

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

FY26 Food Aggregation Grant Program
Stage One Application

Program Summary: The Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR), in partnership with the Office of Grants Management (OGM), is soliciting grant applications from local food aggregation and distribution companies with experience in market development for small farmers to establish and maintain a facility in Montgomery County, Maryland under the County's FY2026 Food Aggregation Grant Program. This facility, and the grantee selected to run it ("Operator"), will aggregate, distribute, and market food grown by regional farmers to wholesale markets- including, but not limited to, Montgomery County institutions and agencies- such as schools, senior centers, hospitals, food banks, and correctional facilities.

\$550,000 in funding is available to fund one award from OFSR to support startup, construction and retrofitting of necessary facilities, ongoing operations, and to purchase food over the initial one-year program period; the performance period of this award is anticipated to cover a four year period from June 30, 2026 to June 30, 2030. Multi-year funding across the four fiscal years will range from \$250,000 to \$500,000 in grant funds and/or food purchasing commitments, pending funding availability and grantee performance, with a maximum of \$500,000 total available in a single fiscal year.

This application consists of a two stage process. Stage One will assess eligibility for grant funding whereas Stage Two will assess fit and alignment for this funding. Applicants who pass Stage One will be invited to participate in Stage Two. The Stage Two dates and Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will be released approximately four weeks after the Stage One application closing date. If an applicant misses the Stage One application deadline, they will **not be** eligible to submit an application for Stage Two.

Stage One Key Program Dates:

- **NOFO Available:** Monday, February 2nd, 2026
- **Program Open for Applications:** Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026, 12:00 PM EST
- **MS Teams Live Grant Information Session (link to join below):** Thursday, February 12th, 2026 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM
- **Submission Deadline:** Friday, February 20th, 2026 at 11:59 PM EST

Stage One Key Program Resources:

- **Program Page:** https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/1dvy14wqkh3o6
- **Information Session:** [Link to the Thursday, February 12th, 2026 12:00 to 1:00 PM Information OR a recording of the event](#)

- [OGM Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template](#)
- [OGM's Resources for Applicants Webpage](#)
- Key Program Resources (including Stage Two reporting requirements) will be provided within a FY26 Food Aggregation Grant Program Stage Two NOFO that is anticipated to be released approximately four weeks after the Stage One application closing date.

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 American with Disability Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management (OGM) 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 OGM using the contact information below.

Greg Weissman,
 Program Manager II, OGM
 (240) 773-3344
grants@montgomerycountymd.gov

For any technical questions related to the application, or inquiries concerning the Scope of Services, Proposal Submission Requirements or procurement procedures, please contact the OFSR using the contact information below:

Heather Bruskin
 Director, Office of Food Systems Resilience
 Montgomery County, MD
 Heather.Bruskin@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 Food Aggregation 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.

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SECTION I – GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Background

Montgomery County, Maryland is home to over 100 food producing farms. The sustainability and growth of these farms is essential to long-term food systems resilience in the County. However, many small farms in Montgomery County face barriers in accessing wholesale and institutional markets which limit their ability to scale production and maintain viability; this is particularly true for farmers representing historically underserved communities. On their own, most small farmers are unable to meet the quantities and specifications, nor manage the cost of logistics and distribution, required by larger volume markets.

Concurrently, there is significant unmet demand for Montgomery County-grown products from local institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and state agencies. [Maryland legislation](#) requires that state institutions attempt to purchase at least 20% of food from locally grown or harvested sources through the [Certified Local Farm and Fish Program \(CLFF\)](#), established in 2023¹. According to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, state agencies and institutions spend upwards of \$91 million annually on food purchases. Maryland's Farm to School program also encourages local food product purchasing by local education authorities.

OFSR and other government programs are already working to support County farmers and the overall resilience of the food system through developing reliable market channels that increase access to local food. The Montgomery County Farm to Food Bank Program, a partnership between OFSR and [Manna Food Center](#), has invested over \$1.5M in capacity building grants and fair market purchases, supporting over 30 County farms, since 2021. Additionally, in FY25 OFSR has established \$1M in grant awards (including through the Food as Medicine and School-Based Food Assistance programs) that prioritize projects that source from local producers, as well as a \$200k cold storage grant program for projects intersecting food security and local food production. Grantees funded through the Food as Medicine program report sourcing at least 94% of their distributed food from local producers, and approximately one-third of food provided to students and families through the School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program is local produce. In 2024, OFSR launched a Collaborative Funding Program with Manna Food Center which awarded ten farms with one-time investments that support infrastructure, equipment, or other capital investments in exchange for the farms' ongoing participation in the Montgomery County Farm to Food Bank program. Despite this legislation and policies, institutions have struggled to meet their buy-local goals, and farmers are still seeking stable markets for their products.

