

**CDFA Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program Technical Assistance Provider RFP
Summary of Public Comments and CDFA Responses March 21-April 4**

Topic	Comment/Question	CDFA Response
Purpose	I need clarification on this RFP vs. the equipment grant in December. What is this purpose of this round?	Corner stores, farmers, small businesses, and food donation programs interested in refrigeration equipment should apply in December. This Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) grant round is to get TAPs on board to advise equipment applicants and grantees for the program, helping with outreach, application assistance, and technical expertise. Organizations that will work with a limited set of local equipment applicants to provide technical assistance and equipment should apply in December as well and can use up to 20% of the grant award towards providing technical assistance. (The remaining 80% would fund refrigeration equipment.)
	I just wanted to clarify that this round is a little different than the previous two because you are offering TA, is that correct?	The two grant rounds of the pilot program were for equipment and some limited TA could also be included. Now the program is expanding and a new type of TA is added for the whole program through this RFP. This is not the opportunity for people seeking refrigeration equipment.
	Is the purpose of the first category of TA to do outreach to stores who may then apply on their own in December?	Yes, the first category is for outreach, to spread word about the program to eligible equipment applicants, and for TAPs to help stores (or other eligible applicants) to apply for equipment, as well. TAPs can help with outreach and/or application assistance, such as language assistance, consulting, filling out the form with/for applicants, etc.
	The program is expanding and so much refrigeration is being included which any small business needs. The meat cases, walk-ins, etc., will help those small businesses that have no idea what type of refrigeration to choose in December. Will this TA provide those answers?	Yes, hopefully TAPs in the technical expertise category can help applicants figure out what they need, what will work best for their businesses and spaces, what is realistic for their business plan, and etc. Applicants could also get this assistance from local programs on the ground applying in December to provide both equipment and TA to stores, in which case a participating store would not need to apply independently.

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	How are other small businesses going to find out about this grant? What are we doing for small businesses that don't speak/read English? I think is a wonderful opportunity for anybody and everybody.	That's such an important question - and it's what we are hoping TAPs will be able to offer: outreach in multiple languages and and helping reach small businesses. That was definitely a challenge of the pilot program and is part of the reason we are looking to secure this new kind of TA and get these TAPs on board for the program.
Definitions	How do you determine if low-income areas or populations are served? Could a grower selling at farmers' markets and roadside stands fit?	Whether low-income areas are served is based on census tract data. The USDA ERS Food Access Research Atlas (www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas) shows whether an address is located in a low-income or low-food access area. There are many other tools too, some listed in the RFP.
	For a small farm business to participate, should their clients be located on low-income or low-food access areas, or does the facility or farm need to be located in low-income or low-food access areas?	Great question. CDFA looks at the point of sale or distribution address, and applicants are also able to make cases and provide data that they were serving low-income or low-food access clients.
	Do you have a specific definition for socially disadvantaged groups?	See Evaluation Criteria p.10 of the RFP, which refers to the Farmer Equity Act of 2017 (AB 1348): a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice, including African Americans, Native American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The following line has also been added to the RFP p.10 "Applicants could also designate Middle Eastern and North African for this program, or provide the definition and criteria used by their program in an application" with an associated footnote.
Priorities	Is any of the grant carved out specifically for rural and hard to reach areas, potentially as defined by the CPUC?	The following clause has been added to the RFP p.8, indicating a priority in scoring that includes hard to reach rural locations. "Will TAPs serve a particular underserved population or location or community, such as rural and hard to reach locations..." However a portion of the funding is not specifically allocated for these areas at this time.

