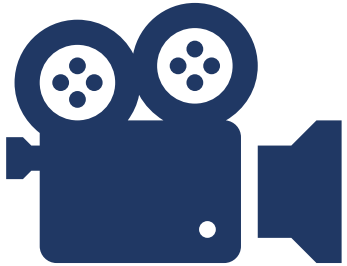
# Farm to Community Food Hubs Grant Program

## Information Session

**Applications are due 5 p.m. PDT on Monday, April 14, 2025**

**Questions? cafoodhubs@cdfa.ca.gov**

Office of Farm to Fork
California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)



This recording and presentation is already posted on the website at

*https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/F2CFHP.html*

# Today we will review:

- Support for applicants
- Program purpose + priorities
- Who is eligible to apply
- Funding tracks + their details
- How CDFA will score applications
- How to apply!

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# Support for applicants

We have resources ready for applicants **and** we want to know:

- How can we clarify?
- How can we simplify?
- How can we help?

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# Several layers of support

Email us at cafoodhubs@cdfa.ca.gov

Frequently Asked Questions regularly updated on website

Public virtual Application Office Hours every month – register online!

- 4 p.m. PST, Tuesday, February 25
- 12 p.m. PDT, Tuesday, March 11
- 9:30 a.m. PDT, Wednesday, March 26
- 11a.m. PDT, Tuesday, April 1
- 12 p.m. PDT, Thursday, April 10, 2025

**From Feb. 20 – Apr. 11**: reviewing draft application materials for up to 20 lead applicants that are:

- California Native American Tribes
- Tribal-led nonprofit organizations
- California food producers that identify as:
  - Socially disadvantaged
  - Beginning food producers
  - Limited resource food producers
  - Veteran or
  - Disabled

**Request a meeting via online form or calling 916-539-6017. Read important details on website.**

Online form

IMPORTANT: we will not write application materials. We will provide guidance and feedback on how to improve applications before applicant submits. Participation does not guarantee an application will be selected.

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# Let's review the grant website

https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/F2CFHP.html

# How much funding is available?

- Up to $13.75 million available for entire program
- One-time funding from California's General Fund
- Up to 10% of funding is set aside for California Native American Tribes (both federally and non-federally recognized) and Tribal-led nonprofit organizations *(10% is not the maximum they could receive or apply for)*

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# Funding tracks

## Track 1: Planning

**Award amount:** $50,000 - $250,000
**Duration:** up to 24 months (2 years)

## Track 2: Infrastructure and Operations

**Award amount:** $350,000 - $2 million
**Duration:** 60 months (5 years)

- ✗ No matching requirement for any tracks
- ✗ An entity can only be a lead applicant for one track
- ✓ Recipients of other state and federal grants are allowed to apply for either track

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# What's the purpose of the program?

Incentivize the creation and permanency of public-serving aggregation and distribution enterprises **(i.e., community food hubs)** by investing in **planning** activities and piloting investments in the capital aggregation and distribution **infrastructure** needed to:

- Increase purchasing of local, environmentally sustainable, climate-smart, and equitably produced food by schools and other institutions
- Build a better food system economy
- Support the local farming and Indigenous food production economies
- Accelerate climate adaptation and resilience and
- Employ food system workers with fair wages and working conditions.

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# What are the priorities?

- **Serve California food producers**. **Prioritize** food producers that identify as at least one of the following:
  - Operate on 500 acres or less
  - Cooperatively owned
  - Using sustainable or climate smart agriculture practices/systems
  - Socially disadvantaged
  - Veterans
  - Disabled
  - Beginning food producer
  - Limited resource food producer

- **Prioritize** distributing California grown or produced foods to **public institutions and nonprofit organizations,** with primary **emphasis on public schools, food banks, and nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities in the region**.

- Cultivate **financial sustainability** via strategies that help cover long-term costs

May serve private institutions, such as for-profit grocery retail, if public institutions and nonprofit organization buyers are prioritized.

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# A community food hub is:

an organization or business that serves as a supply chain intermediary by **purchasing food products from and providing aggregation, distribution, and/or marketing services for** multiple local or regional California food producers, especially those using sustainable or climate-smart agricultural practices and following state labor practices.