The County government also directly purchases food for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR). DOCR, in partnership with OFSR and the County's Department of Environmental Protection, is conducting an assessment of their food procurement with the [Center for Good Food Purchasing](#), with an intention to create a Good Food Action Plan for DOCR. One of the six core values of the Good Food Purchasing Program is “Supporting Local and Community

¹ Maryland Department of Agriculture Certified Local Farm and Fish Program, https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/pages/certified-local-farm.aspx

Based Economies”, which recommends sourcing from small regional producers, like those in the CLFF. OFSR also has partnerships with Montgomery County Food Council, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, Revenue Authority, and the Montgomery Agricultural Producers, all of which might prove relevant to the Operator.

The misalignment of the established institutional demand for locally sourced food products described above and a readily accessible supply of local products available is largely due to a lack of infrastructure and distribution channels in the County to connect and align supply and demand of local products. Additional regional aggregation, distribution, marketing, and value chain coordination capacity will enable Montgomery County farmers to supply local markets, and will help state and local institutions and agencies meet their food purchasing goals and commitments. OFSR aims to address these challenges by investing in an experienced, well-established commercial entity to expand purchasing, aggregation, and distribution of food products from Montgomery County and CLFF producers for sale to institutional and other wholesale buyers. Specific purchasing and contracting structures will be designed with the grantee after the award is made.

This project fits into the County’s three-part strategy for strengthening the local food system - simultaneously scale investments that expand food production capacity by County farms, increase market demand and opportunities, and amplify value-chain coordination and infrastructure. The County will act as an early investor in this system to activate a larger, market-based solution that builds long-term capacity and resiliency for the region’s food system and farmers.

B. Target Population

The target population served by this grant program includes Montgomery County and regional food producers such as farms and value-added businesses, institutional food service providers, restaurants, and food retailers that face barriers related to selling and buying/sourcing food locally for service to Montgomery County residents. Additionally, community members experiencing food insecurity and accessing community-based food assistance programs, including through the OFSR’s School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program, Food as Medicine Grant Program, and Community Food Assistance Grant Program, will benefit from this investment as they will gain greater access to locally grown foods that are supplied by the Operator to the local food assistance network.

C. Funding Priorities

Through this project, OFSR aims to build the long-term resilience of the local food supply chain in Montgomery County. The goal of this funding is to increase market access for small, local farms and the availability of locally grown food to community members through the establishment and/or expansion of a local food aggregator in Montgomery County. Support from the County will be provided through a phased approach that is aimed at catalyzing initial investment while also supporting long-term sustainability.

Funding is available to address these goals through three interconnected offerings:

1. Construction costs: Funding for construction associated with retrofitting or building an aggregation and distribution facility in Montgomery County to fulfill the procurement needs of OFSR's grantees and partners, and enhance market access for farmers in the County and beyond;
2. Operational Costs: Funding for the establishment or expansion of operations in the County, including to support project startup costs, assess infrastructure needs, leverage project funding to attract additional investment, conduct farmer outreach and capacity building efforts, secure necessary technology to manage buyer and seller relationships, and other relevant project implementation costs; and
3. Guaranteed purchases of Montgomery County products by Montgomery County government.

Anticipated Funding Structure

Initial grant funding in year one will help the selected contractor establish operations in Montgomery County, including start-up costs, building costs, planning and management. In year two, the OFSR will provide grant funding to supplement purchasing commitments from the County, pending availability of funds and compliance with reporting requirements. In years three and four, the County will commit to a set amount of market-rate procurements for County institutions and OFSR grant programs, pending availability of funds and compliance with reporting requirements. Specific purchasing and contracting structures will be designed with the grantee after the award is made.

Year One

- \$250,000: In flexible grant funding to support establishing and expanding operational activities, or other relevant expenses as outlined in the proposal. Structured as an up-front payment.
- \$300,000: In capital grant funds to support capital and construction costs for a facility. Structured as reimbursable payments.
- **Total Year One Funding from OFSR: \$550,000**

Matching requirements: Minimum of 50% matching funds requirement (\$275,000), no more than 20% of the match can be in-kind (\$55,000).