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	<p>Does the new round require that produce/food sold in stores be grown in CA?</p>	<p>The focus remains CA-grown. There is some flexibility that items don't need to be 100% CA-grown, especially regarding culturally appropriate foods, which are allowed per the authorizing legislation to be grown in California to the extent possible.</p>
	<p>What about produce grown in Nevada or adjacent areas? Tahoe and eastern California has a strong connection with local agriculture in our closest agricultural area, which is Reno, NV.</p>	<p>The focus of this program remains CA-grown. Since there is some flexibility, an application proposing to include foods from local agricultural areas just adjacent to California could still be considered. It's possible that such an application may not win full points.</p>
<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>Can an organization apply for TA in one city? Would that disqualify them given the request for regional and statewide programming?</p>	<p>That is a great question. While CDFA hopes to find regional and statewide reach, the review committee will in part look at the composition of TAPs as a whole, the proposals that come in, and how broadly the state can be served. It is possible for an organization proposing to work in one city to apply to this grant round, particularly if the applicant has special expertise or networks and there are a lot of potential equipment applicants, such as might be found in one of the state's larger cities. This might make sense for an applicant that can provide a specific type of TA in a location but does not plan to provide ongoing implementation support or equipment. We have added a paragraph in page 4 of the RFP stating: "Ideally CDFA will find TAPs in a few different regions of California that can provide services regionally. CDFA will also consider applications proposing to work in smaller geographic areas if a compelling case can be made for need for the specific services a TAP is uniquely qualified to conduct, such as outreach to a particular underserved group with many eligible small business." If an applicant applies in this round and is not selected for an award but is also eligible to reapply during the equipment grant round, they may reapply then.</p>

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	<p>Could you explain page 4, category B of the RFP - TAPs providing technical expertise should be ready to assist HRGP applicants either regionally or statewide with best practices as well as consult with applicants to offer tailored recommendations and assistance when there is no local healthy retail program for applicants to join. Will the state reach out to TAPs and ask them to provide extra support in another region, beyond the proposal funded?</p>	<p>TAPs should build these services into their application, and specify their capacity to work with varied equipment applicants, whether through staff time/consulting hours available, providing best practice guides, publishing materials, or through other means. TAPs should build a proposal that describes and budgets for the scope of services they're able to provide applicants who lack a local program offering hands-on help. We have added a sentence to the RFP in paragraph b on page 4 in response to this feedback.</p>
	<p>We have farmer friends who don't speak a lot of English. Once you close this grant round and get the advisors, can we tap into them to make sure folks are aware of the program? Do we have to qualify for TA? Can they come visit us to see what we need and help us decide?</p>	<p>Yes, ideally there will be TAPs who can promote the program in multiple languages. Applicants do not need to qualify for the TA. TAPs will be funded through this grant program to provide TA at no charge to equipment applicants. However it is not a requirement that TAPs come to each site in person. Hopefully that might be possible in some regions and cases. An organization applying in December to provide equipment and TA to one or more local small businesses would be expected to be able to visit sites in person.</p>
	<p>Is this TA only for other organizations that might apply for equipment in future? Or could this phase also include outreach to businesses across a three-county region that might be part of our nonprofit equipment application in December?</p>	<p>It depends on the scope of outreach. Outreach simply to finalize businesses to take part in an equipment application in December should be covered through that grant round, when 20% of the total award can fund TA, potentially including outreach. We have added a sentence explaining that outreach can be included in that type of TA to the "Relation to Equipment Grant Round" paragraph of the RFP, page 5. But if you can do broader outreach on a regional, multi-county level, spreading word of the program and helping people apply, it is allowable to apply this round and again in December, to also work with a limited set of businesses on an equipment application.</p>

