

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Food Systems Resilience
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**FY26 Food Recovery Network Coordination
Grant Program**

Program Summary: The Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR) and the Office of Grants Management (OGM) are soliciting grant applications for the County's FY26 Food Recovery Coordination Grant Program to support the design, implementation, and ongoing coordination of a centralized Montgomery County Food Recovery Network (FRN) that improves operational efficiency at the organizational and network levels, leverages new resources, and boosts collaboration across the network of food recovery operators. A single grant for a total of \$125,000 will be made available to fund one award to an eligible non-profit organization that demonstrates experience in coordinating community partners and **does not directly distribute** recovered food.

Key Program Dates:

- **Program Opens for Applications:** Monday, July 21, 2025 at 9:00 AM
- **MS Teams Live Online Grant Program Information Session:** Tuesday, July 29, 2025 from 11:00 AM –12:00 PM
- **Submission Deadline:** Monday, August 18, 2025 at 11:59 PM

Key Program Resources:

- **Program Page:** https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/ko6pzd152eoz
- [Information Session PPT](#)
- [Recording of Information Session Saved Here](#)

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) 773-3344
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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I	Grant Program Information	4
	A. Background	4
	B. Target Population	5
	C. Funding Priorities	5
	D. Eligible Organizations	6
	E. Award Amounts and Duration	7
	F. Application Review & Awards	7
	G. Award Notification	7
	H. Submission Guidelines	7
	I. Information Session	8
	J. Terms and Conditions	9
Section II	Application Tasks	10
Section III	Scoring of Applications	18
	Scoring Criteria	18
	Miscellaneous	20
Section IV	Certifications, Acknowledgements, & Assurances	21

SECTION I – GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Background

Food recovery, also known as food rescue, collects safe-to-eat foods that can no longer be sold, such as produce, meat, shelf-stable items and prepared meals and redistributes them to residents or food assistance organizations. This practice has environmental, economic and social benefits and prevents food waste, redirects surplus food to the community at no cost, and supports local food security efforts.

Montgomery County has invested in wasted food reduction, recovery, and recycling initiatives for over a decade. County leadership first established annualized funding for a community-based food recovery program in 2014 and has since expanded both funding and policy in this area, including through the creation of the [Edible Food Recovery Working Group](#) and the [Composting Education Hub](#) at the Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood. [Community Food Rescue](#), a program of Manna Food Center, has been active in Montgomery County since 2012, connecting more than 400 donors, food providers, and volunteers to rescue nearly 14 million pounds of food. These efforts have demonstrated positive impacts both in supporting food security for residents and advancing the County's [Aiming for Zero Waste \(AZW\) initiative](#) and climate action goals.

Food recovery efforts are an essential component of the County's overall strategy to address food insecurity, and Montgomery County has invested more than \$3 million over the past decade to strengthen local food recovery efforts and support sustainable food system practices. As the demand for food assistance continues to rise, OFSR is implementing new and updated strategies to recover more food, improve access and build a more resilient, collaborative and climate-conscious food recovery network—all while working with limited funding and the increasing level of food insecurity in the community.

From February through March 2025, OFSR conducted listening sessions and circulated a survey to engage with 25 food recovery operators of various scales in Montgomery County regarding challenges, best practices, and opportunities for the enhancement of local food recovery efforts. These conversations identified challenges including needs for infrastructure to pick up, transport, store, and distribute donated food items and coordination with food donors and recovery organizations to streamline services and maximize use of available resources.

This research and community input directly informed the Office of Food Systems Resilience's May 2025 launch of a new, multi-pronged strategy for County government investment in food recovery efforts. This strategy began with the [Food Recovery Network Infrastructure \(FRNI\) Grant Program](#), which awarded \$306,000 total to four organizations to establish shared-use cold storage infrastructure that will reduce food spoilage and increase the volume of recovered food available for redistribution to residents. In Fall 2025, food recovery programs will have a new way to access operational funding through OFSR's Community Food Assistance (CFA) Grant Program. The FY26 Food Recovery Coordination Grant Program will fund one awardee to design, implement, and coordinate a centralized network of food recovery organizations, including all FRNI and CFA food recovery grantees, to improve efficiency, streamline operations, and boost collaboration across the network.

About the Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR): 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 work with the OGM to administer the Grant Program.

