



## **Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG)**

**Fiscal Year 2027**

**(July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)**

### **Request for Responses (RFR)**

**RFR File: AGR-FSIG-FY27**

To support strategic capital investments that increase food security, improve resilience across the Commonwealth's food supply chain, and prioritize increased food security for underserved and under-resourced communities.

#### **Application Deadline**

Responses must be received no later than  
4:00 PM, Monday, May 4, 2026

#### **Submission Instructions**

All proposals must be submitted online as listed in Section 4:

[www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG](http://www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG)

#### **Contact Information**

Program Contact: Holly Velleca

Email: [FSIGGrant@mass.gov](mailto:FSIGGrant@mass.gov)



# GRANT OPPORTUNITY

## FOOD SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary

RFR ID: AGR-FSIG-FY27

<p><b>Proposals Sought For</b></p>	<p>The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“MDAR” or “Department”) invites responses from eligible applicants for participation in the Food Security Infrastructure Grant (“FSIG” or “Program”). For this grant round, the Program will prioritize capital infrastructure and equipment projects that strengthen the Commonwealth’s food supply chain while increasing access and affordability of nutritious, healthy, and preferably locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods for underserved and under-resourced communities. Projects that demonstrate measurable improvements that support food security for residents of the Commonwealth will be prioritized in FY27. Food security is defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as a condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.</p>
<p><b>Overview &amp; Goals</b></p>	<p>The Program supports projects that strengthen the Commonwealth’s food supply chain and expand equitable access to nutritious, health, and preferably locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods for Massachusetts residents. The program can fund infrastructure projects that increase local food production and consumption, enhance mid-supply chain capacity for processing, storage, and distribution for local markets, and build ensure a more safe, resilient and accessible food supply, especially during periods of widespread food insecurity and supply chain disruptions.</p>
<p><b>Eligible Applicants</b></p>	<p>Eligible applicants must be located and operating in Massachusetts, have been in operation for at least three (3) consecutive years, and operate or support a commercial or noncommercial food operation that contributes to the Commonwealth’s food system and serves Massachusetts residents. (See <b>Section 2A</b>)</p>
<p><b>Eligible Projects</b></p>	<p>Projects must be <b>capital improvements</b> that create durable, functional infrastructure supporting production, processing, aggregation, storage, distribution, access, or resilience/emergency preparedness. Applicants must select one primary project type. (See <b>Section 2B</b>)</p>
<p><b>Application Deadline</b></p>	<p><b>Applications must be received by 4:00pm on Monday, May 4, 2026 via the online portal. (see Section 4A)</b></p>
<p><b>Funding Availability</b></p>	<p>Depending on available funding, selected participants may receive an award ranging from \$10,000 to \$500,000 on a reimbursement basis, subject to Department approval. Applicants must choose to apply for a Simplified Project grant (requests ranging from \$10,000 - \$150,000) or Standard Project grant (requests ranging from \$151,000 - \$500,000). (see <b>Section 3B</b>)</p>
<p><b>Match Requirement</b></p>	<p>Participants are required to provide a minimum 20% cash match of eligible project costs. (See <b>Section 3D</b>)</p>
<p><b>Duration of Contract</b></p>	<p>The contract end date is June 30, 2027, with no options for extensions.</p>
<p><b>Contact Information</b></p>	<p>Holly Velleca Email: <a href="mailto:FSIGgrant@mass.gov">FSIGgrant@mass.gov</a></p>

## DEFINITIONS

**Agricultural Business:** A business, cooperative, nonprofit, municipal, Tribal government or entity, Native-led non-profit, or other entity engaged in the growing, raising, cultivating, harvesting, marketing, storing, processing, or distribution of agricultural, aquacultural, horticultural, or livestock products within the Commonwealth. Activities that constitute “farming” and “agriculture” are interpreted consistent with M.G.L. c. 128, § 1A. No commercial profit objective is required.

**Applicant:** A business, municipality, state agency, Tribal government, nonprofit, or organization submitting a proposal to the Department. Where the Applicant does not own the property associated with a proposed project, the term includes any co-applicant landowner(s), as applicable.

**Capital Improvement / Capital Project / Capital Expenditure:** A non-recurring investment in land, buildings, infrastructure, technology, systems, or durable equipment that improves, creates, or extends the capacity, safety, or efficiency of agricultural or food system operations and has an expected useful life of at least five (5) years. Capital improvements do not include routine operating costs, maintenance, consumables, repairs, or short-term equipment. Land acquisition is not eligible unless expressly permitted by the Program.

**Commercial Food Entity:** A for-profit entity engaged in the production, processing, distribution, sale, or service of food, including farming, fishing, food manufacturing, wholesaling, retail, or food service, where food-related activities are conducted primarily for commercial sale or revenue generation. The primary purpose of commercial entities is to sell food to earn income.

**Department:** The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

**Direct-to-Consumer:** Refers to a market channel in which producers sell food or agricultural products directly to individual consumers without intermediaries. Examples include farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), and/or on-farm pick-up.

**Eligible Expenditures:** Project costs that meet the definition of a Capital Improvement, are directly tied to the Department-approved Scope of Services and Budget, and are incurred and paid within the active contract period.

**Emergency Food Provider:** A nonprofit or public organization that offers free food assistance to people in crisis such as low-income, unemployed, or disaster-affected individuals, acting as a critical part of the nutrition safety net. Examples include food pantries, food banks, soup kitchens, and/or other community-based organizations

**Farmer / Farm Operator:** An individual who owns or exercises legal authority to make operational decisions for an agricultural business or commercial agricultural business engaged in activities defined in M.G.L. c. 128, § 1A.

**Food Enterprise:** A commercial, nonprofit, cooperative, municipal, Tribal, or institutional entity that grows, harvests, manufactures, aggregates, stores, processes, distributes, retails, or provides food products or services. Food enterprises may include agricultural producers, fisheries, food hubs, processors, distributors, or market access organizations.

**Food Hub: Local or regional** organizations that aggregate, distribute, and market food from local and small-to-mid-sized farmers, connecting them to larger markets such as schools, nonprofits, grocery stores, and restaurants while supporting local economies and community access to fresh, local food.

**Food Security:** A condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life-

**Gross Income:** The total revenue earned by a business or organization from the sale of goods or services before deducting expenses such as labor, materials, overhead, taxes, or any other operating costs.

**Institution:** A large, formally-established organization designed to fulfill a specific social function through structured rules, roles, and authority. More broadly, institutions are enduring systems that provide stability and order in a society. Examples include schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and/or early childhood education centers.

**Legal Site Control:** The documented right to use property through ownership, recorded deed, lease, license, or other legally binding agreement that expressly authorizes the proposed project activities for the full contract duration and any applicable retention or covenant periods. Site control must authorize construction, installation, and use of infrastructure or equipment funded under the Program.

**Local Food:** For this Program, local food is defined as edible food products primarily grown, raised, harvested, or wild caught within the Commonwealth.

**Local Food System:** For this Program, the local food system refers to the interconnected network of people, businesses, and organizations involved in producing, processing, distributing, selling, and providing food, including food assistance and donation within the New England region.

**Markets:** Refers to the institutions, channels, and infrastructure through which food and agricultural products are sold, purchased, and accessed by consumers and buyers. This includes outlets and systems that connect products from the mid-supply chain to end users.

**Match / Cash Match:** The portion of eligible project costs paid by the Applicant in cash, not funded by the Department and not sourced from other state or federal grants. In-kind contributions, owner labor, donated materials, or other non-cash resources do not qualify as match unless expressly permitted by the Program.

**Mid-Supply Chain:** Refers to the infrastructure, facilities, and distribution channels which connect food production to end consumers by aggregating, processing, storing, and/or distributing products. Examples include value-added processing, cold/frozen storage units, coolers and regional aggregation hubs, loading docks, technology systems for product tracking/food safety, and/or equipment for meat, seafood, or dairy processing/labeling

**Noncommercial Food Entity:** A nonprofit, governmental, Tribal government or entity, Native-led nonprofit, or community-based organization engaged in food-related activities primarily for charitable, educational, public service, or subsistence purposes rather than for profit. Examples include food banks and pantries, nonprofits farms, schools, health care institutions, and correctional facilities. The primary purpose of noncommercial food entities is to serve the public or a community need.

**Production:** Refers to the systems, infrastructure, and activities involved in growing, raising, harvesting, and preparing food and agricultural or seafood products. Its investments include season-extension and climate adaptation structures, on-farm or on-vessel improvements for safety and efficiency, and/or facility construction and upgrades.

**Scope of Services (Scope & Budget):** The contract document defines allowable activities, deliverables, expenditures, infrastructure and equipment, budget, and timeline under the Program.

**Simplified Project:** A Simplified Project is a project that involves smaller equipment purchases that may include minor contractor services (no more than 20% of the total project budget) necessary to make the equipment operational, such as installation and/or electrical work. The minimum request is \$10,000 and the maximum request is \$150,000.

**Standard Project:** For the purpose of this grant, a Standard Project is a project that involves major construction or facility improvements, and/or larger equipment purchases. The minimum request is \$151,000 and the maximum request is \$500,000.