The community food hub provides these services to **strengthen the ability of its California food producer communities to reach sales markets with wholesale, retail, and/or institutional buyers and identifies the source** (e.g. location where food was produced) of 100% of the food products sold.

**Essentially, a "food producer" includes:** a California farmer, rancher, or seafood harvester and a California Native American Tribe, Tribal member, or Native American individual that uses Indigenous food production practices.

*(See official definition in Section 1.2 in the Request for Application)*

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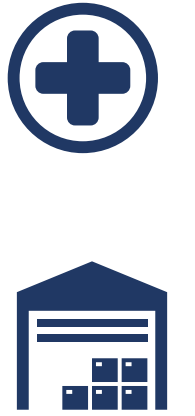
# What are considered public institutions?

- Public schools and school districts, including University of California, California State University, and California Community College campuses
- Early Care and Education sites
- Public hospitals and health clinics
- Health plans or health care providers paying invoices related to California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) medically supportive food and nutrition services
- California correctional facilities and prisons
- Other local, state, or federal government entities paying invoices related to providing food for government owned/operated facilities



- Food service providers operating in any of the above-mentioned public institutions or federal, state, or local government facilities
- Tribal schools (such as those administered through the Bureau of Indian Education)
- Tribal health centers and clinics (such as those administered through the Indian Health Service), and
- Institutions owned and/or operated by California Native American Tribes that provide community, cultural, or health services to Tribal members and Native American people.

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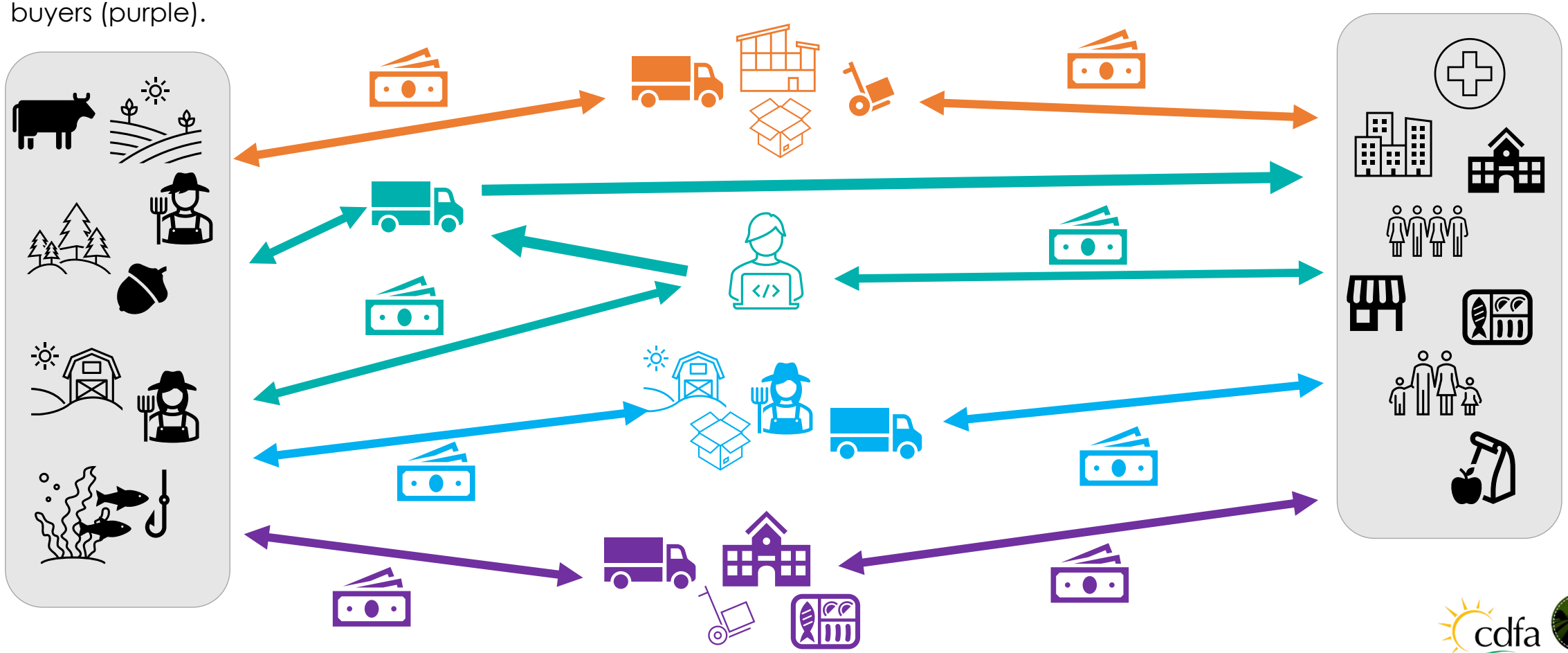
# Simplified examples of community food hub models

