

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork**  
**Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated March 19, 2019**

1. Q: Are food donation programs through food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofits eligible for support through the Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program?

A: Unfortunately, this opportunity focuses specifically on the retail sector, per the legislation authorizing the program. Food donation programs are not eligible.
  
2. Q: Is there a cap or maximum grant size?

A: There is no cap, limit, maximum or average grant size. Applicants are encouraged to request the amount truly needed and the proposal should reflect the details of that need.
  
3. Q: My store or program location doesn't meet the strictest food desert definition, but it does serve low income, low access clientele. May I still apply?

A: While areas and populations of highest need will be prioritized, any interested applicant that serves low-income clientele with low access to full service groceries can be considered. The application should describe how you serve these clients, including by offering any data possible about neighborhood demographics, proportion of low-income clients served, SNAP/CalFresh/EBT utilization and etc.
  
4. Q: Can applicants apply to provide technical assistance to corner stores, even if no refrigeration is needed?

A: Grants cannot be awarded solely to provide technical assistance. Technical assistance can accompany refrigeration grant awards for cities, counties and nonprofits, at up to 10% of grant totals.
  
5. Q: Can cities, counties and nonprofits sub-contract technical assistance to other providers, such as business consultants?

A: Yes, technical assistance can be sub-contracted to other providers including business consultants. Details should be provided in the grant application.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork**  
**Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated March 19, 2019**

6. Q: Can technical assistance costs that exceed 10% of the total budget (based on refrigeration equipment costs) be considered?
- A: Technical assistance cannot exceed 10% of the total grant awarded. Funding for further technical assistance provision must come from other sources. Any applicants requesting a higher rate for technical assistance may face disqualification and/or clarifying questions about the viability of the project, given the hard limit on the rate for this RFP.
7. Q: Are farm stands eligible for this opportunity?
- A: If they meet criteria as small businesses selling produce in food deserts, farm stands are eligible.
8. Q: Are food hubs and similar operations that supply corner stores with fresh produce eligible for the grant program?
- A: A small business, nonprofit, city or county supplying corner stores with produce to sell in a food desert can be considered for the competitive grant process and will be scored based on the criteria published in the RFP.
9. Q: Are refrigeration units other than stand-alone units eligible, including larger built-ins that may use a compressor?
- A: Yes, applicants may select the units that best suit their needs, including larger types and models that use compressors. Applicants should select the most energy efficient models available and are encouraged to select climate friendly solutions as well. See RFP Appendices A and B for energy efficiency and global warming potential guidelines.
10. Q: We are revamping a store and don't need a refrigeration unit immediately but will within the year. Is there a time period by which units need to be purchased/installed?
- A: Applicants should purchase and install the units as soon as possible and invoice CDFA within 60 days of purchase. All grant funds must be encumbered by March 2020 and expended by March 2022, at the latest. The proposal should clarify the projected timing for your store/program.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork**  
**Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated March 19, 2019**

11. Q: Are refrigeration units that stock a variety of foods including CA-grown produce eligible for the program?
- A: This grant program is specifically to fund refrigerators to stock CA-grown produce, nuts and minimally processed foods as defined in the RFP – but not for cases that stock a variety of other foods in addition.
12. Q: Are sandwiches eligible items for refrigeration units to stock through this program?
- A: Unfortunately, sandwiches are not considered to be produce, nuts or minimally processed foods, so do not meet criteria for this grant program.
13. Q: Are nonprofit utilities or other nonprofits that work with corner stores but are not primarily focused on food access/nutrition benefits eligible to apply?
- A: Unfortunately, these organizations are not eligible to apply directly. However, they may partner with counties and may sub-contract as technical assistance providers.
14. Q: Will funding be split evenly between both types of RFPs (cities/counties/nonprofits vs. corner stores/small businesses)?
- A: Funding will not necessarily be split evenly among both types of applications. The review committee will assess what's requested and whether it's necessary to determine an appropriate split for the pilot program, as needed.
15. Q: Will the applications in the concurrent RFPs be scored in one pool or will corner stores and small businesses be scored against corner stores and small businesses?
- A: Each application will be scored on its own merits according to the published criteria, in one pool. If the volume of qualified, worthy applicants is too high to fund in full and selection becomes extremely competitive, the review committee can then determine how to split funding and may then score corner stores and small businesses in their own category.
16. Q: What is the page limit for the proposal?

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork  
Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Updated March 19, 2019**

A: We encourage you to provide concise answers but there is no stated page limit.