**Underserved or under-resourced:** Communities or populations that face persistent barriers to accessing sufficient, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food due to limited financial, infrastructural, geographical, or institutional resources, as well as constraints related to food availability, distribution, transportation, or local food systems capacity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

MDAR is pleased to announce the opening of the application period for the Program. The Program supports capital projects that strengthen the Commonwealth's food security and improves access to affordable, nutritious, and locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods.

The Program prioritizes investments that increase food system resilience, strengthen supply chain capacity, and improve food access, particularly in underserved and under-resourced communities that face barriers to obtaining affordable, nutritious food. It invests in durable infrastructure that supports a more secure, equitable, and reliable food system across Massachusetts, including during periods of supply chain disruption or emergency.

For FY27, the Program will prioritize projects that seek to achieve the following:

- (1) increase the supply or availability of affordable, nutritious, and/or locally produced foods for underserved and under-resourced Massachusetts communities;
- (2) address food supply system vulnerabilities that could lead to shortages during extreme weather events or other disruptions; and
- (3) expand capacity for aggregation, processing, manufacturing, and/or distribution of locally grown, raised, or caught foods to Massachusetts consumers.

Funding is subject to appropriation and awarded at the discretion of the Department.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

### A. Applicants

#### A1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must:

- Be located and operating within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- Have been in operation for a minimum of three (3) consecutive years at the time of the application deadline; and
- Operate or support a commercial or noncommercial food enterprise that contributes to the Commonwealth's food system and serves Massachusetts residents.

Eligible applicants may include, but are not limited to:

- Agricultural operations as defined in M.G.L. c. 128, § 1A;
- Seafood and aquaculture businesses, including commercial fishermen, seafood dealers, and processors as defined in M.G.L. c. 130;
- Food hubs, aggregators, processors, and distributors;
- Food access and emergency food organizations, including good banks, pantries, and food recovery organizations;
- Schools, early childhood education centers, colleges and universities, healthcare facilities, and other institutions that procure, prepare, or serve food;
- Food retail and market access organizations, including grocery stores, and farmer's markets;
- Municipalities, public entities, and Tribal government or entity, Native-led non-profit.

This list provides examples and does not include every type of eligible applicant. The Department will determine eligibility based on the applicant's demonstrated role in the Commonwealth's food system. If an applicant believes they are eligible it is recommended they submit a proposal as MDAR cannot pre-determine the eligibility of potential applicants.

#### A2. Ineligible Applicants

The following applicants are not eligible to participate in FSIG Program:

- Applicants that do not contribute to the Commonwealth's food system or food supply chain.
- Applicants that do not maintain a principal place of business within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Applicants that have been in operation for fewer than three (3) years at the time of application deadline.
- Applicants that are not engaged in activities that support food production, processing, aggregation, distribution, retail access, or food access services benefiting Massachusetts residents.
- Entities with a current FSIG contract which will not be completed prior to the application submission date.
- Entities and/or individuals that own multiple businesses cannot submit applications for each business.
- Applications for projects that are currently being funded through another state or federal grant program, whether in whole or in part.

### A3. Size of Operation

There is no minimum acreage or gross income requirement under the Program.

### A4. Property Ownership or Lease

If the proposed project is located on property not owned by the applicant, a written lease agreement must provide a long-term, legal right to use the property for the project and contract duration. This typically requires a lease term of no fewer than five (5) years from the date of submission. The lease must expressly authorize the construction, installation, or operation of the proposed improvements. The Department may request a copy of the lease agreement.

### A5. Previous Applicants

Proposals from applicants or entities previously funded through the Program are eligible to apply, **provided that all prior FSIG funded projects have been fully completed and all required reporting has been submitted and approved by the Department and all final reimbursement have been made.** The Department may require returning applicants to submit documentation demonstrating completion, outcomes, and benefits of any previously funded FSIG project as part of its review of any application under the Program.

### A6. Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Properties

Before applying to this Program, applicants who own Agricultural Preservation Restriction ("APR") land must consult with the APR Program to determine whether requirements apply to the proposed project under the terms of their APR. Applicants must be in compliance with the terms of their APR or must resolve any outstanding compliance or legal issues with the Department prior to submitting a proposal. Applicants must obtain, or be in the advanced stages of obtaining, all required approvals under their APR before a contract may be executed.

### A7. Produce Farm Registration

All produce operations submitting responses under this RFR are subject to registration under the Produce Safety & Market Access regulation as set forth in 330 CMR 34.00, regardless of whether the farm is classified as a Covered Farm or a Non-Covered Farm as defined in the regulation. Registration will be required as a condition of funding under any contract issued through this Program. For more information on MDAR's Produce Safety Program, visit: [www.mass.gov/produce-safety-program](http://www.mass.gov/produce-safety-program).

### A8. Environmental Justice

For the purposes of this RFR, "Environmental Justice" includes the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities in the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies, as well as the equitable distribution of environmental and energy benefits and burdens. MDAR is committed to Environmental Justice and, in doing so, we are working to ensure communities across the state have the capacity to advance environmental, energy, and food justice, engage in meaningful ways, and help shape policies and programs with equity at the center. Through our programs and services, we aim to support applicants working directly with communities most impacted by environmental, energy, and food injustice, and the disproportionate impacts of climate change.

For more information, please refer to [EEA's Environmental Justice Program Webpage](#).

## A9. Legal Compliance

Eligible applicants must demonstrate compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements, including, but not limited to, statutes, regulations, bylaws, and ordinances in effect at the time of application and throughout the duration of the project. Applicants are responsible for obtaining, maintaining, and complying with any applicable license, permit, approval, or authorization required by law for the proposed project. The Department may request proof of such licensure, permitting, approvals, or other permissions at any time during the RFR process or contract period.

All records submitted to the Department under this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, § 10, and may be disclosed unless exempt under M.G.L. c. 4, § 7(26).

## B. Projects

### B1. Eligible Project Types/Areas

Eligible projects must be capital improvement investments, including the purchase of new equipment and, where necessary, contracted labor for installation or construction, that strengthen the Commonwealth's food supply chain and improve equitable access to nutritious and preferably locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods.

Eligible projects must result in durable, functional infrastructure that supports food production, processing, aggregation, storage, distribution, or access. Projects must fall primarily within one of the project types listed below. **Applicants must select one primary project type when applying.**

The table below describes the eligible project types and provides examples of the kinds of infrastructure and equipment that may be supported. Projects may range in scale from smaller equipment-focused investments to larger, more complex facility or system improvements. Funding ranges, project tracks, and documentation requirements based on project scale are described in Section 3 (Budget Guidelines & Grant Levels) and Section 4 (Application Instructions).

The examples listed are illustrative and not exhaustive. MDAR encourages innovative proposals, provided the project is consistent with the purpose of the Program and meets all eligibility requirements.

Project Type	Description	Examples
Expansion of Agriculture or Seafood Production	Supports farms, fisheries, aquaculture, and community-based food production to expand or enhance local food output and supply for Massachusetts residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-farm or on-vessel equipment</li> <li>• Season extension or climate adaptation structures (greenhouses, high tunnels, shade systems) which enhance resilience</li> <li>• Livestock and poultry biosecurity improvements</li> <li>• Aquaculture or mariculture systems</li> <li>• Slaughter or processing facility upgrades</li> <li>• Infrastructure supporting community or urban farming for projects over \$50,000 (projects under this amount should refer to <a href="#">MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program</a>).</li> <li>• Infrastructure supporting culturally relevant food production</li> </ul>
Local and Regional Mid-Supply Chain Expansion	Develops mid-supply chain capacity that connects local producers to Massachusetts consumers and institutions and supports food system resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value-added processing and packaging facilities</li> <li>• Cold or frozen storage, coolers, or aggregation hubs</li> <li>• Shared-use cold chain facilities</li> <li>• Loading docks and staging areas</li> <li>• Food distribution vehicles</li> <li>• Product tracking and inventory systems</li> <li>• Meat, seafood, or dairy processing equipment</li> </ul>
Noncommercial Food Access & Availability Infrastructure	Develop or enhance programs that increase the consumption of healthy, nutritious, and preferable local food at a free or reduced costs. This includes emergency food assistance providers, food delivery services, and institutions providing vulnerable and low-access populations such as early childhood centers, schools, elder care facilities, hospitals, and correction facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrigeration and cold storage</li> <li>• commercial kitchen upgrades</li> <li>• Receiving, storage, and prep infrastructure</li> <li>• Food recovery and redistribution equipment</li> <li>• Facility upgrades to expand meal production</li> </ul>

<p>Commercial Food Access &amp; Availability Infrastructure</p>	<p>Develop or enhance programs that increase the consumption of locally grown, raised or harvested food through retail outlets at market rates. This includes farm stands, farm stores, CSAs, online retail, and small to mid-size grocery stores. However, projects under \$150,000 should be directed to MDAR's <a href="#">Food Ventures Program</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrigeration and cold storage</li> <li>• Retail display and handling equipment</li> <li>• Commercial kitchen or prep space upgrades</li> <li>• Facility improvements for farm stands, CSAs, farm stores, and small grocery</li> </ul>
<p>Food System Resilience &amp; Emergency Preparedness</p>	<p>(For municipalities and Tribal entities, or collaborative and/or public-private partnerships)</p> <p>Increases resilience of local food systems against disruptions such as power loss, climate events, or supply chain shocks. (see <a href="#">ResilientMass Plan</a> for more information)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backup power systems</li> <li>• Flood or storm adaptation infrastructure</li> <li>• Port or coastal infrastructure</li> <li>• Shared community storage or distribution hubs for emergency use</li> </ul>

## B2. Eligible Expenditures

Eligible expenditures must support capital improvements that strengthen the Commonwealth's food supply chain and expand equitable access to local food, including facilities, equipment, or systems that improve food production, processing, storage, or distribution. See examples in the project types table under B1.

