, etc.);
- 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;
- Pet food;
- Supplanting (replacing) other funds; and
- Providing services that wholly occur outside of Montgomery County.

Montgomery County Eligibility Conditions

- 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.

E. Award Amounts and Duration

Award sizes will vary and will be determined by program format and the total number of households that the applicant indicates they can support with the requested funding amount. Applicants may request a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$300,000; final funding amounts may be lower than \$10,000. Requested funding amounts should reflect continuity of food assistance services for residents at present levels of scale and scope. The grants are anticipated to have a 12-month performance period from on/about October 31, 2025, through on/about October 31, 2026. Programs must be run and evaluated during this period. This Grant Program does not commit Montgomery County to make an award.

Awards will be eligible for renewal pending successful performance outcomes, grant administration compliance, and appropriation of funds, for an additional one-year grant period of November 1, 2026 - November 1, 2027 (dates are approximate and subject to change).

F. Application Review & Awards

Applications submitted will undergo a three-stage review process:

1. **OGM Administrative (Admin) Review** – OGM will assess all applications for Montgomery County Eligibility Conditions listed above as well as confirm that the

applications submitted are complete and meet minimum standards. If minor errors are found in an application, OGM will give applicants a brief window (usually two business days) to resolve the issue. Applicants generally will not be given the opportunity to resolve any issues with Montgomery County Eligibility Conditions or major issues with their applications. Organizations and applications that do not meet these requirements will be disqualified while those that do will move on to the next stage.

- 2. **Programmatic Eligibility Review** The OFSR will also conduct a second review assessing whether applicants and their proposals Programmatic Eligibility Conditions cited above to ensure all submitted applications are within the intended scope of this Grant Program. Organizations and applications that do not meet these requirements will be disqualified while those that do will move on to the next stage.
- 3. **Subject Matter Expert (SME) Review** The OFSR will then establish a Review Committee 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 document and submit recommendations for awards.

Final decisions will be made based on the scores and such other factors and considerations as deemed 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

How to Apply:

- 1. Log into the Euna (eCivis) Portal to create an application profile https://portal.ecivis.com/#/login
- 2. Access the <u>FY26 CFA Grant Program Solicitation Page</u> and click the "Apply" button to create an application.



3. Download and review the Euna (eCivis) applicant user guides for assistance

- 1. Logging into Your eCivis Portal Account
- 2. Reviewing and Submitting your application
- 3. Transfer Application Ownership

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 Euna Grants account, select the Grant Program, and then will be able to access the grant application. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management (contact listed on the first page of this document) to discuss alternative submission options.

Applications are due no later than Friday, September 12, 2025 at 11:59 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. Submission of inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading information within the application could lead to disqualification from consideration, rescinding of award offers, and even termination of any grant agreement resulting from this Grant Program.

I. Information Session

An FY26 CFA Grant Information Session will be held on Thursday, August 21, 2025 from 12:00 - 1:00 PM. The link to participate in the Information Session live or to view an event recording afterwards can be found on the first page of this document or on the grant application page.

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

Applicants are required to follow the content requirements and submission instructions listed within the online application platform and NOFO document. Please submit your proposal, as broken out by each of the Tasks, by filling out the data fields or uploading documents where applicable. Uploaded documents should have clearly titled sections and sub-sections. Document uploads should ideally be submitted as PDF documents with budgets uploaded as MS Excel file. The application platform cannot read Mac formatted documents (i.e. Pages, Numbers, and Keynote). **Applications will be considered incomplete if any part of any section is missing.** Please note that Review Committees have historically preferred concise narratives focused on the funding priorities, questions asked, and scoring themes rather than long narrative descriptions.

A. Applicant Information Form

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 Lead Organization as registered with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT)
- Organization's Maryland SDAT Department ID Number
- Organization's Federal Tax Identification Number
- Montgomery County Supplier Number, if known (optional)
- Organization's website (optional)
- Upload: Most recent IRS 990 Form for Nonprofit Organizations or an explanation of why your organization is exempt from filing 990s
- Contact Information for the Organization's point-of-contact (POC)
- Contact Information for the Organization's Legally Authorized Signatory
- Type in board chair (or equivalent position) names, organization title, email, and phone number

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 Lead and Support organization 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.

