



Notice of Funding Availability

Food Security Grant Program

Application Period: June 3-19, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.

For more information, contact:
Zoe Olson, Grant Administrator
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Division of Community and Regional Affairs
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Section 1.

A. Notice of Funding Availability Questions

Any questions regarding this NOFA or application requirements should be directed to DCRA Grant Administrator Zoe Olson at zoe.olson@alaska.gov or (907) 793-1244. Questions must be received by June 10, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. A written response to all questions will be posted to the Division of Community and Regional Affairs website at <http://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/GrantsSection> by June 13, 2024. Prospective Applicants are encouraged to check the website and review responses to questions. You may also call Zoe Olson at (907) 793-1244 and request a mailed copy of any program documents.

B. Technical Assistance

For questions regarding this NOFA, please contact Zoe Olson, DCRA Grant Administrator at (907) 793-1244 or zoe.olson@alaska.gov.

Section 2.

A. General Information

1. NOFA Purpose and General Provisions

This Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will provide \$1,500,000 in FY24 funds through the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) Food Security Grant Program (FSGP) under AS 44.33.020. The FSGP Program seeks to improve food security in Alaska by increasing access to food in underserved communities. Successful FSGP applicants will receive monetary resources for the sole purpose of purchasing and distributing bulk food to individuals in underserved Alaskan communities. Awardees must distribute bulk food by June 30, 2025.

Many organizations are working throughout Alaska to address the complex challenges of achieving food security. Applicants may wish to review recent recommendations from the [Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force published in 2023](#) in planning their proposal for funding. Another resource that may be helpful to review is: [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\) guidelines](#).

Applicants are not required to demonstrate history of distributing bulk food to individuals in Alaska. Please refer to the Program Description and Application instructions for more detail. Successful applicants who are awarded funds must comply with DCRA and FSGP NOFA requirements established for this program.

2. Evaluation and Award Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by committee method. Funding will prioritize underserved communities in Alaska. Applications meeting all NOFA requirements will be ranked and scored using the evaluation criteria identified in Section 5, A.

Section 3.

A. Funding Available, Minimum Funding Amounts

The FSGP is funded by supplemental appropriation in fiscal year (FY) 2024. \$1,500,000.00 is made available through this NOFA. Funds must be spent prior to June 30, 2025.

The minimum award amount will be \$5,000.00 and the maximum award amount will be \$150,000.00, depending on availability of funding and number of applicants.

There will not be an opportunity to extend or carryover funds into future fiscal years or funding cycles. No matching funds are required for this program. Funds may not be transferred to another entity, re-distributed, or sub-granted.

Funds are not available for subsistence harvest, subsistence-related activities, or individual household distribution. Funds for commercial food or restaurant preparation are prohibited.

1. Definitions

Community – as defined under AS 29.60.879.

Underserved – Communities in which at least 51 percent of the population is considered to be low-to-moderate income based upon the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2023 determination, meaning they earn less than 80 percent of the area median income.

Bulk Food – Food purchased in multiple unit quantities. May include shelf-stable food such as boxed, canned, and pre-packaged foods that do not need to be refrigerated as well as fruits and vegetables. This does not include live food or subsistence harvested food. This may include meat and dairy products. Please review the note to applicants in Section 3. A. 7 of this document.

Alaskan - An Alaskan is someone physically present in the state who intends to remain permanently and make a home here.

Food Bank - A type of market run by an organization recognized by the state or federal government as a nonprofit organization, and that operates principally to collect, inspect, and salvage donated food for free distribution to needy persons or to non-profit organizations for free distribution to needy persons.

Food Pantry - A food distribution location where food from a food bank or other supplier is distributed. Often this location does not store food or receive donations but functions more for distribution purposes.

2. Program Description

a. Program Structure

DCRA's mission is to help Alaska's communities build sustainable economies and a means of self-governance. The FSGP program achieves this mission by providing resources for Alaskans to access the basic human right and need for food.

b. Program Outcomes

Successful compliance with the program requirements identified in the FSGP are:

- Distribution of food to number of households identified in the approved proposal submitted in the application by June 30, 2025.

3. Eligible Applicants

- a. Food Bank/Food Pantry
- b. 501(c)(3) or (4) Non-Profit organization
- c. Borough and Municipality
- d. Federally Recognized Tribe
- e. Housing Authority

Ineligible organizations include: Any organization that is currently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in any DCRA, State, or Federal Program.

4. Performance Period

The performance period of the FSGP is July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. Grantees will have until June 30, 2025, to distribute the food.

5. Application Instructions

Eligible entities interested in applying for funding, must provide all application requirements specified in this NOFA and the application package. Please see specific instructions in the application package.

Applications should be emailed to caa@alaska.gov, faxed to (907) 269-4563, or mailed to:

Division of Community and Regional Affairs
Food Security Grant Program
550 W 7th Ave., Suite 1650
Anchorage, AK 99501

Applications mailed via regular mail must be post-marked by June 19, 2024.