These organizations or businesses may use a centrally located facility, such as a warehouse (orange), aggregate more informally, such as virtually coordinating supply chain activities (green), coordinated by a food producer at their production site (blue), or hosted at an institution that both purchases food for their meal program and sells food to other buyers (purple).



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# Who is allowed to apply? Part 1

Most types of entities are allowed to apply to either track, if they are:

- developing a "new community food hub" or
- expanding capacity of a "developed community food hub"

## New community food hub

an entity that has either:

(1) never conducted community food hub operations **OR**

(2) has been conducting community food hub operations **AND** had an average annual gross income of $1 million or less during the previous three-year period.

**VS**

## Developed community food hub

a community food hub that had an average annual gross income range of $1,000,001 - $5 million during the previous three-year period.

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# Who is allowed to apply? Part 2

## Can apply:

- Food and agriculture-related business
- Nonprofit organization
- California public school district
- California County Office of Education
- Cooperative business
- Certified B Corporation
- California Native American Tribe (federally and non-federally recognized)
- Tribal college
- Tribal school
- Tribal-led nonprofit organization
- Resource Conservation District
- University of California, California State University, and other public institutions of higher education

## Cannot apply:

- Individuals
- Private schools
- Other local, state, and federal entities
- Food hubs, aggregators, and distributors that do not meet the definitions of "new community food hub" or "developed community food hub"

Community food hubs with an average annual gross income greater than $5 million during the previous three-year period are **not eligible to apply to the program.**

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# Who is allowed to apply? Part 3

## Track 1 Planning

If community food hub is currently operating, the **lead applicant must be the entity conducting day-to-day operations.**

If the community food hub does not currently exist, **lead applicants do not have to be expected operator.**

**VS**

## Track 2 Infrastructure and Operations

Lead applicant must be **the entity conducting day-to-day operations**

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# Track 1: Planning Details

# Track 1 Planning Overview

**Purpose:** develop one or more plans to:

1. Support the development of a new community food hub, or
2. Expand the capacity of a developed community food hub.

**Award Amount:** $50,000 - $250,000

**Grant Duration:** Up to 24 months (2 years)

***Examples:***

- Feasibility study
- Business plan
- Plans for developing lightly processed or value-added foods
- Financial planning
- Developing efficient facility and operational systems
- Education, community engagement, and training plans
- Site design and engineering
- Marketing strategies

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# How can you use funds for Track 1 projects?

Almost anything that is necessary and reasonable to meet project goals

**<u>Examples</u> of allowed costs:**

- Personnel
  - Wages/salaries
  - Fringe benefits
- Equipment and supplies
  - Community engagement related costs, such as venue rental fees, educational materials, printing costs
  - Survey or mapping software
- Contractors and consultants
- Travel costs, including meals, lodging, incidentals
- Other Costs, such as participation stipends for food producers

**Indirect Costs:** up to 30% of total direct costs. UC/CSU applicants use negotiated rates.

**<u>Examples</u> of costs <u>not</u> allowed**

- Plans directly related to agricultural production or farm certifications for individual farms/ranches

- Plans related to <u>certain</u> direct-to-consumer food distribution activities
  - Example: plans evaluating how to increase food distribution to homes and private individuals as part of a subscription program **<u>unless</u>** a public institution or nonprofit organization buyer is paying the invoice (e.g. health plans paying invoices related to CalAIM)

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# Track 1 reporting requirements

- Beginning and final interviews
- Quarterly or monthly invoices
- Quarterly check in surveys
- Possible presentations
- Annual and final reports
- Provide information such as:
  - Number and type of food producers engaged
  - Number of new relationships with food producers and buyers
  - Number, type, and location of buyers engaged
  - Photos, quotes, other storytelling media