## B3. Ineligible Expenditures

### Operational Costs

- **Routine Operating Expenses:** Day-to-day operating costs such as fuel, utilities, supplies, or other recurring expenses necessary for normal business or organizational activities.
- **Operational Salaries:** Salaries or wages for ongoing work related to operations, including non-labor costs (management) and fees for project oversight, consultations, and administration.
- **Labor Performed by the Applicant or Organization:** Labor performed by the applicant, its owners, employees, family members, affiliates, or any business in which the applicant holds an interest in completing the proposed project.
- **Proposals for Establishing a New Organization/Business:** Proposals related to the establishment of a new organization or business.

### Maintenance and Equipment

- **Routine Maintenance and Repairs:** Costs for ongoing maintenance, repairs, or replacements that do not represent a capital improvement.
- **Short-Term or Non-Durable Equipment:** Expenditures for equipment with a short lifespan or non-capital nature, such as disposable goods, packaging materials, or consumables.
- **Used Equipment & Materials:** Costs associated with purchasing used, refurbished, or reconditioned equipment or materials.

## Ineligible Operational or Program Costs

- **Non-Program Infrastructure:** Infrastructure not directly related to the applicant's mission or food system operations (e.g., recreational, residential, or other non-production spaces).
- **Marketing or Promotional Materials:** Costs related to advertising, marketing campaigns, branding, signage, or promotional events, including vehicle graphics.
- **Planning or Feasibility Studies:** Costs for feasibility analyses, audits, or other studies that do not result in tangible capital improvements.
- **Subscription-Based Services:** Costs for ongoing or recurring fees such as software subscriptions, digital services, or cloud-based tools.
- **Extended Warranties:** Costs associated with extended warranties or service plans beyond the standard manufacturer coverage.
- **Office or Administrative Equipment:** General business equipment such as office furniture, computers, or electronics not directly tied to project infrastructure.
- **Vehicles:** Vehicles not intended for food distribution. Registration, inspection, and licensing fees are also ineligible.
- **Food Purchases:** Costs for purchasing food or food products for resale, donation, or consumption.
- **Seed Purchases:** Costs for purchasing seeds, including aquaculture seed.
- **Administrative and Management Expenses:** Costs and fees associated with project oversight, consultations, and administrative costs.

## Financial and Legal Costs

- **Interest on Loans or Financing Fees:** Interest payments or any fees related to securing loans, financing, or credit.
- **Land Acquisition or Lease Payments:** Funding cannot be used for purchasing land or paying for ongoing lease payments.
- **Permitting or Approval Fees:** Costs of obtaining permits, licenses, or approvals required for the project.
- **Pre-Existing Work or Purchases:** Costs for work started, equipment purchased, or construction completed before a fully executed contract is in place with the Department.
- **Deposits:** Deposits are not eligible for reimbursement if they are outside of the contract start date.
- **Legal Fees:** Costs related to legal representation, contract review, or other legal services.
- **Tariffs:** Costs associated with tariffs, customs duties, or fees imposed on imported or exported goods.

## Miscellaneous

- **Urban Agriculture Projects requesting \$50,000 or less,** which may otherwise be eligible for funding under MDAR's [Urban Agriculture Program](#).
- **Food Venture Projects requesting \$150,000 or less:** Commercial projects related to improving economic opportunities in low- to moderate-income communities and increasing access to healthy, affordable food, which may otherwise be eligible to apply for funding under [MDAR's Food Ventures Program](#).

## Eligibility and Compliance

- **Non-Compliance and Ineligibility Costs:** Costs associated with proposals from applicants whose operation is out of compliance with any laws or regulations, or proposals from applicants that do not meet eligibility requirements listed in Section 2A. Compliance is required at the time of application and throughout the duration of any award. Failure to maintain compliance may result in the loss of funding.
- **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Projects on Farms:** Projects such as solar photovoltaics, wind, or geothermal systems on farms are not eligible for FSIG.

## 3. FUNDING & BUDGET GUIDELINES

### 3A. Funding Availability / Maximum Funding

Reimbursement grants from \$10,000 up to \$500,000 will be awarded competitively.

### 3B. Budget Guidelines & Grant Levels

Proposals must include an adequate budget for the proposed project, including the total project cost, the applicant's cash match, and the total funding request. Use of grant funds is limited to costs identified in the approved budget. The total project cost may not include any ineligible expenses as listed in Section B3.

Funding requests may be for components of a larger project; however, applicants must demonstrate financial sustainability and that the proposed request will result in a complete, functional, and operable system.

#### **Project Tracks:**

The FSIG Program supports projects of different scales and complexity under two project tracks based on **total funding request:**

#### **Simplified Project Track (requests ranging from \$10,000–\$150,000):**

For smaller-scale or lower-complexity capital projects, including equipment, systems, or limited infrastructure improvements that do not require extensive construction or technical documentation.

#### **Standard Project Track (requests ranging from \$151,000–\$500,000):**

For larger-scale or higher-complexity capital projects, including major equipment systems and/or substantial facility or infrastructure improvements that require more extensive planning, coordination, or technical documentation.

Applicants must select the appropriate project track based on the total scope and cost of the proposed project. Documentation requirements by project track are described in Section 4B.

### 3C. Appropriation

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. The Department may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, the Department may terminate the contract.

### 3D. Match Requirement

Participants are required to contribute a minimum of 20% cash-match to the total eligible project costs. MDAR will not fund more than 80% of the total eligible project cost, up to a maximum award of \$500,000. The applicant's cash match and the FSIG request must together equal the total eligible project cost.

All matching funds must be in cash; in-kind contributions, including but not limited to owner or employee labor, donated materials, or expenditures incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement, shall not be accepted as an eligible match. Matching funds may not originate from other state or federal grant programs or funding source already awarded or anticipated.

### 3E. Multiple Program Applications

Applicants may submit proposals to more than one Department grant program within the same fiscal year; however, the Department will not issue funding from multiple programs for the same or substantially similar project activities. If an applicant applies to multiple department programs for the same project, the Department reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine under which program, if any, the project will be funded. The Department's determination shall be final and binding. The Department cannot, however, take an application from one program and fund it through a different program to which the applicant did not already separately apply.

Applicants should carefully consider whether their proposed project is best aligned with FSIG or another MDAR grant program. Projects focused primarily on farm business viability, on-farm improvements, or on-farm energy and climate-related investments may be more appropriately suited to other MDAR programs, including the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP), APR Improvement Program (AIP), Stewardship Assistance and Restoration on APRs (SARA), the Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) Program, and the Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP). Applicants are encouraged to review program purposes and eligibility requirements before applying.

## 4. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS & EVALUATION

### 4A. Application Submission Instructions

Applicants must complete and submit all required materials as outlined below.

Applications must be submitted through the online application available at: [www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG](http://www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG). All attachments must be in **Word or PDF formats**. Submissions exceeding **25 MB** will not be accepted

This RFR does not allow for the submission of hard copy or emails of the application, including attachments.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Applicants may submit questions regarding this RFR and application process. Questions must be submitted by email to [FSIGGrant@mass.gov](mailto:FSIGGrant@mass.gov).

**The deadline for questions is 4:00PM on Monday April 20th, 2026.** All questions and answers will be posted at [www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG](http://www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG) so that all applicants can review.

#### Submission Deadline:

Applications must be **received by 4:00 PM, Monday, May 4, 2026**. Late submissions, including those delayed by technical issues, will not be accepted.

#### Important Notes

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain a copy of their entire submission.
- All applicants/Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for submission of their proposal by considering delays online impediments like Internet traffic, internet connection speed, file size, and file volume.
- The Department is not responsible for delays encountered by Bidders or their agents, or for a Bidder's local hardware failures, such as computers or related networks, associated with bid compilation or submission.

## 4B. Supporting Documentation

Applicants must submit the supporting documentation listed below based on the project track under which they are applying.