Year Two

Year Two funding is contingent upon appropriation of funding, compliance with Year 1 reporting requirements, and successful achievement of Year Two milestone objectives. An updated budget and funding plan for Year Two will also be required.

- \$200,000: In grant funding for operational cost assistance, structured as up-front payments disbursed 50% at the beginning and 50% at the mid-point of the Year 2 cycle

- \$300,000: In County purchases of food products at market rates to be allocated through OFSR food assistance grant program(s) **Total Year Two Funding: \$500,000 (40% grant funding, 60% County committed purchases)**

Years Three + Four

Year Three and Four funding is contingent upon appropriation of funding, compliance with reporting requirements from the previous year, and successful achievement of annual milestone objectives. Updated budgets and funding plans will be required annually.

- \$300,000: In County purchases of food products at market rates to be allocated through OFSR food assistance grant program(s)
- **Total Year Three Funding: \$300,000 (100% County committed purchases)**
- **Total Year Four Funding: \$300,000 (100% County committed purchases)**

This project will result in new or adapted food systems infrastructure, enhanced relationships between buyers and sellers inside and beyond the County, and increased farmer income and capacity. Ideally, this effort will serve as a model for how public investment can catalyze market development and increased food systems resilience.

A successful proposal will demonstrate the following elements:

- A viable and well-researched plan to develop a food hub operation in Montgomery County that can aggregate, store, and distribute a variety of locally sourced food products to fulfill the County Government's guaranteed purchases and create more market opportunities for County farmers
- Performance history that demonstrates the skills and experience to meet the goals of this funding
- Operational capacity to meet the procurement requirements of this program including:
 - Inventory management
 - Logistics and routing
 - Fleet management, interstate DOT compliance
 - Staffing
 - Technology
- Procurement capabilities including:
 - Capacity to onboard Montgomery County farmers and food businesses during the period of performance, with an emphasis on purchasing from local, DMV-region farms and food businesses and/or Maryland and Mid-Atlantic region (DC, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, PA, NJ, West Virginia)-based businesses owned/operated by individuals representing historically underserved communities.
- A strategy to utilize existing or new sales relationships with institutional and wholesale buyers to increase market opportunities for farmers and food businesses in Montgomery County
- Detailed and achievable timeline and strategy to establish or expand operations in Montgomery County to meet the demands of this program, including:
 - Compliance with the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA);

- Third party audited food handling practices, Supplier Verification program, and FSMA PCR-compliant policies; or experience implementing these controls at a new facility;
 - Ability to segregate GAP and non-GAP certified produce;
- A feasible and detailed timeline and plan to receive, inventory, sell, and fulfill a variety of locally produced foods, potentially including but not limited to:
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh and frozen meats and proteins, eggs, dairy products, seafood, and shelf-stable goods
 - Culturally diverse foods
- Grant management capacity to properly manage and track funds use, effectively collect and report relevant/required performance evaluation data, and comply with other OFSR and Montgomery County Government grant requirements
- A plan to retrofit and/or build the infrastructure required to fulfill the grant requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Fundraising for unmet infrastructure needs
 - Identifying and overseeing the development of unmet infrastructure needs
- A plan to maintain sustainable operations beyond the life of this grant funding
- Alignment with OFSR's core values:
 - Equity: all efforts should address social injustice and racial disparities to build equity and food sovereignty in our community.
 - Systems-based: strategies should focus on identifying, maximizing, and addressing the interconnections of food issue areas, simultaneously contextualizing their benefits and their impacts on production, access, natural resources, education, and economy.
 - Innovative: to transform our food system, novel approaches, creative ideas, and best practices models from other jurisdictions are critical.
 - Data-driven: strategic policy and investment decisions require intentional and reliable data collection and analysis, and solutions with clearly defined success metrics and measurable impact.

Additional Support

In addition to funding, the OFSR and Montgomery County Office of Agriculture (OAG) will leverage their existing relationships with State agencies and local institutions such as Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Montgomery County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), and hospitals to facilitate productive introductions for the Operator with producers and buyers across the region. OAG will also continue to provide farmers with technical assistance, including training for farmers to increase their market readiness and success encouraging GHP/GAP regulatory compliance. OFSR will connect the grantee to the [Montgomery County Green Bank](#), Revenue Authority, and with the [Montgomery County Business Center](#) with the goal of leveraging additional resources through partnership and incentives such as the [MOVE grant](#) (as applicable).