17. Q: What is the indirect cost rate?

A: For this grant, the two allowable costs are refrigeration equipment (including energy efficiency add-ons if needed) and technical assistance (at up to 10% of the total requested). The technical assistance (TA) line item can include indirect costs associated with staffing and printed materials if that makes sense for your program budget. We have not supplied an indirect cost rate. If including indirect costs as part of TA, your application should describe the inclusion and please add an indirect costs line item to the TA detail in Question 13 on the proposal form. Again, please note that the total TA amount cannot exceed 10% of the total request.

18. Q: What is the funding period?

A: Grant agreements are generally one year; however, the funding period can extend through March 2022 for a multi-year grant.

19. Q: Does the application process change for a multi-year grant proposal?

A: The application process is the same, but the projected timeline should be explained in the application.

20. Q: Is shelving for healthy foods an allowable expense?

A: Unfortunately, shelving for healthy foods is not an allowable expense.

21. Q: Are there any matching fund requirements or limitations on potential matching funds?

A: No, there are no matching fund requirements or limitations.

22. Q: Are there examples of past, successful grantees we could learn from?

A: This is a new grant program and there are no previous grantees.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork**  
**Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated March 19, 2019**

23. Q: Is there a minimum grant size?

A: There is no minimum grant size. Applicants are encouraged to request the amount truly needed and the application should reflect the details of the need.

24. Q: How are retail/small business operations defined for this grant program?

A: Small businesses are defined in [Government Code Section 14837 \(d\) \(1\) \(A\)](#) as: "Small business" means an independently owned and operated business that is not dominant in its field of operation, the principal office of which is located in California, the officers of which are domiciled in California, and which, together with affiliates, has 100 or fewer employees, and average annual gross receipts of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) or less over the previous three years, or is a manufacturer, as defined in subdivision (c), with 100 or fewer employees. Commencing January 1, 2019, the average annual gross receipts threshold shall be fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000)."

For the purposes of this grant, per [Food and Agricultural Code Section 49015 \(a\) \(6\)](#), participating small businesses must be located in a food desert and authorized to accept nutrition benefits from any of the following benefit programs: WIC, CalWORKs, CalFresh, WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition program, Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, or SSI or SSP (per [Food and Agricultural Code Section 49012 \(b\) \(1\) to \(6\)](#)).

Small businesses in process of obtaining authorization to accept nutrition benefits should describe the plan in the proposal.

25. Q: Are farmers who sell at farmers' markets, community garden farm stands, mobile markets operated by farmers, community gardens or nonprofits, and other alternatives to retail brick and mortar stores eligible to apply?

A: Any small business located in a food desert that is authorized or planning to accept nutrition benefits, including but not limited to small farms, community garden farm stands, and mobile markets, is eligible to apply. Similarly, nonprofit farms, community gardens, or mobile markets that sell produce in food deserts are eligible to apply.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork**  
**Healthy Stores Refrigeration Grant Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Updated March 19, 2019**

26. Q: Are refrigerated trucks allowable expenses for applicants that are not brick and mortar corner stores?
- A: Refrigerated trucks are an allowable expense for all qualified applicants.
27. Q: Are there other sources of funding for refrigeration upgrades for food banks, food pantries, food distribution sites, nonprofits or government entities operating mobile farmers markets in low access food areas?
- A: Unfortunately, we are not aware of other currently open funding sources. One informational resource is: <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/resources-tools/find-money-policy-efforts-by-state>. There is also currently proposed money in the Governor's budget for infrastructure upgrades for food banks. We recommend keeping an eye on this through the state budget process, and you might consult the [CA Department of Social Services](#) and the [CA Association of Food Banks](#) for more information on current and proposed funding for food bank infrastructure updates.
28. Q: How will recipients be monitored to assure that they are selling California agricultural products?
- A: Recipients must specify where they will get CA-grown produce from in the grant proposal. A CDFA designee will work with grantees to obtain data for program evaluation. Site visits and other monitoring efforts may be conducted.
29. Q: Can this program be combined with other healthy retail programs, such as a program designed to encourage corner stores in low food access areas not to sell tobacco-related products?
- A: Yes, applicants are encouraged to combine funding from this program with other programs and funding sources. Combining with other healthy retail programs including those focused on tobacco reduction could be a good fit; however, the funds from this program must go directly toward refrigeration units and associated technical assistance. Applicants already engaged in broader healthy retail work or planning to undertake it during this grant term should describe that broader scope of work in the proposal.