6. **Waivers**

Waivers may be requested if the June 19, 2024, deadline at 4:30 PM is missed. DCRA will review and evaluate waiver requests on a case-by-case basis if funds remain.

7. **Budget**

a. Allowable costs

- Bulk food – non-perishable, whole fruits and vegetables, meat, and dairy*, canned or boxed foods or pre-packaged food that does not need refrigeration or time and temperature control for safe consumption. This may include infant formula, meals-ready-to eat (MREs), freeze-dried emergency food supplies, and bottled water.
- Grant Administration Not to Exceed 2% of total budget.
- Shipping/freight
- Administrative fees**

*Purchasing meat and dairy products or foods requiring refrigeration will require an Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation permit.

**Federally negotiated rates are not accepted under this state program. This includes the 10% de minimis rate. Grant administration costs for this program are capped at 2% of the total overall budget.

b. Ineligible costs

- Capital improvements including building construction, rental space
- Machinery and Equipment purchases
- Rental fees for space and/or machinery and equipment
- Subsistence food or related activities
- Livestock
- International shipping fees

Attention Applicants! Safe Food Handling is in the public interest. Please make note that applicants proposing use of funds for purchase of meat and foods that require time and temperature control for safety (refrigeration) will be required to purchase a permit through the [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Health](#) (DEC-EH). If you already have a permit, please review the application instructions for including your permit number. For more information, please see DEC-EH's website: <http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/> or call at 907-369-7501.

Section 4.

A. Reporting

The grantee must establish and maintain separate accounting for the use of grant funds. The use of grant funds in any manner contrary to the Grant Agreement terms and conditions may result in immediate revocation of the grant and any balance of funds under the grant.

The grantee shall submit a Financial/Progress Report (“Report”) each month during the life of the grant. The Report must be certified by an authorized signer and scanned, faxed, or mailed to DCRA for processing. The Report must include receipts and a narrative describing activities supporting expenditures during the reporting period. The report shall also include the following information:

- Total Number of households served,
- Total pounds of food distributed to each household,
- Address of each household served, and a contact person at each household that includes their name, phone number and e-mail address (if they have one).

Grantees are also required to submit a final Report (“Final Report”) within one month of closeout of the grant performance period. The performance period ends on June 30, 2025. Final Reports are due by July 30, 2025, or within 30 days of when all funds have been expended and all food distributed.

Final Reports will include a final summation of the impact the funds had in the community and identify any successes and challenges.

The grantee must keep records of all expenditures related to the grant project and make these available to your Grant Administrator upon request. Records should include all invoices and bills along with proof of payment (copies of checks). The grantee shall maintain its grants records for at least 6 years after submission of the Final Report.

B. Application Requirements

1. Applicant Contact Information
2. Applicant Organization Type
3. Project Proposal
4. Budget and Budget Narrative
5. Certifications and Attachments
6. Miscellaneous and Preferred Requirements

Section 5.

A. Evaluation and Award Criteria

A review committee will use the scoring criteria below to evaluate all applications meeting NOFA submission requirements. Awards will be made based on the total sum of scores received during the application evaluation. All applications will be evaluated using the same scoring criteria regardless of the number of individuals proposed to be served.

The review committee for the FY24 Supplemental Food Security Grant Program administered by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Community and Regional Affairs (Division) is comprised of two (2) representatives from the Division, a representative (1) from the Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Public Health, a representative (1) from the Department of Health, Nutrition Program, and a representative from the Food Security Task Force (1). The committee will have five (5) members total.

Scoring Criteria Summary

Evaluation Category	Maximum Points Possible
Program Proposal (0-40 points)	40
Underserved Community Preference (0-60 points)	60
Total possible evaluation points	100

Program Proposal (Maximum 40 points)

The Program Proposal Narrative will be scored based on the following criteria:

- Identification of the community or communities where you plan to distribute food. Full points will be awarded based on completeness.
- A complete response includes at least one community identified where food will be distributed. If the applicant fails to provide a response to this question or identify one community in Alaska where food will be distributed, zero points will be awarded. Responses that solely provide information such as “Statewide” will not be awarded points. Responses that only identify a region of Alaska will not be awarded points. Responses that identify a region of Alaska **and** list all communities where food distribution is planned will be awarded points.
- Disclosure of the number of individuals you will distribute food to and how you estimate that number. A complete response will include:

- The numerical value describing the number of individuals for example, “24 individuals” and narrative describing how you estimate that planned number of individuals.
- Description of the demographics of the individuals you will distribute food to and food-security related factors of the individuals you will distribute food.
- Description of the type of food you plan to distribute. Applicants are encouraged to consider guidance and recommendations for distributing appropriately nutritional and culturally sensitive food.
- Description of a plan of action detailing your plan to distribute food purchased with grant funds including pantry distribution dates. Please provide current, previous, and future distribution calendars if available. Provide information about your shipping plans as well as method of communication to the public about the distribution of food and your capacity to organize food distribution.