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<p>The last time we applied, we had worked with some of the stores and spec'd some of their equipment in advance. Do you anticipate that TAPs will be doing the outreach, and that would lead to the specifications for specific equipment for the applications in the equipment phase?</p>	<p>If TAPs come on board that have the expertise to provide both categories of TA, this could be a possibility in some cases. However, an organization planning to work with a limited set of stores on the ground to provide both equipment and TA should apply during the equipment grant round, when 20% of the total award can fund TA provision (which can include outreach to finalize store partners and selecting appropriate equipment). The current grant round is especially intended to support potential equipment applicants that don't have a local healthy retail program to join.</p>
<p>How can we identify partners to have a more regional approach, specifically in the Monterey region?</p>	<p>You might connect with your local food policy council to find other groups working on food issues regionally. Public health departments or city and county governments could run healthy retail programs nearby. Other ideas include contacting community development corporations, local USDA offices, chambers of commerce, or business improvement districts. ChangeLab Solutions' Bay Area Healthy Retail Collaborative might also be a resource.</p>
<p>Will there be trainings or structure to follow for TA recipients or is the expectation that they create their own outreach plan?</p>	<p>CDFA does not require any specific trainings. Organizations should detail their expertise and submit their own outreach plans.</p>
<p>Because this could be a multi-year program and we are doing outreach to help stores apply - will the equipment round also be multi-year so we can coordinate activities?</p>	<p>There are two equipment rounds planned at this time, for December 2022 and fall 2023. Equipment grants can also have multi-year terms. After the two equipment grant rounds, CDFA will assess whether funding remains for more grant rounds. All grants are planned to finish by December 2026.</p>
<p>If we feel we have a solid plan and can apply for 5 years of funding, should we go ahead and submit and then CDFA can reflect on how it will affect future rounds?</p>	<p>Grants are planned to end by December 2026 due to the fund liquidation deadline for this program. Applicants may propose a project term through that end date. CDFA has reserved the right to work with applicants to modify their project scope if needed.</p>

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Eligible Applicants, Items, and Units	<p>What about a fridge or freezer truck? We are in a very remote area and this could facilitate getting produce here, or for local farmers that need refrigeration to supply local corner stores.</p>	<p>These items could be a fit for the equipment round in December. (This current grant round for TAPs is not the opportunity to secure funding for equipment.)</p>
	<p>Can free food lockers be included in this program?</p>	<p>Since food donation is now allowable in the expanded program, free food lockers can be considered if they serve target low-income or low-food access populations and could be funded during the equipment grant round.</p>
	<p>What about freezers for fruit or smoothies or pies?</p>	<p>Frozen fruit and smoothies are allowable for the program, as mentioned in the RFP. A freezer for the purpose of stocking desserts would not be allowable.</p>
	<p>Producers of flowers are not eligible to participate, correct?</p>	<p>Businesses producing/selling only flowers are not eligible for this grant program.</p>
	<p>I don't know what an RFP is. We are farmers and grow berries, delivering and selling at farmers' markets. This could really help us but I'm not sure if we qualify.</p>	<p>An RFP is a request for grant proposals, when we release the request publicly and solicit applications for funding. Farmers can qualify for this program if they meet small business definitions and work/sell in low-income or low-food access areas. You'll want to apply to the equipment grant round in December.</p>
	<p>Can a small grocery store apply for more than one piece of equipment, such as a meat case and also a frozen walk-in cooler?</p>	<p>Yes, applicants will be able to apply for more than one piece of refrigeration/freezer equipment during the equipment grant round in December.</p>

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	<p>This grant will also include meat/deli refrigeration. What was the reason for this shift?</p>	<p>The emphasis is still on fresh, CA-grown foods and not extremely processed items. Grantees during the pilot phase of the program provided feedback that expanding the list of items that could be stocked in fridges would be useful. Program expansions were generally intended to make the program more useful and viable for the communities and small businesses being served, while helping meet energy/climate goals, increasing access to healthy foods, and promoting California agriculture.</p>
<p>EQUIPMENT GRANT ROUND</p>	<p>For the equipment grant round that will be available in December - equipment grants will be awarded from what period to what period?</p>	<p>It generally takes 4-6 months from the application period for projects to start. Equipment grants are projected to begin no earlier than April 2023. We will also publish a draft RFP with a timeline before the December grant round.</p>
	<p>These refrigerators are quite often expensive, and you have to float the expense which could be a barrier for the small corner stores. If they apply on their own, are they expected to purchase the equipment and float the funds until reimbursed by CDFA?</p>	<p>Through the expanded program, CDFA can advance some of the funds for the project. For this grant round, TAPs that help with outreach and applications but not after equipment grants are awarded would not be expected to front the funds for refrigeration purchases. Stores would purchase and be reimbursed or could request funds to be advanced, in keeping with the regulations referenced on page 6 of the TAPs RFP.</p>