About the Office of Grants Management (OGM): OGM is the central point of contact for all grants that the County receives or awards. OGM also develops countywide policies and procedures regarding grants management and ensures these are consistent with the County's racial equity and social justice goals, 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 website](#).

B. Target Population

According to the [Capital Area Food Bank's 2024 Hunger Report](#), an estimated 34% of households in Montgomery County households are experiencing food insecurity. Simultaneously, the local food economy of food retailers, farms, restaurants, and other food businesses have significant quantities of food that they cannot or do not sell that are going to waste. Through this program, the grantee will engage with food recovery organizations and food donors through coordination, training, and resource development to support the sustainable, efficient management and redistribution of recovered food to Montgomery County residents living in [underserved communities](#) who are experiencing food insecurity and accessing food assistance services.

C. Funding Priorities

The primary goals for this program are: an increased supply of nutritious food for distribution to Montgomery County residents through the local food assistance provider network, improved cooperative coordination and communication among food recovery organizations, and a reduction in wasted food regionally. Funding will be prioritized to support proposals that build the operational capacity of the food recovery organization network through direct coordination and technical assistance activities and expand available resources for network partners through recruiting new donors, soliciting grants, creating cost-sharing and collective purchasing mechanisms, and more.

Priority in funding will be given to the proposal that best demonstrates strategies to:

- Establish, foster, and implement formal and informal collaboration activities among network members, including communication, service coordination, and information/resource sharing which leverage and expand upon existing structures in the food recovery sector;
- Leverage new external funds, donations, and/or resources to support the success of the proposed project;
- Provide technical assistance and related supportive materials to network partners on operational challenges and best practices, including (but not limited to) food safety and management of recovered food, organics waste management, communications, and relationship management;

- Capacity to coordinate with the private sector to develop preferred vendor lists for key products and services used by network partners;
- Experience with food recovery or related technology platforms, and sufficient expertise to identify and implement technology system(s) to coordinate food recovery network activity; and
- Capacity to develop and share educational materials for food donors, volunteers, and food assistance recipients regarding the purpose, benefits, and use of recovered foods.

D. Eligible Organizations

Applicants may only submit one application per organization.

Programmatic Eligibility Conditions:

- Demonstrate experience in coordinating community partners;
- Have a working knowledge of the food recovery landscape in the DMV region;
- Do not directly distribute recovered food; and
- Request the full funding amount available (\$125,000) within their proposal.

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 focused in Montgomery County, though food can be recovered from sources outside of the County;
- Active 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.

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

- To cover any expenses, obligations and/or fines made prior to the grant award term dates;
- Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Montgomery County;
- For debts and penalties imposed on the grantee;
- For alcoholic beverages;
- For lobbying;
- To supplant (replace) funds from other grant sources; or
- To provide services that wholly occur outside of Montgomery County.

E. Award Amounts and Duration

A single grant for a total of \$125,000 will be made available to fund one award to an eligible organization. The grant is anticipated to have a 12-month performance period from on/about September 30, 2025 through September 30, 2026. Programs must be run and evaluated during this period.

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 roughly three to four weeks after the application deadline via email. 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 FY26 FRN Grant Program Solicitation Page and click the “Apply” button to create an application through [here](#).

[Insert address to solicitation page as hyperlink]



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 FY26 Food Recovery Network Coordination Grant Program, and then will be able to access the grant application.

After creating an account, an applicant must select the Grants Program from the [OGM homepage](#), and then will be able to create an application for this Grant Program within the Euna Grants platform. 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 Monday, August 21, 2025 at 11:59 PM. Applicants may only submit one application per organization. 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.

I. Information Session

An FY25 Food Recovery Network Infrastructure Grant Information Session will be held on Tuesday, July 29, 2025 from 11:00 AM - 12:00 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

- 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.
- 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. 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 [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.

- 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 [OGM Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template](#) and upload it into application. Responding to these questions is optional and will have no impact on application reviews.

C. Project Scope of Work

The Project Scope of Work includes several data components related to the proposal, as outlined below:

- **Project Title** – If awarded, Project Title will become the Grant Agreement name
- **Project Overview** – Provide a brief description of the project. This description of the project will also be directly integrated into the Grant Agreement (*120-word limit*)
- **Grant Program Funding Request** – Total amount requested through this grant proposal (***must be aligned with the full funding available***). Applications that request less than this amount will be disqualified.
- **Total Project Cost** – Total cost of project from all funding sources

The proposal's Scope of Work Narrative is outlined in the following questions. If a question below does not apply to your proposal, please indicate that it is not applicable within the Scope of Work Narrative.