Document	Simplified Project (\$10,000 - \$150,000)	Standard Project (\$151,000 - \$500,000)	Description or Instructions
Budget	Required	Required	Template is provided (Attachment B). The budget should include all project costs, the applicant's cash match, and the total amount requested from the program. Failure to submit a complete budget will result in the application being ineligible.
Quotes	Required	Required	Applicants must submit two (2) quotes for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs \$50,000 or more. Applicants must submit one (1) quote for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs less than \$50,000. Quotes should be from qualified vendors or contractors and reflect accurate cost estimates. Failure to submit quotes will result in the application being ineligible.
Demonstration of Project Need and Feasibility	Recommended	Required	May include organizational planning and feasibility documents created or updated within the last three (3) years that demonstrate the applicant's operational readiness and strategic direction. Examples include a business plan, strategic plan, or SWOT analysis, as well as a project feasibility study, market analysis, or a recent report identifying a gap within the food system. Applicants may submit <b>one (1) to three (3)</b> documents for this category.
Demonstration of Project Benefit to Underserved and Under-Resourced Communities	Optional	Recommended	May include letters of commitment or MOUs from partners demonstrating planned and specific food security impacts, and/or supporting documentation that provides contextual or descriptive evidence of need and feasibility (e.g., demographic data of the clientele or service area, participant or beneficiary information, SNAP sales data, a list of partners, or a

			project plan). Applicants may submit <b>one (1) to three (3)</b> documents for this category.
Letters of Support	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	Non-binding letters of support from partners, community organizations, or stakeholders demonstrating community benefit, endorsement, or alignment with the project's goals without committing specific resources or actions. Applicants may submit <b>one (1) to three (3)</b> documents for this category.
Letter of Match	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	A signed letter from an authorized signatory confirming the applicant's cash match commitment and identifying the funding source(s).

#### 4C. Additional Contract Documentation

If selected, the applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete the contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form with Commonwealth Terms & Conditions
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form
- Completed Commonwealth W-9 tax information form
- Completed Electronic Funds Transfer Form

These forms do not need to be completed as part of the response. Assistance to complete these forms will be provided to Respondents selected to participate in the Program. These forms are available for review at [www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd) or by request.

#### 4D. Review Process / Evaluation Timeline

The Department cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, the Department is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. Scoring will be performed by a grant review committee led by the Department and which may include staff from other state agencies with relevant knowledge and oversight of the proposals' subject matter.

There will be three steps of review following the grant application period.

**Step I:** Applications will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and compliance with the requirements of this RFR. Applications that are incomplete, ineligible, or otherwise not in compliance with the requirements of this RFR will not advance to further review.

**Step II:** Applications that pass the administrative and eligibility review will be evaluated and scored based on the Evaluation Criteria in Section 4E.

**Step III:** All projects which are favorably reviewed may require a site visit prior to final award determinations being made. A favorable initial evaluation and field visit DOES NOT guarantee funding for a proposed project. The purposes of the site visit are as follows:

- To verify the information presented in the proposal;

- To view operation and assess the project request;
- To determine the appropriateness of the practice proposed;
- To confirm the ability to implement and maintain the practice;
- To explore other items deemed necessary; and
- To develop a basis for future 'before and after' comparisons.

The Department staff may modify the scope of the proposed project to more effectively achieve program goals. The Department may request additional project information.

Final recommendations will be conveyed to the Commissioner of Agricultural Resources and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for final decisions. All acceptances shall be conditional upon the availability of funding. Once the review period has ended and award decisions are finalized, applicants will be notified via the primary email address listed on the application if they were selected for funding or not.

#### 4E. Evaluation Criteria

Each eligible response will be reviewed and receive a point score based on the assigned values to Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, and No Evidence as defined.

**Very Good** - The application is specified and comprehensive. There is complete, detailed, and clearly articulated information as to how the criteria are met. The ideas presented are innovative, well-conceived, and thoroughly developed.

**Good** - The application is reasonably comprehensive and includes sufficient detail. It contains many of the characteristics of a response that is very good even though it may require additional specificity, support, or elaboration in places.

**Fair** - The application is non-specific, and lacks focus and detail. The response addresses some of the selection criteria, but not all. Some ideas presented are sound, but others are not responsive to the purpose of the grant. Additional information is needed in order to be reasonably comprehensive and meet the criteria of a response that is good.

**Poor** - The application does not meet many criteria; provides inaccurate information or provides information that requires substantial clarification as to how the criteria are met; lacks meaningful detail; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issue in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.

**No Evidence** - The application does not address the criteria or simply re-states the criteria.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below. The evaluation will assess the proposal's alignment with program goals, feasibility, budget, and anticipated outcomes.

#### 1. Project Need & Alignment – 30%

The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the organization/operation, identifies the problem or capacity gap the project addresses, and explains why the proposed project is the right solution. Applications should show clear alignment between the proposed project and the selected project type in Section B1 and describe who will benefit from the project.

If applicable, the extent to which the applicant describes how the project is incorporating, or will allow, multi-sector collaborations/partnerships, and how the collaborations/partnerships will strengthen the Massachusetts food system.

Additional consideration will be given to applicants that have not previously received FSIG funding.

## 2. Food Security Outcomes & Impacts – 35%

Applicant clearly identifies 2-5 expected performance impacts (see Attachment C) that best align with the proposed project. Applicant describes how the project will achieve each expected outcome measure within 1-3 years of project completion and provide realistic, project appropriate estimated metrics expressed as whole numbers. Reasonable estimates may be used when baseline data is unavailable.

Extent to which the applicant demonstrates how the project will increase equitable access to nutritious—preferably local and culturally relevant—food for **under-resourced and underserved residents of the Commonwealth**. For the purposes of this Program, under-resourced and underserved refers to communities or populations that face persistent barriers to accessing sufficient, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food due to limited financial, infrastructural, geographical, or institutional resources, as well as constraints related to food availability, distribution, transportation, or local food system capacity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review community-level data and research, which may include, but are not limited, to:

- [Food Bank Coalition of MA Impact Report: FY24](#)
- [SNAP Clients by Municipality in Massachusetts](#)
- [The Cost of Hunger in Massachusetts](#)
- [MA Community Health Assessment & Data on Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [Medicaid Nutrition Supports Lower Hospital and ER Visits](#)
- [The Impact of Recent SNAP Policy Changes](#)
- [Climate Change, Global Food Security, and the U.S. Food System](#)
- [Understanding the Intersection of Climate Risk, Food System Resilience, and Racial Equity](#)
- [Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- [USDA Food Access Research Atlas](#)
- [SNAP: Estimated Eligibility and Receipt among Food Insecure College Students](#)
- [Environmental Justice and Social Determinants of Health | Mass.gov](#)
- **Health Impact Assessment** is a tool to identify potential health impacts and benefits of a proposed project, program, or policy decision and recommend strategies that best protect and promote health. [Health Impact Assessment | Mass.gov](#)
- [MassGIS Data Hub](#) to find, map and download GIS open data for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- [SDOH Screening Tools - Environmental Justice - Resource Guides at University of Massachusetts Medical School](#)

To receive full consideration, applicant should:

- Reference relevant community-level data to document need.
- Describe key characteristics of the population served (e.g., income, socioeconomic conditions, food access, English isolation).
- Explain the geographic relationship between the community served and the project site.
- Describe how the project will reach the intended population(s) and provide evidence of that pathway (e.g., distribution plans, partner commitments, service area descriptions, procurement agreements, or program participation data).
- Demonstrate meaningful support from or participation by the intended population(s) (e.g., letters of support, community partnerships).
- Where applicable, describe direct benefits to farmers, ranchers, or small businesses within the food supply chain that face barriers to market access.

Applicants could also share if their organization or business itself will have any direct benefits for groups such as [historically underserved farmers and/or ranchers](#) and middle-of-the-supply chain small businesses owned by [socially disadvantaged individuals](#) (as defined by the Small Business Administration). Please provide information about any barriers you have faced accessing funding if applicable.

If applicable, applicants may describe how the project incorporates resilience measures (e.g., backup power, flood protection, waste reduction) that protect food access during disruptions. If the project aligns with any of the objectives outlined in [ResilientMass](#), please demonstrate.

### **3. Feasibility – 15%**

The extent to which the project scope, budget, timeline, and implementation plan are realistic and achievable within the grant period. Applications should demonstrate readiness to implement (including permits if applicable), capacity to manage the project, and financial ability to cover upfront costs and the required match. Quotes and supporting documentation should be consistent with the proposed budget and scope.

### **4. Sustainability & Maintenance – 10%**

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the investment will be maintained and continue to provide benefits beyond the contract period. Applications should describe who will maintain the equipment/infrastructure, how ongoing costs will be covered, and how benefits (food access, distribution, or resilience outcomes) will be sustained over time.

### **5. Overall Compatibility – 10%**

Reviewers will consider the applicant's overall operations alongside the proposed project details, including whether the project's benefits are proportional to the amount requested relative to the organization's size and budget. They will consider how well the proposed project aligns with the FY27 RFR priorities (improving food access for under-resourced and underserved communities, enhancing resilience to disruptions, or expanding mid-supply chain capacity for local foods). Letters of support from community members or partners will also be considered. For applicants who received previous FSIG funding, reviewers will take past project outcomes and impact into account.

## **5. PROJECT TERMS & COMPLIANCE**

### **5A. Contract Terms**

If awarded, all projects will be required to execute and comply with the standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions. All final contracts are subject to successful negotiation of a final Scope of Services and Budget. No project may commence until a contract has been fully executed by the Department and the award recipient.