Applicants can verify their status with SDAT via this link: https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch

B. Project Scope of Work

The Project Scope of Work 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 (500-character limit)
- FY26 Community Food Assistance Grant Request Type (check one box)

Option 1: Direct grant funds to be used for Food Purchases (such as orders from wholesalers/distributors, Capital Area Food Bank, local farms, etc.): □ Operational Expenses (Optional; no more than 15% of the Food Purchase budget)
Option 2: Manna Food Center Food Staples Credits (current Manna Staples program partners only) □ Operational Expenses (Optional; no more than 5% of the total credit request)
Option 3: Direct grant funds to support Operational Expenses for the Recovery of Food for direct distribution or redistribution to other Montgomery County food assistance providers (There is no cap on the percentage of operating funding requests for food recovery funding support.) Note: Organizations selecting this option must complete additional questions within the Strategy Narrative and Performance History sections of the application. Organizations selecting this option must demonstrate significant experience (1-3 years) recovering food in Montgomery County, including redistributing recovered food to other County organizations for distribution to residents. Organizations awarded through this option will have additional reporting requirements. This option is only encouraged for organizations that recover 50% or more of their total food for distributions.

Purchases as outlined in Options 1 and 3 above. (There is no cap on the percentage of operating funding requested for food recovery funding support.)

□ Note: Organizations selecting this option must complete additional questions within the Strategy Narrative and Performance History sections of the application. Organizations selecting this option must demonstrate significant experience (1-3 years) recovering food for distribution to residents. Organizations awarded through this option will have additional reporting requirements. This option is only encouraged for organizations that recover 50% or more of their total food for distributions.

Option 4: Direct grant funds to support Food Recovery Operational Expenses AND Food

• FY26 Community Food Assistance Grant Requested Amounts: Applicants must select one of the four options below for their FY26 CFA Grant Funding Request (amounts listed below must match amounts outlined in application Budget Task):

O	ption 1: Direct grant funds to be used for Food Purchases: Food Purchase Expenses Operational Expenses (no greater than 15% of total food purchase budget)
0	Option 2: Manna Food Center Food Staples Credits (current Manna Staples program partners only) ☐ Manna Staples Credits
	☐ Operational Expenses (no greater than 5% of total staples credit budget)
0	Option 3: Direct grant funds to support Food Recovery Operational Expenses Operational Expenses specifically for the recovery of food
0	Option 4: Direct grant funds to support Food Recovery Operational Expenses
0	Option 4: Direct grant funds to support Food Recovery Operational Expenses and Food Purchases
0	
0	and Food Purchases

- **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 Traditional Food Assistance (Family Market, Choice pantry, Pre-packaged box/bag distribution, Prepared Meals distribution, Home Delivered Prepared Meals, Other); Food Recovery Distribution (Food recovery involves collecting edible food that would otherwise go to waste and distributing it directly to food assistance recipients); Food redistribution (Food redistribution involves collecting edible food that would otherwise go to waste and redistributing it to food assistance organizations for distribution to their clients).
 - Successful performance history with the selected format must be demonstrated in Section H: Performance History.
- 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
- Quantities of Food Offered Select all options that apply to your organization's possible offerings Family-sized (10+ family-size items/20+ lbs), individual-size (5-8 items, 10+ lbs), individual prepared meals, other
- Frequency of Services Select all options that apply to your organization's possible offerings Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Other
- Current Distribution Location(s), Day(s), and Time(s) Please list all of the locations where your organization currently distributes food to Montgomery County. Please include the following details for each distribution:
 - o Location: street address, city, and zip-code.
 - Day(s) of the week
 - o Time
 - o Frequency (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, other)