Please upload one PDF attachment that answers each of the below questions.

- Describe your assessment of the current challenges and opportunities in local food recovery efforts, and how coordination and collaboration can address them. (*500-word limit*)
- What best practices and strategies in other jurisdictions have you identified to potentially model in our community? (*500-word limit*)
- Outline how your organization proposes to enhance current food recovery efforts in Montgomery County, specifically addressing strategies to:
 1. **Establish and Manage Food Recovery Network** (*600-word limit*): Outline a plan for designing and implementing a Food Recovery Network (FRN) in Montgomery

County, including specific strategies for supporting network member organizations through:

- Identifying potential food recovery network member organizations, including their service area, capacity, and contact details;
- Engaging food recovery partners that are not required to participate in FRN through OFSR grant agreements;
- Establishing consensus-based formal network member agreements;
- Regular community of practice gatherings and other communication pathways;
- Regular technical assistance and training on a wide range of operational topics as defined by the network, provided either directly or through partner entities;
- Utilizing technology platform(s) for logistics coordination, communication, resource sharing, etc. (including strategies for integration with other systems);
- Support Food Recovery Network member compliance with collection and reporting of required food recovery data to the Office of Food Systems Resilience; and
- Administer formal and informal feedback loops with Food Recovery Network members on a recurring basis, to assess network functionality, sufficiency of currently available resources, coordination effectiveness, etc.

2. **Coordinate Logistics** *(500-word limit)*

- Design and implement strategies to address the logistical challenges experienced by food recovery organizations, including coordination of pick-up, storage, and redistribution for recovered food;
- Develop an equitable and efficient network partner system for sharing infrastructure, connecting with new donors, re-distribution of food, and other resources that avoids network partner competition, honors existing relationships, aligns with Partner Direct and other existing donor assignment structures, and encourages individual organization recruitment efforts;
- Evaluate the current methods, volume and cost impacts of food waste management among network member organizations and identify infrastructure, technical assistance, and other needs to pursue zero-waste strategies in food recovery operations.

3. **Expand Available Resources** *(600-word limit)*

- Recruit and retain new food recovery donor partners, particularly institutions, commercial-scale producers, and sources of specialty diet, high value, and/or diverse food products;
- Identify potential new donors, which may include farms, restaurants, and food retailers;
- Donor incentives and recognition opportunities, as well as developing donor recruitment materials for direct use by network partners;
- Address infrastructure challenges, including strategies to increase availability and facilitate shared-use of cold storage units, refrigerated vehicles, dry-storage space, etc.;
- Leverage existing local, statewide, regional, and/or national food recovery partnerships and structures to increase resources for the FRN;

- Increase non-County funding, in-kind resources, and assets access available for food recovery efforts that support Montgomery County residents;
- Identify cost-savings opportunities for network organizations through collective purchasing, discount negotiation, and competitive pricing research;
- Create and distribute educational and communications materials for diverse audiences (including food donors, network member organizations, and food assistance recipients) on topics including:
 - Training and compliance with food safety and/or nutrition standards, including donation guidelines and safe storage of potentially hazardous food items (cut produce, meat, dairy, prepared foods, etc.);
 - Redistribution and quality control measures that ensure residents do not receive spoiled food; and
 - Community benefits of and specific storage and preparation guidance for recovered food.

D. Project Budget Task

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

- Upload of Project Budget (No page limit, MS Excel budget template below required)
- Organization estimated staff size serving Montgomery County in 2025 (in total FTEs)
- Description of Organization's Grant and Financial Management Practices (*120-word limit*)
- Upload: Current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (*optional*)
- 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

Use the required Grant Program Standard Project Budget template available here:

[FY26-FRC-Budget-Template.xlsx](#)

The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, using the provided template. The budget template for this proposal includes:

- Expenses: detailed itemized cost information for all proposed expenses, including quantities and prices, plus any indirect costs.
 - o *Budget requests should **not** include any capital costs (i.e. infrastructure, equipment, etc.) and should focus on costs associated with operations, such as staffing, print/communications materials, and technology investments as applicable.*
 - o Program Budgets should also include indirect costs. Indirect costs may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, etc. Indirect costs may only be charged on direct operating expenses, not capital expenses. If applicants have a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), then they must use that rate within their application. Applicants without a NICRA may use a rate of up to 15%. **The maximum indirect rate should not exceed 15%.**

- Revenues: 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.