The Department does not guarantee that any contract will result from this RFR or that any particular funding level will be awarded. MDAR reserves the right to offer an award amount different from the

amount requested and may fund only a portion of a proposed project if such funding is determined to be in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The Department reserves the right to negotiate the project scope, budget, and award amount prior to entering into a contract.

All projects funded under this Program must be maintained by the applicant for the duration specified in the contract. Projects and rights under any contract may not be assigned or transferred. If a funded project is sold or discontinued during the contract term, the Department may require repayment of grant funds, as specified in the contract.

The Department reserves the right to interpret, clarify, modify, or supplement the terms and conditions of this RFR and any resulting contract to ensure proper administration of the Program and compliance with applicable state and federal requirements. All determinations made by the Department, including but not limited to eligibility, allowable expenditures, compliance actions, and award amounts, shall be final and binding.

## **5B. Duration of Contracts**

All projects must be completed by June 30, 2027, with no options for extensions.

## **5C. Installation Standards & Permits**

All work funded under this Program must be completed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, codes, ordinances, and permitting requirements.

Award recipients are responsible for obtaining and maintaining all permits, licenses, and approvals required for the project. Failure to obtain or remain in compliance with any required approvals may result in termination of the contract.

All equipment purchased must be new and covered under the manufacturer's warranty. All construction and installation work must meet applicable codes and standards and be completed in a professional manner, consistent with the approved project scope.

# **6. DELIVERABLES, REPORTING & INVOICING**

## **6A. Project Deliverables**

Award recipients must complete all capital improvements and associated project activities in accordance with the approved Scope of Services and Budget.

Deliverables include, at a minimum, the purchase, installation, and operational readiness of approved equipment or infrastructure, as well as submission of required progress and final reports, as specified in the contract.

## **6B. Reporting Requirements**

All award recipients will be required to collect and provide programmatic and project-specific data as required under their grant contract. Due to the range of eligible project types, reporting and data requirements will be defined on a project-specific basis during contracting.

Award recipients may be required to submit progress reports upon request by the Department. The Department will provide reporting templates if applicable.

The Department reserves the right to conduct site visits and inspections at any reasonable time during the contract period and after project completion to verify project implementation, compliance, and ongoing maintenance of funded assets. Whenever practicable, reasonable notice will be provided prior to a site visit.

Failure to comply with reporting, monitoring, or access requirements may be considered a breach of contract and may result in enforcement actions as specified in the contract.

### 6C. Invoicing & Payment

All grants under this Program are reimbursed on a **reimbursement basis only**. Award recipients must submit acceptable documentation to the Department prior to any payment.

Only eligible expenses incurred during the contract period are eligible for reimbursement. Any costs incurred prior to the full execution of the contract are not eligible.

The number and timing of reimbursements will be specified in the contract Scope of Services.

Equipment and vehicles must be purchased outright and may not be financed or leased. All equipment and vehicles must be fully owned by the award recipient by the contract end date to be eligible for reimbursement.

Project modifications or substitutions of approved items, activities, or objectives are not permitted without prior written approval by the Department. Unauthorized changes or noncompliance may result in termination of funding and/or recovery of funds.

## 7. DEADLINES & PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

<b>Release of RFR</b>	Monday March 23, 2026
<b>Question Deadline</b>	Applicants may submit questions regarding this RFR and application process. Questions must be submitted by email to <a href="mailto:FSIGGrant@mass.gov">FSIGGrant@mass.gov</a> . The deadline for questions is 4:00PM on Monday April 20, 2026. All questions and answers will be posted at <a href="http://www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG">www.mass.gov/ApplytoFSIG</a> so that all applicants can review.  A prerecorded informational webinar has been made publicly available for interested applicants on the <a href="#">FSIG webpage</a> .
<b>Application Due Date</b>	Monday May 4, 2026 at 4:00PM
<b>Estimated Award Date</b>	Summer 2026
<b>Estimated Contract Start Date</b>	The effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form.

## 8. MISCELLANEOUS

<b>Type of Procurement</b>	Grant
<b>Use of This Procurement by Single or Multiple Departments</b>	This RFR is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized only by MDAR.
<b>Request for Single or Multiple Contractors</b>	Multiple Contractors
<b>RFR Distribution Method</b>	<p>This RFR has been distributed by MDAR’s Farm and Market Newsletter, posted to the program’s website at <a href="http://www.mass.gov/agr">www.mass.gov/agr</a>, and by a distribution list of requested applicants.</p> <p>This RFR has been distributed electronically via COMMBUYS. It is the responsibility of every applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to applicants who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent RFR files.</p> <p>Respondents may not alter RFR language or any RFR component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections that prompt a Respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.</p>
<b>List of Attachments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. *Application Form- (This is a copy for reference only. PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE. See Section 4 of the RFR for instructions).</li> <li>B. Budget Template</li> <li>C. Expected Performance Outcomes and Measures</li> <li>D. RFR Required Specifications</li> </ul>

# ATTACHMENT A

**THIS IS A COPY FOR REFERENCE – ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE. SEE SECTION 4 OF THE RFR.**

## FOOD SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT (FSIG) FY27 RESPONSE FORM

### Project Overview

ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS NAME:

PROJECT TITLE

PROJECT TYPE (select one)

Expansion of agriculture or seafood production

Local and regional mid-supply chain expansion

Noncommercial food access & availability

Commercial food access & availability

Food system resilience and emergency preparedness

**PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

A project overview is a summary of three sentences or less, suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a very brief description of your project, the expected deliverables/outcomes, and a description of the general tasks/activities to be completed during the project period.

**PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:** If there are any partner organizations contributing to the project, please list them.

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET

REQUESTED AMOUNT

I have applied to another grant program for costs associated with this project:  Yes  No

If yes, name of grant(s):

Have you received notification of award:  Yes  No

*MDAR has the option to negotiate the requested amount before entering into a contract with the applicant. Any costs incurred prior to an executed contract with MDAR are not eligible for reimbursement from MDAR.*

## Applicant Information

MAIN CONTACT (FIRST NAME)	MAIN CONTACT (LAST NAME)
TITLE/ROLE:	
MAILING ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP
COUNTY	LEGAL STRUCTURE <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietor <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> LLC <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> 501 (c)(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Government
PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL	WEBSITE (optional)
SITE ADDRESS (if different)	SITE CITY, STATE, ZIP
Have you received any of the MDAR grants listed below in the past five years? Check all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (AFSIP) <input type="checkbox"/> Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture Program (MEGA) <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVER) <input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts Food Trust Program <input type="checkbox"/> APR Improvement Program (AIP) <input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts Food Ventures Program <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Agriculture Program <input type="checkbox"/> Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG)	

## Operation background/Context

PRIMARY OPERATION TYPE			
<input type="checkbox"/> Farm	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipality	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Bank or Pantry	<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Store
<input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Business or Commercial Fisherman	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Food Hub/Aggregator	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmers Market	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Kitchen
<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture	<input type="checkbox"/> School K-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Recovery Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Value-Added Processor
<input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Dealer or Processor	<input type="checkbox"/> University or College	<input type="checkbox"/> Meat Processing or slaughterhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor or Wholesaler
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare or Medical Facility	<input type="checkbox"/> Medically Tailored Meal Service

OPERATION ENTITY

For Profit Business  
  Nonprofit Organization  
  Public  
  Tribal Entity  
  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

OPERATION'S PRIMARY SUPPLY CHAIN ROLE

Production  
  Middle of Supply Chain  
  Markets/Retail

MISSION STATEMENT (optional)

Provide a brief (2-3 sentences) overview of your operation and its role in the Commonwealth's food system:

YEARS IN OPERATION

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET/REVENUE (2025)

ESTIMATED FOOD SALES IN 2025 (if applicable):

ESTIMATED FOOD PURCHASES IN 2025 (if applicable):

\$0 - \$24,999  
  \$25,000 - \$249,999  
 \$250,000 - \$499,999  
  \$500,000 +

\$0 - \$24,999  
  \$25,000 - \$249,999  
 \$250,000 - \$499,999  
  \$500,000 +

TOTAL FULL TIME STAFF

TOTAL PART TIME STAFF

LIST ANY LOANS OR OTHER DEBT, TO WHOM MONEY IS OWED, AND \$ AMOUNTS:

Is the site address for the proposed project leased?      If yes, when does the lease end?

Yes  
  No

**Document Upload: Project Need or Feasibility - Applicants may upload up to three (3) documents**

Applicants will be asked to upload documentation demonstrating project need or feasibility.

Eligible documentation may include created or updated within the last three (3) years):

- Business plan or strategic plan
- SWOT analysis
- Project feasibility study
- Market analysis
- Report identifying a gap within the food system

**Requirements:**

- Required for funding requests over \$151,000
- Recommended for funding requests \$150,000 or less

THIS IS A COPY FOR REFERENCE ONLY - ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE. SEE SECTION 4 OF THE RFR.

The following questions are only for operations that primarily sell food products (such as farms, seafood businesses, and other producers or distributors). Please complete the section as best as you can and provide estimates when necessary. This will help us better understand where food products are being sold.