Additional In-Kind Contribution from the County will include:

- Warm introductions to producers and buyers across the region, including for institutional purchasing opportunities through County-funded programs

- Introductions and potential collaboration with other funding and technical assistance partners within Montgomery County Government
- Support from the [USDA Wholesale Markets and Facility Design](#) program, which can provide additional design details and capital cost estimates
- Access to value-chain coordination support and technical assistance for engaging small farmers. This in-kind work could include creating an outreach plan to inform the farming community about local wholesale opportunities or facilitating grower agreements that match farmers' interests and experience levels.
- Support from OAG to help small farmers secure and incorporate season-extending processes and equipment, like high tunnels, into their operations as funds are available.
- County-organized trainings for farmers to increase their market readiness and success
- County-led ongoing communications with farmers regarding planting and harvesting schedules, GHP/GAP and regulatory compliance, post-harvest handling procedures, packaging and labeling standards, and delivery
- Supplemental support to the Operator's marketing and branding efforts through social media and other communications channels

D. Eligibility Conditions

Organizations may only submit one application in each stage, and must meet all of the following Grant Program and Montgomery County eligibility conditions to be considered for the award.

Grant Program Eligibility Requirements

1. The grantee must have the ability to aggregate, store, and distribute a variety of locally sourced food products to fulfill OFSR's guaranteed purchases and create more market opportunities for the County farmers.
2. The grantee must have prior experience contracting with and selling to at least 2 institutional buyers (e.g. K-12 schools, universities, hospitals, carceral sector)
 - a. Preference will be given to applicants with experience:
 - i. Maintaining sales relationships with the charitable food sector
 - ii. Sourcing from registered CLFF producers
 - iii. Maintaining sales relationships with institutional buyers in Maryland and/or the Mid-Atlantic region
3. The grantee must have active wholesale and institutional customer relationships;
 - a. Preference will be given to applicants with existing market channels in (a) Montgomery County, (b) Maryland, and (c) the Mid-Atlantic region.
4. The grantee must demonstrate at least \$1M in annual gross revenue from food sales within the past three years.
5. The grantee must demonstrate procurement capabilities including:
 - a. Existing procurement relationships with at least 10 small farms (farms with less than \$350K in annual revenues²)

² United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. "Farm Structure and Organization – Farm Structure and Contracting." Updated January 5, 2025. www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-structure-and-organization/farm-structure-and-contracting

- i. Preference will be given to applicants with past experience
 1. Sourcing from both GAP and non-GAP certified farms (including MDA GAP, USDA GAP, and USDA Harmonized GAP)
 2. Sourcing from farms with no past wholesale markets experience
- b. Capacity to onboard and regularly source from a minimum of 5 CLFF producers and 5 Montgomery County farmers and food businesses during the first two years and a total of 20 CLFF and/or Montgomery County farms during the total performance period
- c. Experience sourcing a variety of culturally-specific food products

6. The grantee must demonstrate appropriate administrative capacity and experience, including:

- a. Experience receiving and administering grant funds and meeting the associated reporting requirements
 - i. Preference will be given to applicants with experience administering funding from government agencies and collaborating with governmental entities on previous projects
 - ii. Preference will be given to applicants with experience in program evaluation and/or data collection from food system stakeholders, including farmers

7. The grantee must demonstrate relevant experience with infrastructure development including:

- a. Building or retrofitting facilities and infrastructure for food aggregation and distribution;
- b. Successfully maintaining and managing facilities and infrastructure for food aggregation and distribution; and
- c. Experience raising diversified capital for development or retrofitting of food supply chain facilities.

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;
- All successful applications must clearly state the following and activities and expenditures funded through this grant program must:
 - Be provided free of charge (this includes a prohibition on requesting donations and use of County resources for fundraising);
 - Not be provided in promotion of a particular religion, political party, etc. or with a requirement of service or program attendance; and
 - Be open and available to all Montgomery County residents, regardless of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability,

sexual orientation, gender identity, family responsibility, genetic status, presence of children, or source of income.

- 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.