E. Budget Narrative/Justification Task

In addition to a Program Budget, the proposal must include a Budget Narrative/Justification that briefly describes the proposed expenditures and revenues. 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 should upload an attachment that addresses each of the following questions:

- Brief description of each staff member and contractor role and responsibilities in relation to the proposed project (*500-word limit*);
- Outline the purpose of proposed operating costs and an explanation of how costs were calculated (*500-word limit*);
- 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 (*200-word limit*);
- Specify how your project would be affected if total available funding were more than the amount requested. With additional funding, what infrastructure, technology, or other one-time expense would you add to your budget to enhance the impact of the proposed project? (*200-word limit*);
- 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 (*200-word limit*).

F. 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.

Please upload one PDF attachment for the performance history narrative that demonstrates the organization's history with **each** of the following (*200-word limit for each bullet*):

- Establishing networks, and fostering, and implementing formal and informal collaboration activities among network members and relevant food system partners, including communication, service coordination, and information/resource sharing;
- Leveraging multiple forms of external investment and/or resources, including through grant-writing, solicitation of in-kind resource donations, and securing group discounts on services and goods;
- Connecting partner organizations with available resources and providing technical assistance;

- Developing subject matter expertise on network building and food recovery sector operational challenges and best practices, including (but not limited to) food safety organics waste management, communications, and relationship management;
- Collaborating with the private sector, particularly within the local food system (food businesses, institutions, etc.);
- Experience with selecting, implementing, and managing use of relevant technology platforms, particularly related to network coordination, food recovery, and/or broader food systems initiatives;
- Developing resource toolkits for diverse audiences, including private sector, nonprofits, and residents;
- Working with food recovery organizations and programs, including relevant partnerships/roles with local, state, regional and/or national entities and relationships with potential food recovery donor partners such as institutions, commercial-scale producers, and other sources of specialty diet, high value, and/or diverse food products including farms, restaurants, and food retailers. (*Note: The applicant may choose to name specific entities when outlining relevant existing partnerships with potential donor partners*);
- Creating, administering, and analyzing results of network surveys and data collection strategies.

G. 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 (outlined [here](#)). Grantees will submit a **Programmatic Report** at the **mid-cycle and end-cycle** points of the 12-month performance period using an online platform provided by OFSR.

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 two points in time (“milestones”): at 6 months (mid-cycle) and 12 months (end-cycle). *Note: If awarded funding, Performance Evaluation Metric targets will be revised as needed to align with the actual number of school partners assigned.*

1. Total number of food assistance/food recovery operators engaged in Montgomery County Food Recovery Network
2. Total number of new food donors contributing to Montgomery County food recovery efforts
3. Total number of food recovery organizations engaged through the following activities:
 - o Food Recovery Network Meetings
 - o Food Recovery Network Trainings
 - o Email lists
 - o Executed FRN member agreements
4. Total \$ value of non-food new resources leveraged to support the network during the grant period
5. Total hours of technical assistance provided to food recovery partners, including donors and food recovery operators

Performance Evaluation Narrative Questions:

In an uploaded attachment, the applicant should demonstrate a clear, cohesive timeline for establishing, expanding, and coordinating a Food Recovery Network comprised of food recovery operators that engages donors and other food system partners in Montgomery County over the 12 month grant performance period; and identify projected outputs and outcomes, using the key metrics outlined in the [Required and Recommended Metrics attachment](#) and those explicitly outlined below. (200 words per section)