- o Site Type: For each entry above, please indicate the site type from the following options (My organization's site/Community Partner site/MCPS facility/Housing community/Publicly owned property/ other)
- Funded through this grant request (yes/no)
- O Use the following examples for formatting: (Ex 1: 123 Montgomery Street, Rockville, 20850, Mondays and Wednesdays from 2-4pm; 100 Monroe Rd, North Bethesda, 20853, every Saturday from 10am-12pm) (Ex 2: 123 Montgomery Street, Rockville, 20850, first Sunday of each month from 10am-2pm)
- Applicants should upload a location excel spreadsheet for programs serving more than 5 sites.
- Organization's Current Fiscal Year Budget Board approved budget for the organization for the current fiscal year (upload)
- Start Date for Qualifying Food Assistance Services in Montgomery County: See Eligibility section for full details. If an interruption of food assistance services longer than one month occurred after this date, please enter the date when services resumed and continued monthly through the current date. Organizations that received funding through the FY25 Community Food Assistance Grant Program do not need to provide this date.
- Total number (average, estimated or actual) of individual services delivered per month (ex. total number of boxes or meals distributed, total number of households visiting a choice pantry, etc. during a calendar month)
- Current Distribution Zip Codes(s) Zip code(s) where your organization currently hosts at least one monthly food distribution that is open to the public. *Use the following example for formatting:* 01234, 12344,12323, 14324.
- Current Home Zip Code(s) Served—Home zip codes of clients that your organization currently serves (in Montgomery County). Use the following example for formatting: 01234, 12344,12323, 14324.
- Additional Zip Codes(s) Zip codes that your organization has the capacity to serve with funding through this grant program. Use the following example for formatting: 01234, 12344,12323, 14324.
- Requirements for clients to receive food assistance from your organization Select all options that apply.
 - o Appointment required; Client information required (valid ID, recent bank statement, paystub, etc.); Age restrictions; Zip code/location restrictions; Other (list)

Scope of Work Narrative

Organizations applying must provide the following information using narrative entry fields (2,500-character limit each):

- **Service Delivery:** Outline how the program service delivery will work from start to finish, including strategies for:
 - Participant outreach, recruitment, and intake, including additional relevant details regarding your organization's intake process such as client requirements to receive services and information collected from new clients
 - Sourcing food for distribution, including details on anticipated/established purchasing partners, summary of cost analysis and source of cost estimates, and plans for product transport, delivery, inventory management, and storage
 - o Providing food assistance tailored to participant preferences and dietary needs

- o Providing external benefits and program referrals, co-located services, and/or educational resources to participants. Describe any incoming or outgoing referral processes in collaboration with other Montgomery County-based service providers.
- **Community Engagement**: How will your organization utilize these grant funds to support food access for underserved communities? Please reference specific communities identified through the <u>Montgomery County Community Equity Index</u> as appropriate. How will your organization ensure that the proposed project is specifically reaching the target population(s)?
 - O Describe your relationship with the demographic/geographic community in the zip codes where you currently provide services, and those in which you would potentially like to expand to support. How does community insight inform your program planning?
 - What is your organization's capability to implement this project in a culturally, linguistically, and/or technically proficient way?
 - Why is your organization uniquely suited to have a positive impact on Montgomery County households through this program? Please include information about partners with whom you collaborate in the implementation of your food assistance programming, and the nature of these collaborations (including to avoid duplicative services and maximize community reach).
- Capacity: Describe the goals of your organization's food assistance services in the coming year. How does this compare to services provided in the previous calendar year (July 2024-July 2025)? Do you anticipate any changes in your operational model, scale, or type of services provided during the grant performance period?
 - o Describe your organization and program's alignment with <u>OFSR Values</u> of equity, systems-based, innovation, and data-driven.
 - O Describe innovative strategies and/or new approaches that your organization has recently implemented or is considering implementing to support program development, refinement, and enhancement. (Optional)
- Food sourcing strategy: How does your organization support the local food economy through purchasing partnerships with Montgomery County farms, Washington Metropolitan/DMV-based farms representing underserved communities, and/or a locally-owned and operated food retailer, wholesaler, and/or distributor that sources from Washington Metropolitan/DMV-region farms?
- **Nutrition considerations:** How does your program prioritize high quality nutrition in the food provided to clients? If applicable, please include detail on medically-tailored food options that are offered to clients.
- Food safety/quality considerations: Outline your organization's plan for compliance with food safety standards and relevant County/state food licensing requirements, including safe storage of potentially hazardous food items (cut produce, meat, dairy, prepared foods, etc.) and pest management practices. How are staff and volunteers trained on these practices?
 - o If your organization is offering potentially hazardous food items and/or recovered food to clients, please outline the strategies your organization has implemented to comply with food safety requirements and best practices (optional, 1,000-character limit).