Grant funding cannot be used for:

- Gift cards;
- 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.

E. Award Amounts and Duration

This program will make a single award in the amount of \$550,000 for the initial one-year program period. **Applicants must request the award amount of \$550,000 in their application.** Final funding amount may be lower than \$550,000. The funding request should reflect the operational and capital costs associated with the establishment and maintenance of an aggregation facility within the initial one year program period following the awarding of the grant. **The performance period of the grant is anticipated to be over a four year period from on/about June 30, 2026 through June 30, 2030.** Program activities must take place and be evaluated during this period. This Grant Program does not commit Montgomery County to make an award. The awardee will be eligible to receive funding and/or committed purchases from OFSR programs as outlined in Section C (Funding Priorities pgs. 5-8) over the four year period, pending successful performance outcomes, grant administration compliance, and appropriation of funds.

F. Grant Program Timeline

Timeline for Stage One:

- **Launch date:** Monday, February 2nd, 2026
- **Deadline for Stage One Applications:** Friday, February 20th, 2026

Tentative Timeline for Stage Two:

- **Estimated Launch date:** Friday, March 20th, 2026
- **Estimated Deadline for Stage Two Applications:** Friday, April 17th, 2026

G. Application Review & Awards

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** – OFSR will also conduct a second review assessing whether applicants and their proposals Grant Program Eligibility Requirements cited above to ensure all submitted applications are within the intended scope of this Grant Program. Organizations and applications that do not meet these all of these requirements will be disqualified.

H. Award Notification

Invitations to Stage Two are expected to be released via email roughly one month after the Stage One application deadline. One award offer will be extended to the successful grantee roughly one month after the Stage Two application deadline. For the awardee, the Grant Agreement will contain the total amount awarded and funding restrictions; programmatic, administrative, and policy requirements; reporting requirements; and payment terms.

I. Submission Guidelines and Support Resources

How to Apply:

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



Montgomery County MD

FY26 Healthy Communities Fund Grant Program

Apply

Overview Eligibility Financial Contact Files

3. Review the Euna (eCivis) applicant user guides for assistance and other support resources

OGM Developed Instructional Videos (Youtube videos):

1. [**How to Create an Euna Application**](#)
2. [**Euna Budget Tool Instructional Video**](#)

Euna Applicant User Guides (PDF downloads):

1. [**Logging into Your eCivis Portal Account**](#)
2. [**Reviewing and Submitting your application**](#)
3. [**Transfer Application Ownership**](#)
4. [**Guide for Applicants**](#), including Budget Tool assistance on pages 13 to 20

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.

Stage One Applications are due no later than Friday, February 20th, 2026 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.

J. Information Session

An FY26 Food Aggregation Grant Information Session will be held on **Thursday, February 12th, 2026 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.

K. 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 – STAGE ONE 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 Stage One applicants are not required to complete the Budget or Goals & Metrics sections in Euna.

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 the new [**federal standards for collecting this 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. Stage One Questionnaire

This section will enable the Stage One review committee to judge if the applicant meets the requirements to access this funding opportunity. 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** - Please provide a brief project overview demonstrating your vision for expanding food hub operations into Montgomery County (*2,500 characters maximum*).

Please provide short answers to the following questions with as much specificity and quantification as space allows:

1. Do you have experience with aggregating, storing and distributing a variety of locally sourced foods?
 - a. If yes, briefly describe your experience. (*1,250 characters maximum*)
2. Do you have experience selling a variety of local foods to wholesale and institutional market channels?
 - a. If yes, briefly describe your experience, including the number of farms you work with, the products you buy from them, and what volumes. Please also describe the type, number, and scale of market channels you work with (e.g. retail, direct to consumer, broadline distributors, institutions). (*1,250 characters maximum*)