A complete response will also include a timeline and description of how and when you will take action to purchase bulk food, who will take that action, who will be responsible for that action and interaction with the FSGP as well as plans to communicate with the public or your intended recipients about the opportunity to obtain the bulk food purchased. Points will be awarded based on assessment of thoroughness of response at the discretion of the reviewing committee.

Incomplete responses will not be considered or evaluated. Points will be awarded based on assessment of thoroughness of response at the discretion of the reviewing committee. To receive the maximum number of points for this part of the program proposal, applicants must provide a narrative. A higher number of households or lower number of households will not result in higher or lower points. Disclosure of personal family data or data related to named individuals will not result in deduction or increase of points.

Prohibition on the Use of FSGP funds by Religious Organizations: FSGP Funds may not be provided to primarily religious organizations, such as churches, for any activity that requires religious participation. Funds must be used exclusively by the applicant entity for secular purposes, available to all persons regardless of religion.

Underserved Community Preference (0-60 points)

Up to 60 points will be awarded to proposals seeking to distribute food to underserved communities. The review committee will use the following scoring criteria to evaluate proposals to serve underserved communities, including low to moderate (LMI) income data, bulk food access, road system access, and basic product costs such as the cost of a gallon of milk.

- 30 points will be awarded to applicants distributing food in an area where 51% or greater of the population are LMI persons according to HUD’s FY23 [LMI Summary](#).

- 10 points will be awarded to applicants serving communities with no access to bulk food resources (a grocery store as large as or larger than a Three Bears) within 30 miles.
- 10 points will be awarded to applicants seeking to serve communities with no access to roads connecting them to large urban centers with populations greater than 50,000 people.
- Up to 10 points will be awarded to applicants based on the average cost of a basic food metric such as a gallon of dairy milk in the communities to be served. Six (6) points will be awarded for communities with an average gallon of milk cost under \$4, 8 points for milk cost under \$6, and 10 points for milk cost exceeding \$8.

B. Selection of Proposals for Funding

1) Selection Process

- a. Applications will be reviewed by committee method shortly after the application due date ends on June 19, 2024. Awards will be announced June 28, 2024. Grantees will be required to sign a Grant Agreement before August 1, 2024. The Grant Agreement is not subject to negotiation between a successful grantee and DCRA.
- b. There will be one review committee. The committee will be comprised of 5 members selected by DCRA staff.

Applications that pass threshold review will be considered for funding. Funding determinations will take into account:

1. The amount of funding available identified in Section 2, A, 1.
2. Total points earned in the scoring process.

- 2) DCRA may award a smaller dollar amount than applied for depending on the pool of applicants and limited funds available.
- 3) All funding decisions will be made by DCRA in its sole and absolute discretion. Eligibility for a grant does not guarantee a grant award.

C. Proposal Costs

All costs of responding to this NOFA are the responsibility of the applicant.

D. Acceptance of Terms

When submitting an application in response to this NOFA, an applicant accepts all terms, conditions, and requirements of this NOFA and the Grant Agreement. The applicant's proposal will become part of the Grant Agreement which will bind the grantee to the terms and conditions of the proposal unless otherwise approved by DCRA in writing.

Any materials submitted to DCRA in response to this NOFA become the property of DCRA and will be returned only at DCRA's discretion. Applications are public documents. They may be copied or inspected by anyone after they have been reviewed and scored and a Letter of Intent to Award Funds has been issued by DCRA.

E. Misstatements

Funds must be spent for the express purpose of complying with the NOFA requirements for the FSGP. If DCRA learns that a material misstatement was made by a recipient of FSGP funds related to their application or the administration of FSGP funds, DCRA will, at its discretion, require the applicant to repay the funds to DCRA if already received and to forfeit any funds not yet expended.

F. Appeals

- (1) An applicant may appeal to the DCCED Commissioner a decision of DCRA in denying an application. The appeal must be in writing and must be postmarked within 10 days after the borough, municipality, village council, housing authority, or incorporated nonprofit entity received the written denial decision. The appeal must include relevant evidence in support of the claim.
- (2) No later than 10 days after receipt of the appeal, the Commissioner will render a decision on the appeal. Immediately following the Commissioner's decision, written notification, containing a statement of the decision and the reasons for it, will be sent to the applicant.
- (3) The commissioner's decision on an appeal is final.

Section 6.

A. References and Resources

[Division of Community and Regional Affairs](#)

[Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force published in 2023](#)

[U.S. Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\) guidelines](#)

[Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Health](#)

[Alaska Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing](#)

[Alaska Native Health Consortium - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations](#)