Does your operation sell food products:  Yes  No (if no, skip to next section)

What is the current % breakdown between wholesale (sales to distributor, restaurants, stores) and retail sales (directly to customers) of your products:

Wholesale

Retail

WHERE PRODUCTS ARE SOLD or DONATED: (check all that apply)

- Grocery Store – Commercial
- Grocery Store – Independent
- Schools – K-12
- Schools – University/College
- Early Childhood Education Centers

- Healthcare or Medical Facilities
- Other Institutions
- Restaurants
- Direct to Consumers (farmer's market, CSA, online store, etc.)
- Emergency Food Assistance Programs (food banks, pantries, etc.)
- Other: (LIST) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the current breakdown of food products sold locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally:

	%	Massachusetts		%	Nationally
	%	Regionally (nearby states)		%	Internationally

Describe how your proposed project will change or improve your local food sales.

The following questions are only for operations that primarily buy/source food products (such as retail outlets, food service providers, emergency food providers, etc.). Please complete the section as best as you can and provide estimates when necessary. This will help us better understand where food products are being bought/sourced from.

Does your operation buy/source food products:  Yes  No (if no, skip to next section)

What is the current breakdown of food products bought/sourced locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally:

	%	Massachusetts		%	Nationally
	%	Regionally (nearby states)		%	Internationally

How many people do you provide food for annually?

Describe how your proposed project will change or improve your local food buying/sourcing habits.

## Agricultural Operations Details Only

I am a farmer as identified in MGL Chapter 128, Sec. 1A:  Yes  No  N/A (skip to next section)

Is the majority of the applicant's sales from their own agricultural products?  Yes  No

Type of Operation:  Produce  Livestock  Dairy  Greenhouse  Nursery  Cranberry  Maple  
 Vineyard  Aquaculture  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage: Owned  Leased  In Production

My operation has an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR):  Yes  No

APR Contact Person:

This project will be implemented on APR Restricted Land:  Yes  No

I have contacted the APR Program to determine if this proposal needs a Certificate of Approval (COA):  Yes  No

This project needs an approval from the APR Program:  Yes  No

Year the APR was recorded:  Name on APR:

## Seafood Operations Details Only

I am a permitted Massachusetts commercial fisherman or seafood dealer:  Yes  No  N/A (skip to next section)

List the top 5 species by volume that this grant-funded equipment would handle, starting with highest:

Length of Vessel:  Year vessel was built:

Typical number of on-board crew members:

## Project Information

Capital infrastructure included in budget (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Construction/Renovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Contracted Labor	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology/Software	<input type="checkbox"/> Boat Upgrades (engines, trawl nets, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Food Storage (non-perishable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Storage (perishable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Safety Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Canning, Preserving, or Pasteurization
<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen/Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/> Production, Harvest, or Cultivation Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Pest Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> Season Extension	<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging	

Stage of food supply chain the **proposed project** will most directly impact (refers to specific project, not entire operation):

Production  Middle of Supply Chain  Markets/Retail

## Project Need & Alignment

Describe the problem or capacity gap your project addresses and explain why your proposed project is the right solution. Be sure to show clear alignment with the selected project type (Section B1) and identify who will benefit from the project.

If applicable, describe how the project is incorporating, or will allow, multi-sector collaborations/partnerships, and how the collaborations/partnerships will strengthen the Massachusetts food system.

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What goals that have been identified in [Massachusetts Local Food Plan](#) does your project align with? Check all that apply.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal 1: Increase production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal 2: Create jobs and economic opportunity in food and farming and improve the wages and skills of food system workers.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal 3: Protect the land and water needed to produce food, maximize environmental benefits from agriculture and fishing, and ensure food safety. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal 4: Reduce hunger and food insecurity, increase the availability of healthy food to all residents, and reduce food waste.                    |

## FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Clearly identify (by indicator number and description title) 2-5 expected performance outcomes (see Attachment C) that best align with the proposed project. Describe how the project will achieve each expected outcome measure within 1-3 years of project completion and provide realistic, project appropriate estimated metrics expressed as whole numbers. Reasonable estimates may be used when baseline data is unavailable.

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ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.  
SEE SECTION 4 OF THE RFR.

Demonstrate how the project will increase equitable access to nutritious—preferably local and culturally relevant—food for under-resourced and underserved residents of the Commonwealth. For the purposes of this Program, under-resourced and underserved refers to communities or populations that face persistent barriers to accessing sufficient, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food due to limited financial, infrastructural, geographical, or institutional resources, as well as constraints related to food availability, distribution, transportation, or local food system capacity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review community-level data and research, which is referenced in Section 4E of the RFR.

To receive full consideration, applicant should:

- Reference relevant community-level data and research to document need.
- Describe key characteristics of the population served (e.g., income, socioeconomic conditions, food access, English isolation).
- Explain the geographic relationship between the community served and the project site.
- Describe how the project will reach the intended population(s) and provide evidence of that pathway (e.g., distribution plans, partner commitments, service area descriptions, procurement agreements, or program participation data).

Applicants could also share if their organization or business itself will have any direct benefits for groups such as [historically underserved farmers and/or ranchers](#) and middle-of-the-supply chain small businesses owned by [socially disadvantaged individuals](#) (as defined by the Small Business Administration). Please provide information about any barriers you have faced accessing funding if applicable.

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**Document Upload: Project benefit to Underserved and Under-Resourced Communities – Applicants may upload up to three (3) Documents**

Applicants will be asked to upload documentation demonstrating how the proposed project benefits underserved and under-resourced communities.

- Letters of commitment or MOUs from partners demonstrating planned and specific food security impacts
- Demographic data for the clientele or service area
- Participant or beneficiary information
- SNAP or nutrition incentive sales data
- List of partners
- Project plan or other documentation demonstrating need or feasibility

**Requirements:**

- Recommended for funding requests over \$151,000
- Optional for funding requests \$150,000 or less

If applicable, describe how the project incorporates resilience measures (e.g., backup power, flood protection, waste reduction) that protect food access during disruptions. If the project aligns with any of the objectives outlined in [ResilientMass](#), please demonstrate.

### FEASIBILITY OF PROJECT PLAN

Describe your operations' capacity and ability to administer the project. Please include details about key personnel, their responsibilities, and qualifications.

Provide a comprehensive timeline of the tasks/activities associated with the project, including any local or state permitting required. Be sure to demonstrate that the project can be completed within the grant period time frame.

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This is a reimbursement grant program with a 20% cash match component. Describe how the project will be funded up-front and how a cash match will be provided.

**Document Upload: Letter of Match – Applicants may upload one (1) document**

Applicants will be asked to upload a letter of match confirming the applicant's cash match commitment.

A letter of match must:

- Be signed by an authorized signatory
- Confirm the cash match amount
- Identify the funding source(s) of the match

**Requirements:**

- Recommended for funding requests over \$151,000
- Optional for funding requests \$150,000 or less

**SUSTAINABILITY & MAINTENANCE**

Demonstrate how the investment will be maintained and continue to provide benefits beyond the contract period. Response should describe who will maintain the equipment/infrastructure, how ongoing costs will be covered, and how benefits (food access, distribution, or resilience outcomes) will be sustained over time.

**Previous Funding**

If your operation received any funding from the Food Security Infrastructure Grant before, provide the total amount of funding received and a brief (2-3 sentences) summary of the project's impact.

Total amount of funding received:

Project Impacts:

## Required Documentation

1. Project budget. Make sure it includes the project total, match, and total funding request from the Food Security Infrastructure Grant. There is a budget template provided in Attachment B of the RFR. Failure to provide a project budget will result in the application being ineligible.
2. Vendor quotes. Applicants must submit two (2) quotes for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs \$50,000 or more. Applicants must submit one (1) quote for each expenditure/line item in the budget that costs less than \$50,000. Quotes should be from qualified vendors or contractors and reflect accurate cost estimates. Failure to submit quotes will result in the application being ineligible.

## Optional Documentation

1. Additional Letters of support. Applicants may submit up to three (3).

*These documents are not required but applicants who supply them may receive additional points – especially when considering larger projects.*

## ATTESTATION

By signing this application, you attest all statements herein are accurate and true. By signing this application, you give permission to have a site visit by MDAR staff which may be necessary before a funding decision is made. All site visits will be arranged with you in advance.

Signature

Date

Print Name

THIS IS A COPY FOR REFERENCE ONLY –  
ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.  
SEE SECTION 4 OF THE RFR.

## FY27 Food Security Infrastructure Grant – Budget Template

**Applicant Name:** First Name  Last Name

**Operation Name:**

**Project Title:**

Materials				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
4				
Contractual Costs/Labor (expenses for services performed by someone other than the applicant)				
	Description	Rate	Hours	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
Equipment (Equipment to be purchased under the FSIG grant)				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
Equipment Rental (Rented equipment required to complete the project)				
	Description	Rate	Hours	Total Costs
1				
2				
Other Costs				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
4				
<b>Total FSIG Project Cost*:</b>				<b>\$</b>
<b>Applicant Match (see Match Requirements in Section 3D of the RFR):</b>				<b>\$</b>
<b>FSIG Request (Total Project Costs minus Applicant Match):</b>				<b>\$</b>

\*The applicant match and FSIG request should equal the total FSIG project cost. A 20% minimum cash contribution towards the project must come from the applicant.