- **Leverage external investment:** How will the applicant secure additional funding and/or resources to support the success of the proposed project? Include projections for the following:
 - External investment/resources secured (\$ value)
 - Funds (\$ value)
 - Volunteers (total number)
 - Non-food in-kind resources (\$ value)
 - Discounts for network members (\$ value)
- **Technical Assistance:** How will the applicant connect food system partner organizations with available resources through technical assistance? Include projections for the following:
 - Total number of new donors recruited
 - Total value of food recovered from new donor partners (\$ value)
 - Total food recovered from new donor partners (pounds)
 - Total hours of technical assistance provided
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** How does the applicant plan to design, administer, and evaluate the responses from a baseline survey and 6-month follow-up survey for food recovery operators in the FRN? The surveys will collect data on food recovery activities and include space for narrative feedback.
 - Include a timeline for each step of the survey process and an estimated participation rate among FRN members.
- **Technology Experience:** How will the applicant leverage food recovery or food systems technology, and research and identify a platform that can be used to coordinate food recovery efforts?
 - Identify a timeline for understanding use cases, user research and business requirements, testing, selecting the appropriate platform, providing training and technical assistance to users, and launching its use.
- **Resource Development:** How does the applicant plan to develop and share resource toolkits to food donors and food assistance recipients regarding the purpose, benefits, and use of recovered foods? Include projections related to:
 - Total number of new resources developed, by target audience:
 - Donor;
 - Food recovery operators;
 - Program participants
 - Estimated percentage of recipients expected to report improved understanding or use of recovered food after receiving new resource toolkits
 - Total estimated distribution reach (number of individuals receiving) of all resources

- o Strategies to ensure accessibility for recipients with limited language or data literacy

H. Supporting Documentation

- Letter(s) of Support from Montgomery County-based food recovery organization(s) (optional)

I. Budget Tool

This Grant Program is not using the Budget Tool. This item should be ignored as applicants prepare and submit proposals.

J. Goals Tool

This Grant Program is not using the Goals Tool. This item should be ignored as applicants prepare and submit proposals.

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 [statistical rescaling](#) 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 Goals and Grant Program Priorities (Establishing and Supporting Food Recovery Network)

(1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

In line with the priorities for the Grant Program listed above, the proposal clearly demonstrates:

- Cohesive plans to establish, foster, and implement formal and informal collaboration activities among Food Recovery Network members, including communication, service coordination, and information/resource sharing which leverage and expand upon existing structures in the food recovery sector;
- Strategies for offering technical assistance and developing supportive materials for Food Recovery Network partners regarding operational challenges and best practices
- Experience with food recovery or related technology platforms, and sufficient expertise to identify and implement technology system(s) to coordinate Food Recovery Network activity; and
- Plans to develop and administer formal and informal feedback loops with Food Recovery Network members.

Criterion B: Project Goals and Grant Program Priorities (Coordination and Logistics)

(1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

In line with the priorities for the Grant Program listed above, the proposal clearly demonstrates:

- Capacity to design and implement strategies to address the logistical challenges experienced by food recovery organizations;
- Strategies to develop an equitable and efficient network partner allocation/assignment system for new donors and re-distributed food; and
- Plans to evaluate the current methods, volume and cost impacts of food waste management among network member organizations.

Criterion C: Project Goals and Grant Program Priorities (Expanding Available Resources)

(1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

In line with the priorities for the Grant Program listed above, the proposal clearly demonstrates strategies to:

- Recruit and retain new food recovery donor partners;
- Address infrastructure challenges;
- Leverage existing local, statewide, regional, and/or national food recovery partnerships and structures to increase resources for the FRN;
- Increase non-County funding, in-kind resources, and assets access available for food recovery efforts and the success of the project;
- Identify cost-savings opportunities for network organizations through collective purchasing, discount negotiation, and competitive pricing research; and
- Develop and share educational materials for food donors, volunteers, and food assistance recipients regarding the purpose, benefits, and use of recovered foods.

Criterion D: Budget Proposal and Narrative

(1-3 rating; weighted at 15/100 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 and other parts of the proposal, and outlines a clear plan to implement the proposed infrastructure; and
- Applicant's Budget and Budget Justification reflect reasonable and realistic costs needed to implement the proposal and achieve the stated outcomes.

Criterion E: Performance History and Performance Evaluation Plans

(1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates strong existing partnerships, network coordination experience, and subject matter expertise sufficient to achieve proposed program objectives.
- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Plan a clear work plan and process to

measure/evaluate impact, comply with the required metrics, and administer surveys and/or evaluation of Food Recovery Network Members on a recurring basis;

- Proposal outlines reasonable and achievable performance milestones, effective program data tracking and reporting processes, and sound program evaluation methods;

Criterion F: Soundness of the Overall Proposal

(1-3 rating; weighted at 5/100 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.

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

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 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, and 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.