Applicants requesting operating funds to support their recovery of food (Option 3 OR Option 4) must also respond to the questions below.

- **Annual pounds of food recovered** Total pounds of food directly recovered by your organization in 2024.
- Estimated percentage of distributed food that is recovered Of all the food that your organization distributes to residents, estimate what percentage is recovered food.
- Current Capacity:
 - Cold storage space dedicated to recovered food (sq ft) Total cold storage capacity (in square feet) that is currently used to safely store recovered food.
 What is the total volume of recovered food (lbs) that can currently be stored in cold storage unit(s) used by your organization?
 Describe the cold storage space(s) in more detail, including whether the
 - infrastructure is owned or rented. (600-character limit)
 - Transportation dedicated to food recovery activities: Describe the number and type(s) of vehicles currently used to support food recovery. Include details on whether the vehicles are refrigerated, owned, loaned/rented. (600-character limit)
 - Waste infrastructure/technology: Describe the strategies that your organization currently uses to prevent and manage food waste, including organics recycling (food waste composting) infrastructure or partnerships. (600-character limit)
 - o **Dry storage space dedicated to recovered food (sq ft)** Total dry storage capacity (in square feet) of your organization's operations to safely store recovered food onsite.
 - Describe the Dry Storage type(s) (Shelving within an office room, sealed shed, storage pod, etc.). Include details on any offsite storage locations. (600-character limit)
- Food Recovery Network Participation Commitment Please note that organizations seeking FY26 CFA grant funding related to food recovery operations (Option 3 or Option 4) are required to participate in the Food Recovery Network. Please confirm that a representative of your organization will commit to regular participation in the Food Recovery Network (approximately 2 hours per month), hosted by the Montgomery County Food Recovery Coordinator (designated by OFSR). This network is designed for sharing food recovery resources and information, best practices and collectively identifying opportunities to streamline food assistance operations across the county. (Y/N)
- **Key Physical Infrastructure Needs (Optional)** Does your organization have any key physical infrastructure needs for your food recovery operations beyond the operating costs outlined in this grant application? Please include a brief description of the needed resource(s), estimated cost, and projected impact on capacity to recover food.

C. Project Budget Template

The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, and **must use the provided** <u>FY26 CFA Grant Program Budget Template</u>. Please note that there must be a "Request Justification/Brief Description" for each listed budget line item.

The Project Budget Task includes several data components related to the proposal:

• Upload of Project Budget (No page limit, <u>FY26 CFA Grant Program Budget Template</u> required)

- Upload: Current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (optional)
- Organization's paid staff size serving Montgomery County in 2025 (in total FTEs)
- Organization's estimated total volunteers serving Montgomery County in 2025 (in total FTEs)
- Description of Organization's Grant and Financial Management Practices (600-character limit)
- Upload: Public Copy of Most Recent Independent Audit Report, Financial Review, Agreed Upon Procedures. If not available, please submit a brief statement of explanation.
- Upload: Previous fiscal year budget to actuals
- Upload: Organization total current-year budget (revenues/expenses), including funding sources, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives

The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, using the provided template. Enter numeric values for each budget item only. The template will automatically calculate the totals for you. Ensure that budget totals match throughout your entire grant application.