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# Highlights for Track 1 scoring (Part 1)

| Application Section | Points | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| Eligibility | 5 | 4% |
| Project Type | -- | 0% |
| Funding Amount Requested | -- | 0% |
| Previous Grants | -- | 0% |
| Project Title + Summary | -- | 0% |
| Project Team | 20 | 17% |
| Project Need | 20 | 17% |
| Workplan and Budget | 15 | 13% |
| Objectives | 15 | 13% |
| Engagement Plan | 25 | 21% |
| Metrics | 5 | 4% |
| Letters of Support | 15 | 13% |
| Additional Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| **Total Possible Points** | **120** | **100%** |

## Eligibility section includes points for:

Applicants that qualify as "new community food hubs"

## Project Team section includes points for:

Projects that demonstrate how a project will be a **"producer-led community food hub":** community food hubs in which California food producers are the owners, operators, and/or decision makers. The food producers have decision-making roles that directly affect the planning, design, and/or operations of the community food hub. Producer-led community food hubs could be using any form of legal business structure, whether it is a cooperative or not.

## Project Need section includes points for:

Clarity on how outcomes of the project team's previous plans, work, community engagement, or business activities show why the project is needed **and** the need is significant.

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# Highlights for Track 1 scoring (Part 2)

| Application Section | Points | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| Eligibility | 5 | 4% |
| Project Type | -- | 0% |
| Funding Amount Requested | -- | 0% |
| Previous Grants | -- | 0% |
| Project Title + Summary | -- | 0% |
| Project Team | 20 | 17% |
| Project Need | 20 | 17% |
| Workplan and Budget | 15 | 13% |
| Objectives | 15 | 13% |
| Engagement Plan | 25 | 21% |
| Metrics | 5 | 4% |
| Letters of Support | 15 | 13% |
| Additional Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| **Total Possible Points** | **120** | **100%** |

## Objectives section includes points for:

- Clarity and thoughtfulness for:
  - How the project will increase purchasing of food by institutions/nonprofits
  - How the project will serve priority food producers, e.g. socially disadvantaged
  - Approach on evaluating community food hub's financial health

## Engagement Plan section includes points for:

Clear understanding of your audiences and thoughtful strategies to engage:

- California food producers, especially priority groups (e.g. socially disadvantaged)
- Public institution and nonprofit buyers, especially public schools, food banks, or other nonprofits
- Other local food system/community partners

## 5 Letters of Support (optional template online)

- 3 signed letters from California food producers
- 2 signed letters from community supporters
- Tribal-led nonprofits must include at least one letter from a California Native American Tribe

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# Track 2: Infrastructure and Operations Details

# Track 2: Infrastructure and Operations Overview

**Purpose:** cover infrastructure and operating costs to

1. Establish operations or expand capacity for a new community food hub or
2. Expand capacity of a developed community food hub

**Award Amount:** $350,000 - $2 million

**Grant Duration:** 60 months (5 years)

Looking for projects that are ready to implement or expand operations

***Examples***

- Purchase land and construct community food hub facilities, such as warehouses or food processing facilities
- Increase storage, food processing, and/or transportation, and/or food recovery capacity
- Initiate, coordinate, expand sales to buyers
- Engage, educate, and/or train food producer vendors to increase their capacity to sell to the community food hub
- Establish partnerships and operations for inter-food hub trading/sales

# How can you use funds for Track 2 projects?

Almost anything that is necessary and reasonable to meet project goals

**Examples of allowed costs:**

- Personnel: wages/salaries; fringe benefits
- Equipment and Supplies
  - Land purchases + leases (up to 75% of direct costs)
  - Refrigerated vans/trucks, coolers, freezers, forklifts, food packaging
  - Food processing equipment
  - Inventory/sales software
- Contractors and Consultants, including construction
- Food Safety Related Costs (required if food safety plan is not in place)
  - Certifications, audits, education/training, etc.
- Travel costs, including meals, lodging, incidentals
- Other Costs, such as certifications and trainings associated with organic certification or other regulatory requirements

**Indirect Costs:** up to 30% of total direct costs. UC/CSU applicants use negotiated rates.

**Examples of costs not allowed**

- Donations, including food
- Incorporation fees, business license fees, and other costs associated related to organizing a business or similar entity
- Promotional items, advertising, and public relations not directly related to the purpose of the grant program/award
- Costs related to certain direct-to-consumer food distribution activities
  - Examples: food distribution to homes and private individuals **unless** a public institution or nonprofit organization buyer is paying the invoice (e.g. health plans paying invoices related to CalAIM)