**Attachment C**  
**Expected Performance Outcomes & Measures for FY27 Food Security Infrastructure Grants**

## Instructions for Applicants

In your response to the first question under the *Food Security Impacts and Outcomes* section of the application, select a **minimum of two (2) and a maximum of five (5)** expected performance outcomes that best align with the proposed project.

In your response, you must:

- Clearly identify the performance outcomes you selected (by indicator number and description title), and
- Describe **how the project will achieve each selected outcomes within 1-3 years of project completion** and provide **estimated metrics** expressed as **whole numbers**. Please ensure your targets are realistic and project appropriate.

Applicants may use reasonable estimates when baseline data is unavailable.

Awarded applicants will be required to track and report on selected performance outcomes within 1-3 years after the project is completed.

<b>OUTCOME 1: Increase local and/or nutritious food access and availability</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Metric</b> <i>Ex: 200 new SNAP customers served; 5,000 additional square feet of cold storage)</i>
1.1	Number of new customers served from underserved or/and under-resourced populations (e.g. clients of WIC, SNAP, HIP, food pantries, medically tailored meals, etc.)	
1.2	Number of new or strengthened partnerships with food access organizations or institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, etc.)	
1.3	Number of additional pounds of food or dollars of food purchased or sold for emergency food assistance/donation (e.g. food pantry, meal site, food bank, etc.)	
1.4	Number of additional pounds of food recovered and/or diverted to the emergency feeding system	
1.5	Number of new institutional food service accounts serving underserved and/or under-resourced populations	

**Attachment C**

**Expected Performance Outcomes & Measures for FY27 Food Security Infrastructure Grants**

1.6	Number of additional scratch-cooked meals prepared on-site serving underserved and/or under-resourced populations	
<b>OUTCOME 2: Increase economic viability of local food producers, processors, farmers and/or fishermen</b>		
2.1	Number of new full or part-time jobs created	
2.2	Number of new local/regional products processed, aggregated, stored or distributed for Massachusetts residents	
2.3	Number of local food producers, farmers or fishers who benefited from new or improved processing/aggregation/storage or distribution infrastructure	
2.4	Number of new Massachusetts market outlets established due to improved infrastructure or equipment	
2.5	Number of increased local food sales or purchases serving Massachusetts residents	
2.6	Number of increased acres of food production due to new or improved infrastructure/equipment	
<b>OUTCOME 3: Strengthened food supply chain resilience for local and/or nutritious food products</b>		
3.1	Increased capacity of food storage and/or preservation (e.g. square footage of new capacity; additional storage units)	
3.2	Number of increased square footage of local food production/aggregation/processing capacity due to new or improved infrastructure	
3.3	Number of new sourcing relationships with local buyers or local farmers/fishers	
3.4	Number of new pounds or dollars of food purchased from local farmers and/or fishers	
3.5	Number of additional days of reliable food storage and/or distribution during times of emergency	



## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

Revision Date: July 10, 2024

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions*. However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth departmental competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00.

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00. Additional definitions also may be identified in this RFR. Other terms not defined elsewhere in this document may be defined in OSD's [Glossary of Terms](#). Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

**1. COMMBUYS Market Center.** COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this Bid and is publicly accessible at no charge at [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com). Information contained in this document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bid Questions and Answers (Q&A), are components of the Bid, as referenced in COMMBUYS, and are incorporated into the Bid and any resulting contract.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Bid via COMMBUYS. Bid Q&A supports Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Bid and publication of official answers.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

- Any amendments, addenda, or modifications to this Bid, and
- Any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

**2. COMMBUYS Registration.** Bidders may elect to register for a free COMMBUYS Seller account which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records. However, to respond to a Bid, Bidders must register and maintain an active COMMBUYS Seller account.

All Bidders submitting a Quote (previously referred to as Response) in response to this Bid (previously referred to as Solicitation) agree that, if awarded a contract: 1) they will maintain an active seller account in COMMBUYS; 2) they will, when directed to do so by the procuring entity, activate and maintain a COMMBUYS-enabled catalog using Commonwealth Commodity Codes; 3) they will comply with all requests by the procuring entity to utilize COMMBUYS for the purposes of conducting all aspects of purchasing and invoicing with the Commonwealth, as added functionality for the COMMBUYS system is activated; and 4) in the event the Commonwealth adopts an alternate e-procurement platform, successful Bidders will be required to utilize such system, as directed by the procuring entity. Commonwealth Commodity Codes are based on the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC).

COMMBUYS uses terminology with which bidders must be familiar to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about COMMBUYS, please visit the [Learn about COMMBUYS Resources](#) page on [mass.gov](http://mass.gov).

**3. Multiple Quotes.** Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the RFR authorizes them to do so. If a Bidder submits multiple quotes in response to an RFR that does not authorize multiple responses, only the latest dated quote submitted prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

**4. Quote Content.** Bid specifications for delivery, shipping, billing, and payment will prevail over any proposed Bidder terms entered as part of the Quote, unless otherwise specified in the Bid.

**5. Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) Programs.** Pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#), the Commonwealth supports the use of diverse and small businesses through the Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) and the Supplier Diversity

## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

Program (SDP). Based on the estimated value of the procurement, one of the above-mentioned programs shall be applicable to this RFR. For more information on the program that applies to this solicitation, see the body of this RFR.

### **6. Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP)**

**Program Background.** The Massachusetts [Small Business Purchasing Program](#) (SBPP) was established pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#) to increase state contracting opportunities with small businesses having their principal place of business within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Pursuant to the SBPP, it is the intention of the issuing department to award this Small Procurement to one or more SBPP participating business(es) as described below.

**SBPP Award Preference.** While all businesses, no matter the size or principal place of business, may submit responses to this solicitation, should an SBPP participant respond and meet the best value criteria described in this solicitation, the SBPP participant shall be awarded the contract. The Strategic Sourcing Services Team (SST) will not evaluate submissions from non-SBPP participants unless no SBPP Bidder meets the SSST's best value evaluation criteria.

**SBPP Participation Eligibility.** To be eligible to participate in this procurement as an SBPP participant, an entity must meet the following criteria, and be marked as an SBPP-registered business in [COMMBUYS](#):

1. Have its principal place of business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
2. Been in business for at least one year;
3. Employ a combined total of 50 or fewer full-time equivalent employees in all locations, or employees work less than a combined total of 26,000 hours per quarter; and
4. Have gross revenues, as reported on appropriate tax forms, of \$15 million or less, based on a three-year average.

Non-profit firms also must be registered as a non-profit or charitable organization with the MA Attorney General's Office and be up to date with all filings required by that office and be tax exempt under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**SBPP Compliance Requirements.** It is the responsibility of the Bidder to ensure that their SBPP status is current at the time of submitting a response and throughout the life of any resulting contract. Misrepresentation of SBPP status will result in disqualification from consideration, and may result in debarment, contract termination, and other actions. To learn more about the SBPP, including how to apply, visit the SBPP webpage, <http://www.mass.gov/sbpp>.

**Program Resources and Assistance.** Bidders and Contractors seeking assistance regarding SBPP may visit the [SBPP Webpage](#), or contact the SBPP Help Desk at [sbpp@mass.gov](mailto:sbpp@mass.gov).

### **7. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP)**

**Program Background.** Pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#), the Commonwealth's [Supplier Diversity Program](#) (SDP) promotes business-to-business relationships between awarded Contractors and diverse businesses and non-profit organizations ("SDP Partners") certified or recognized (see below for more information) by the [Supplier Diversity Office \(SDO\)](#).

All Bidders and Contractors are strongly encouraged to create a profile on the SDO's Supplier Diversity Hub to access the Commonwealth's supplier diversity resources and tools.

**Financial Commitment Requirements.** All Bidders responding to this solicitation are required to make a significant financial commitment ("SDP Commitment") to partnering with one or more SDO-certified or recognized diverse business enterprise(s) or non-profit organization(s). This SDP Commitment must be expressed as a percentage of contract sales resulting from this solicitation that would be spent with the SDP Partner(s).

After contract award (if any), the Total SDP Commitment shall become a contractual requirement to be met annually on a Massachusetts fiscal year basis (July 1 – June 30) for the duration of the contract. The minimum acceptable Total SDP Commitment in response to this solicitation shall be 1%. Bidders shall be awarded additional evaluation points for higher SDP Commitments.

No contract shall be awarded to a Bidder without an SDP Commitment that meets the requirements stated herein. This requirement extends to all Bidders regardless of their own supplier diversity certification.