Organizations requesting funds in accordance with Option 1 or Option 2 below should only complete the first tab of the budget template ("Budget-NON-FOODRECOVERY"). This template includes sections for:

• Option 1: Direct grant funds to be used for:

- o Food Purchasing Expenses: Detailed cost information for all proposed food purchasing expenses, including quantities and prices (such as orders from wholesalers/distributors, Capital Area Food Bank, local farms, etc.)
- o If your organization is requesting funds to distribute pre-packed produce/food boxes, please include the total estimated cost for boxes during the grant period in this section. Funding recommendations will be based on the per-service cost guidelines below:
 - Pre-packed bag/box for household (10+ items), with shelf-stable food only:
 \$15-20/box
 - Pre-packed bag/box for household (10+ items), with mix of fresh and shelfstable food: \$20-25/box
 - Pre-packed bag/box for household (10+ items), with fresh foods only: \$20-25/box
 - Prepared meals: \$10-12/meal
- Operational Expenses (Optional; Operating cost request amounts may not exceed 15% of the direct food purchase request amount.)
 - Detailed cost information should be included for all proposed operating expenses, including:
 - Staffing (specify salaries, benefits, and contract/hourly worker expenses)
 - Supplies (Boxes, Bags, PPE, Packaging)
 - Location (rent, utilities, etc.)
 - Transportation (Gas, Rental, Recurring Expenses)

- Indirect costs (legal accounting, liability insurance, audits, etc.)
- Option 2: Manna Food Center Food Staples Credits (current Manna Staples program partners only)
 - o Food Staples Credits
 - o Operational Expenses (Optional; no more than 5% of the total credit request)
 - See above for allowable operating expenses

Organizations seeking operating funds to support food recovery operational expenses through Option 3 or Option 4 **must** complete the second tab of the budget template ("Budget FOOD RECOVERY APPLICANTS"). This template includes sections for:

- Option 3: Food Recovery Operational Expenses Only (There is no cap on the operating funding request for food recovery operations funding support. *Please note: This option is encouraged only for organizations that at a minimum recover 50% or more of their total food for distributions. These funds should be used for the RECOVERY of food only, NOT THE DISTRIBUTION of recovered food. Expenses related to redistribution of recovered food to other food assistance providers is allowed.*
 - o Detailed cost information should be included for all proposed operating expenses *directly related to food recovery activities*, including:
 - Staffing (specify salaries, benefits, and contract/hourly worker expenses)
 - Supplies (Boxes, Bags, PPE, Packaging)
 - Location (rent, utilities, etc.)
 - Transportation (Gas, Rental, Recurring Expenses)
- **Option 4:** Direct grant funds to support Food Recovery Operational Expenses AND Food Purchases *Please note: This option is encouraged for organizations that recover 50% or more of their total food for distributions.*
 - o Applicants under Option 4 should follow all budget instructions outlined above for both Option 1 AND Option 3, making sure to complete both tabs of the budget spreadsheet (first for Direct Grant funds for purchasing food, the second for food recovery operations).

Budget should also include any relevant food assistance services and/or food recovery operations **revenues** in the food assistance program budget. Please 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. Include the value of distributed recovered food as in-kind funding.

D. Budget Narrative/Justification

In addition to a Program Budget, the proposal must answer the Budget Narrative questions below that 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 at the end of this section of the application.

Applicants **must** address the following:

- **Food Sourcing Expenses:** Briefly describe how expenses were calculated for the "Food Sourcing" budget category. (2,500-character limit). This includes:
 - o Direct food purchases (such as through retailers, wholesalers, distributors, Capital Area Food Bank and/or local farms)
 - o Manna Staples Program Credits
 - o Estimated value of recovered food included in the "in-kind" budget section
- Operating Expenses: Outline the purpose of proposed operating costs and an explanation of how costs were calculated. Include brief descriptions of each staff member and contractor role and responsibilities in relation to the proposed project (2,500-character limit).
 - o Organizations seeking funding via Option 3 or Option 4 for **food recovery operating costs** <u>must</u> detail how the operating expenses outlined in the budget relate specifically to food recovery operations.
- **Reduced Funding Impact:** 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. (1,000-character limit);
- Additional FY: Specify any shifts in project costs that you anticipate if the grant award were to be renewed for one additional year. Please note that if renewed, the annual award amount will not change beyond a potential inflationary adjustment; pending Council appropriations. (1,000-character limit);
- Outside Services: If your organization provides services outside of Montgomery County, please describe in detail how your organization will ensure that funding provided through the Community Food Assistance grant will exclusively benefit Montgomery County residents. (1,000-character limit).