3. Do you have experience selling or supplying foods to food banks, food access programs, and other community-based programs?
 - a. If yes, briefly describe your experience. (*500 characters maximum*)
4. Please describe your current sales relationships, listing current buyers (noting those operating in Montgomery County and/or Maryland if applicable), and highlighting any long-term/contractual sales partnerships. (*1,500 characters maximum*)
5. Please share a statement of activities (revenues and expenses) for the last twelve months, and the percentage of revenue by source, including each market channel specified in question 2. Please also provide an estimate of your total projected revenue and expenses for the next twelve months, and the same breakdown by market channel. (*2,500 characters maximum*) This may be provided in a Microsoft Excel version if preferred, using the upload option.
6. Do you have experience sourcing from small farms? (USDA defines small farms as those with less than \$350k in annual farm revenues).
 - a. If yes, describe your experience, including the number of farms, locations of farms, and product types purchased from small farmers within the past year (*500 characters maximum*)
 - b. Please describe specific experiences sourcing from farms that are based in Montgomery County and/or are participants in the CLFF program (*1,000 characters maximum*)
7. Do you have experience sourcing culturally-specific food products, including those that reflect the needs of immigrant and/or historically marginalized communities?
 - a. If yes, describe your experience (*500 characters maximum*)
8. Do you have experience receiving, administering, and reporting on government and/or philanthropic grant funding?
 - a. If yes, please provide a brief description of the funding, including the funding source(s) and date(s) (*500 characters maximum*)
9. Do you have experience with tracking and reporting operational and/or program data, including data collected from external partners such as farmers?
 - a. If yes, please describe your experience (*500 characters maximum*)
10. Do you have experience managing and maintaining existing facilities and infrastructure for food aggregation and distribution?
 - a. If yes, please describe your experience (*500 characters maximum*)
11. Do you have experience raising capital for building or retrofitting food supply chain facilities?
 - a. If yes, please describe your experience (*500 characters maximum*)
12. Do you have experience building out and/or retrofitting food supply chain facilities?
 - a. If yes, please describe your experience (*500 characters maximum*)

SECTION III – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

Stage One Scoring Criteria

Stage One applications will be evaluated based on their ability to meet the Grant Program Eligibility Requirements (copied below):

Grant Program Eligibility Requirements

1. The grantee must have the ability to aggregate, store, and distribute a variety of locally sourced food products to fulfill OFSR's guaranteed purchases and create more market opportunities for the County farmers.
2. The grantee must have prior experience contracting with and selling to at least 2 institutional buyers (e.g. K-12 schools, universities, hospitals, carceral sector)
 - a. Preference will be given to applicants with experience:
 - i. Maintaining sales relationships with the charitable food sector
 - ii. Sourcing from registered CLFF producers
 - iii. Maintaining sales relationships with institutional buyers in Maryland and/or the Mid-Atlantic region
3. The grantee must have active wholesale and institutional customer relationships;
 - a. Preference will be given to applicants with existing market channels in (a) Montgomery County, (b) Maryland, and (c) the Mid-Atlantic region.
4. The grantee must demonstrate at least \$1M in annual gross revenue from food sales within the past three years.
5. The grantee must demonstrate procurement capabilities including:
 - a. Existing procurement relationships with at least 10 small farms (farms with less than \$350K in annual revenues³)
 - i. Preference will be given to applicants with past experience
 1. Sourcing from both GAP and non-GAP certified farms (including MDA GAP, USDA GAP, and USDA Harmonized GAP)
 2. Sourcing from farms with no past wholesale markets experience
 - b. Capacity to onboard and regularly source from a minimum of 5 CLFF producers and 5 Montgomery County farmers and food businesses during the first two years and a total of 20 CLFF and/or Montgomery County farms during the total performance period
 - c. Experience sourcing a variety of culturally-specific food products
6. The grantee must demonstrate appropriate administrative capacity and experience, including:
 - a. Experience receiving and administering grant funds and meeting the associated reporting requirements
 - i. Preference will be given to applicants with experience administering funding from government agencies and collaborating with governmental entities on previous projects

³ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. "Farm Structure and Organization – Farm Structure and Contracting." Updated January 5, 2025. www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-structure-and-organization/farm-structure-and-contracting

- ii. Preference will be given to applicants with experience in program evaluation and/or data collection from food system stakeholders, including farmers
- 7. The grantee must demonstrate relevant experience with infrastructure development including:
 - a. Building or retrofitting facilities and infrastructure for food aggregation and distribution;
 - b. Successfully maintaining and managing facilities and infrastructure for food aggregation and distribution; and
 - c. Experience raising diversified capital for development or retrofitting of food supply chain facilities.

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 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.), 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, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The applicant further agrees to make every attempt to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.) and ensure that the program is accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the applicant intends to comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. Sections 6101-6107) such that no person will experience discrimination based on age in any program that receives federal financial assistance.
- ✓ 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.