### **Eligible SDP Partner Certification Categories**

## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

SDP Partners must be business enterprises and/or non-profit organizations certified or recognized by the SDO in one or more of the following certification categories:

- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Minority Non-Profit Organization (M/NPO)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Women Non-Profit Organization (W/NPO)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VBE)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise (LBGTBE)

**Eligible Types of Business-to-Business Relationships.** Bidders and Contractors may engage SDP Partners as follows:

- **Subcontracting**, defined as a partnership in which the SDP partner is involved in the provision of products and/or services to the Commonwealth.
- **Ancillary Products and Services**, defined as a business relationship in which the SDP partner provides products or services that are not directly related to the Contractor's contract with the Commonwealth but may be related to the Contractor's own operational needs. These may include but are not limited to the following examples: professional services (e.g., IT, legal, advertising, HR, accounting etc.), maintenance services (e.g., cleaning, landscaping, tradespersons services, etc.), office expenses (e.g., office supplies, furniture, IT supplies, etc.). Anything declared as a business expense in which a certified vendor is used would qualify.

Other types of business-to-business relationships are not acceptable under this contract. If subcontracting is proposed, it must meet all the subcontracting provisions (if any) listed in this RFR.

**Program Flexibility.** The SDP encompasses the following provisions to support Bidders in establishing and maintaining sustainable business-to-business relationships meeting their needs:

- SDP Partners are **not** required to be subcontractors.
- SDP Partners are **not** required to be Massachusetts-based businesses.
- SDP Partners **may be changed or added** during the term of the contract, provided the Contractor continues to meet its SDP Commitment.

**SDP Plan Form Requirements.** All Bidders must complete the SDP Plan Form included in this solicitation and attach it to their bid response. In addition to proposing an SDP Commitment, each Bidder must propose one or more SDP Partner(s) to utilize to meet its SDP Commitment. Certified diverse Bidders may not list their own companies, their subsidiaries, or affiliates as SDP Partners and may not meet their SDP Commitment by spending funds internally or with their own subsidiaries or affiliates.

**Bidders may propose SDP Partners that are:**

- **Certified or recognized by the SDO:** Such partners appear in the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in the [SBA Veteran Small Business Certification \(VetCert\)](#) directory. After contract award (if any), spending with such partners will contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment.
- **Certified by one of SDO's recognized third-party certification bodies but not yet listed in the SDO Directory of Certified Businesses:** Such partners must be certified in eligible categories by one of SDO's recognized third-party certification bodies, which include the [City of Boston](#), the [Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council \(GNEMSDC\)](#), the [Center for Women & Enterprise \(CWE\)](#), [Disability: IN](#), [National LGBT Chamber of Commerce \(NGLCC\)](#), or the [National Veteran Owned Business Association \(NaVOBA\)](#) but have not yet opted to be listed in the SDO Directory of Certified Businesses. In order to opt into SDO's Directory of Certified Businesses, the SDP partner must follow the applicable expedited instructions on SDO's Apply for Recognition as a Third-Party Certified Business webpage. Self-certification is not acceptable. While Bidders may list such proposed SDP Partners on their SDP Plans, spending with such partners will not contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment unless they apply for and are granted SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition. If proposed SDP Partners do not receive SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition, the Contractor must find alternative SDP Partners to meet the SDP Commitment.
- **Not yet certified or recognized by the SDO or one of SDO's recognized third-party certification bodies:** Such partners must be certified in eligible categories by other third-party certification bodies that are not yet recognized by the SDO, such as another city or state supplier diversity certification office, the [National Minority Supplier Development Council](#), or the [Women Business Enterprise National Council](#), but are not listed in the above-mentioned directories. Self-certification is not acceptable. While Bidders may list such

## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

proposed SDP Partners on their SDP Plans, spending with such partners will not contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment unless they apply for and are granted SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition. If proposed SDP Partners do not receive SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition, the Contractor must find alternative SDP Partners to meet the SDP Commitment.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that their proposed SDP Partners obtain such certification or recognition by the SDO after contract award (if any). The issuing department and the SDO will not conduct outreach to proposed SDP Partners to ensure their certification. Furthermore, no guarantee may be made that a proposed SDP Partner will be certified, or regarding the time it may take to process a proposed SDP Partner certification. Contractors may direct partners to the SDO's homepage, [www.mass.gov/sdo](http://www.mass.gov/sdo) and the [Certification Self-Assessment Tool](#) for guidance on applying for certification.

It is **desirable** for Bidders to provide a description of supplier diversity businesses practices. Specifically, listing contact information for the individual or unit responsible for establishing and maintaining supplier diversity relationships, and including a written policy for establishing and maintaining supplier diversity relationships.

It also is **desirable** for Bidders to use the SDP Plan Form to describe additional creative initiatives (if any) related to engaging, buying from, and/or collaborating with diverse businesses. Such initiatives may include but not be limited to:

- Serving as a mentor in a mentor-protégé relationship.
- Technical and financial assistance provided to diverse businesses.
- Participation in joint ventures between nondiverse and diverse businesses.
- Voluntary assistance programs by which nondiverse business employees are loaned to diverse businesses or by which diverse business employees are taken into viable business ventures to acquire training and experience in managing business affairs.

**Evaluation of SDP Forms.** To encourage Bidders to develop substantial supplier diversity initiatives and commitments as measures valuable to the Commonwealth, at least 25% of the total available evaluation points for this bid solicitation shall be allocated to the evaluation of the SDP Plan submissions. Because the purpose of the SDP is to promote business-to-business partnerships, the Bidders' workforce diversity initiatives will not be considered in the evaluation.

**SDP Spending Reports.** After contract award, Contractors must submit reports at least annually to demonstrate compliance with the agreed-upon SDP Commitment. To submit SDP spending reports using the Hub, Contractors must first create a profile in the Hub. Once registered, awarded contractors must report information such as, but not limited to, SDO or SDO-recognized SDP partner(s), spend with SDO partner(s), and total contract sales. Contractors must follow report submission instructions from the issuing department and the SDO.

**SDP Spending Compliance.** Only spending with SDP Partners that appear in the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in the [SBA Veteran Small Business Certification \(VetCert\)](#) directory shall be counted toward a Contractor's compliance with their SDP Commitment. Spending with SDP Partners that do not appear in the directories above shall not be counted toward meeting a Contractor's SDP Commitment.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure they meet their SDP Commitment, and the SDO and the issuing department assume no responsibility for any Contractor's failure to meet its SDP Commitment.

**SDP Spending Verification.** The SDO and the contracting department reserve the right to contact SDP Partners at any time to request that they attest to the amounts reported to have been paid to them by the Contractor.

**Program Resources and Assistance.** Contractors seeking assistance in the development of their SDP Plans or identification of potential SDP Partners may visit the SDP webpage, [www.mass.gov/sdp](http://www.mass.gov/sdp), or contact the SDP Help Desk at [sdp@mass.gov](mailto:sdp@mass.gov).

**8. Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products).** Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural, or horticultural commodities; the growing and harvesting of forest products; the raising of livestock, including horses; raising of domesticated animals, bees, and/or fur-bearing animals; and any forestry or lumbering operations.

## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

**9. Best Value Selection and Negotiation.** The Strategic Sourcing Services Team or SSST may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The SSST and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

**10. Bidder Communication.** Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the SSST regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through COMMBUYS.

**11. Contract Expansion.** If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

**12. Costs.** Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response and accepted by a department as part of a contract will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

**13. Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information.** It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current on COMMBUYS the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the SSST, including requests for clarification. The SSST and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the SSST to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

**14. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).** All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder is able to provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe, and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors may track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's [Vendor Web system](#). A link to the EFT application may be found on the [OSD Forms](#) page ( [www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms](http://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms)). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](#) site ([www.mass.gov/osc](http://www.mass.gov/osc)). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval, and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder already is enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the SSST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The SSST will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings to the bidder.

**15. Executive Order 509, Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies.** Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009, that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Tools and Resources for Implementation of Executive Order 509](#).

**16. HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations.** Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will

## RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

**17. Minimum Quote (Bid Response) Duration.** Bidders Quotes made in response to this Bid must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of quote submission.

**18. Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD).** All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth's Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder provides compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically may be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form may be found as an attachment for this Bid on [COMMBUYS](#).

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the SSST. The SSST will review, negotiate, or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the SSST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

**19. Public Records.** All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes, including marking by bidders of information as confidential during the quote submission process in COMMBUYS, shall be disregarded.

**20. Reasonable Accommodation.** Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The SSST reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

**21. Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal.** Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

**22. Subcontracting Policies.** Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

### **23. Acceptable Forms of Signature**

Effective June 15, 2021, for all 1) CTR forms, including the Standard Contract Form, W-9s, Electronic Funds Transfer

## **RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services**

(EFT) forms, ISAs, and other CTR-issued documents and forms, or 2) documents related to state finance and within the statutory area of authority or control of CTR (i.e. contracts, payrolls, and related supporting documentation), CTR will accept signatures executed by an authorized signatory in any of the following ways: 1. Traditional “wet signature” (ink on paper); 2. Electronic signature that is either: a. Hand drawn using a mouse or finger if working from a touch screen device; or Page 2 b. An uploaded picture of the signatory’s hand drawn signature 3. Electronic signatures affixed using a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign. If using an electronic signature, the signature must be visible, include the signatory’s name and title, and must be accompanied by a signature date. Please be advised that typed text of a name not generated by a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign, even in computer-generated cursive script, or an electronic symbol, are not acceptable forms of electronic signature.