Optional Budget Narrative Responses:

• If food costs fall outside of the per-service projected cost ranges listed in the Project Budget Template section above, please include clear justification for expense calculations based on the proposed service format (2,500-character limit);

E. Performance History

The Performance History is a summary of applicant organizational outcomes already achieved as evidence that the proposed project will have a meaningful impact on the target population. The outcomes described in the Performance History may be the result of projects funded by previous County grants and/or contracts, 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.

• Performance History Narrative - How do the outcomes achieved in the past provide evidence that your proposal will achieve these outcomes in the future? Please include detail regarding the food assistance format provided, and reference data collected through

satisfaction surveys, listening sessions, or other direct feedback mechanisms offered to program participants/clients (2,500 Character Limit).

If applying for funding to support food recovery programs, please provide an additional narrative summary of your organizational history engaging in food rescue/food recovery in Montgomery County. Applicants seeking food recovery funding should be able to demonstrate food recovery activities occurring at least once per month, totaling a minimum of 10,000 lbs per month, for a minimum of one year. Include available food recovery service data and key outputs and outcomes of recent food recovery activities serving Montgomery County residents. (2,000-character limit)

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

- Upload of documentation that demonstrates that the organization has held regularly scheduled, no cost services to Montgomery County residents at County-based sites at least once per month for a minimum of one year (e.g., email documentation demonstrating communication to clients, fliers, participation data, etc.) (required unless the applicant was funded through the OFSR's FY25 Community Food Assistance Grant Program)
- Upload of a photo (or multiple photos) that demonstrate the food types, quantities, and format of a typical distribution

F. Performance Reporting Requirements and Evaluation Milestone Metrics

This Grant Program **requires** evaluation, documentation, and reporting on specific metrics relevant to (1) performance and (2) financial management of grant funds through standards outlined in the <u>Performance Reporting Requirements Attachment</u>. Grantees will be required to submit **monthly service data reports** (12 total throughout the grant performance period) **and Quarterly Narrative and Financial Reports** (4 total throughout the grant performance period), following the schedule outlined in the <u>Performance Reporting Requirements Attachment</u>.

Additionally, all CFA grantees are required to distribute a satisfaction survey to participating students/households on a once-annual basis (minimum) and demonstrate in performance reports how they are adapting the scope, scale, and types of services offered to address feedback gathered from program participants.

Performance Evaluation Milestone Metrics:

Applicants must provide targets for the following Performance Evaluation Metrics which will be used to evaluate the anticipated impact of services. Targets should be provided for three points in time ("milestones"): at 6 months (mid-cycle), 12 months (end-cycle), and at the end of 24 months (contingent on extension). Note: If awarded funding, Performance Evaluation Metric targets will be revised as needed to align with the final projected number of total households served.

Targets must reflect unduplicated participant counts. The same household should not be counted more than once during the three estimated points in time (6, 12, and 24-month "milestones"):

- 1) Number of households receiving food assistance (unduplicated)
- 2) Total pounds of food distributed to Montgomery County residents

Applicants requesting additional operating funds to support food recovery efforts (through Option 3 or Option 4 outlined above) must also include milestone estimates for the following Performance Evaluation Metrics at 6 months (mid-cycle), 12 months (end-cycle), and at the end of 24 months (contingent on extension):

- 1. Total number of food recovery runs* from Montgomery County food donors
- 2. Total number (unduplicated) of Montgomery County food donors
- 3. Total average pounds of food recovered per month from Montgomery County donors
- 4. Total average pounds of recovered food redistributed to other Food Recovery Network (FRN) partners per month in Montgomery County (if applicable)
- *"Food recovery run": One individual transaction in which an organization picks up or receives a delivery of recovered food directly from the donor.

Performance Evaluation Narrative Questions:

- **Data Management:** What tools or systems will be used to record the data, and ensure data is accurate and consistent? (500-character limit)
- **Data Collection Roles:** Who will be responsible for collecting the data? *Note: This response should be consistent with the staffing roles outlined in the Budget Narrative section of the application.* (500-character limit)
- **Data Collection Frequency:** How often will data be collected to ensure compliance with reporting requirements? (500-character limit)
- If providing unduplicated service data will not be possible, please explain the barriers to doing so. (optional) (500-character limit)
- Do you anticipate changes in annual performance metrics for future years if the award is renewed for a subsequent year-long performance period? (optional) (500-character limit)

G. Applicant Background 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 <u>federal standards for collecting racial and ethnic data</u>. 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.

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

If choosing to provide race and ethnicity information for their board, applicants must use the <u>OGM</u> <u>Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template</u> and upload it into application. Responding to these questions is optional and will have no impact on application reviews.

SECTION III – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

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.

Depending on the volume of applications, number of Review Committee members, and whether they all review each application, OGM may employ a <u>statistical rescaling</u> of scores to put applications on a more level playing field.

Each criterion is attributed a specific weight out of a total of 100 points.

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

In line with the priorities for the FY26 Community Food Assistance Grant Program, the proposal demonstrates:

- A strong understanding of community food assistance needs and an effective program strategy to meet the needs of the communities being served, including service format and frequency, and food types and quantity;
- Diversified food sourcing to incorporate locally produced food, culturally relevant food items, and/or recovered food items that prevent food waste;
- Flexible service models that offer an element of choice, with access to a variety of culturally relevant, healthy shelf-stable and fresh food items including fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and eggs;
- Technically, culturally, and/or linguistically proficient services, inclusivity of underserved community members, and the use of a racial equity lens in providing food assistance to underserved communities and zip-codes (as identified by Montgomery Planning's Community Equity Index).

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 Narrative are consistent with the Project Strategy, Performance Plan milestone estimates, and other parts of the proposal, and comply with the allowed percentages for operating costs outlined in each Option (1-4);
- Applicant's Budget and Budget Narrative reflect reasonable and realistic costs needed to implement the proposal, which fall within the recommended per-service cost range and are based upon a robustly researched food sourcing strategy;
- Proposal's contingency plans for a lower than requested funding amount is realistic and still results in desired outcomes albeit at a lower level; and
- The proposal leverages additional resources to support this program, including in-kind contributions, direct organizational investment, non-county public dollars, and secured outside grant funds.

Criterion C: Organizational Capability and Performance History (1-3 rating; weighted at 25/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates the expertise and experience to deliver the proposed outcomes to the target population;
- The proposed program provides continuity of publicly accessible food assistance services at existing levels of scale and scope;
- Applicant engages in and seeks opportunities for implementing operational best practices and collaborative service models, including through past participation in Peer Learning Circles and trainings offered through the Montgomery County Food Council; and
- Applicant demonstrates a strong performance history serving Montgomery County children and families.

Criterion D: Performance Evaluation and Data Collection Capacity (1-3 rating; weighted at 15/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Evaluation Narrative responses a clear process and effective methods to measure/evaluate its project and comply with the required service metrics and program evaluation data collection and reporting, including clear methods to track unduplicated households served, food quantities distributed, and client satisfaction;
- Proposal's milestone estimates, proposed evaluation methods, and ultimate proposed outcomes fit the project strategy and Grant Program's goals; and
- Applicant provides a strong justification for the target milestone estimates, 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;
- Proposal aligns with the OFSR's <u>core values</u> of equity, systems-based, innovation, and data-driven; and

• The implementation plan within the proposal is realistic and achievable based on the proposed timeline.

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

- Applicant utilizes food sourcing strategies that entail collaboration with Montgomery County and/or Washington Metropolitan/DMV-region farms representing underserved communities, and/or Washington Metropolitan/DMV-based food retailers, wholesalers, and/or distributors that source directly from County and/or Washington Metropolitan/DMV-region farms;
- Applicant demonstrates the capability to effectively collaborate with other Montgomery County-based service providers, including through incoming and outgoing referrals and to coordinate service offerings that avoid duplication and maximize community reach.

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, ACKNOWLEGMENTS, AND ASSURANCES

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 the online grant application portal.

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 noncompetitive 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.