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# Track 2 reporting requirements

- Beginning and final interview
- Baseline survey
- Quarterly or monthly invoices
- Quarterly check in surveys
- Annual and final reports
- Possible presentations

Data such as:

- Financial sustainability
- Number and type (size and ownership) of food producers products are sourced from
- Number of food producers using climate-smart agricultural practices
- Weight/units of food products purchased from each food producer
- Number, type, and location of buyers served
- Weight/units of food products sold to each buyer
- Photos, quotes, storytelling media

**All projects will have a 60-month term.**
Reporting will continue throughout.

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# Highlights for Track 2 scoring (Part 1)

| Application Section | Points | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| Eligibility | 5 | 3% |
| Funding Amount Requested | -- | 0% |
| Previous Grants | -- | 0% |
| Project Title + Summary | -- | 0% |
| Project Team | 20 | 12% |
| Project Need | 20 | 12% |
| Workplan and Budget | 25 | 15% |
| Serving Food Producers | 50 | 29% |
| Buyers and Sales | 20 | 12% |
| Financial Sustainability | 10 | 6% |
| Food Safety | -- | 0% |
| Metrics | 5 | 3% |
| Letters of Support | 15 | 9% |
| Additional Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| **Total Possible Points** | **170** | **100%** |

## Eligibility section includes points for:

Applicants that qualify as "new community food hubs"

## Project Team section includes points for:

Projects that demonstrate how a project will be a **"producer-led community food hub".**

## Serving Food Producers section includes points for:

- How prioritizing purchases from priority food producer groups, e.g. socially disadvantaged
- Approaches to serving food producers, beyond purchasing/selling their food products

**Food Producer Network List (required spreadsheet)**

- 10+ food producers (+2 points)
- 40%+ of food producers are **"local"** (+2 points)
- More points for greater proportion of food producers that are using sustainable practices, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, operating on 500 acres or less, beginning food producers, veterans, disabled, or cooperatively owned

**Food Producer Verification Forms (required form)**

- 10 signed forms (+5 points) AND +0.5 pt for each form that is from a priority food producer group

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# Highlights for Track 2 scoring (Part 2)

| Application Section | Points | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| Eligibility | 5 | 3% |
| Funding Amount Requested | -- | 0% |
| Previous Grants | -- | 0% |
| Project Title + Summary | -- | 0% |
| Project Team | 20 | 12% |
| Project Need | 20 | 12% |
| Workplan and Budget | 25 | 15% |
| Serving Food Producers | 50 | 29% |
| Buyers and Sales | 20 | 12% |
| Financial Sustainability | 10 | 6% |
| Food Safety | -- | 0% |
| Metrics | 5 | 3% |
| Letters of Support | 15 | 9% |
| Additional Applicant Information | -- | 0% |
| **Total Possible Points** | **170** | **100%** |

## Buyers and Sales section includes points for:

- Clear strategies for prioritizing sales to public institutions and nonprofits, especially public schools, food bank, or nonprofits serving low-income communities
- Showing knowledge/approach to addressing buyers' needs

## Financial Sustainability section includes points for:

- Financial analysis that includes quantification (numbers; statistics), demonstrates a financial outlook for the community food hub, and clearly shows thoughtful/reasonable planning.
  - Example: expected operating costs, sales goals, and strategies to achieve goals and manage cash flow
- Clear, thoughtful "SWOT" analysis

## 6 Letter of Support Forms (required form online)

Use required Letter of Support Form

- 2 forms from public institution or nonprofit buyers
- 1 form from a business/economic development supporter
- 3 forms from community supporters
- Tribal-led nonprofits must submit at least one form from a California Native American Tribe

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# How do we apply?

**Applications are due 5 pm PDT on Monday, April 14, 2025**

- Attach all completed application materials in an email to cafoodhubs@cdfa.ca.gov. No late applications will be accepted.
- Find all application materials on the website. Read the Request for Application.
- Use the "Application Submission Checklist" to see and track required application materials for each funding track.

TIP

***https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/F2CFHP.html***

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# *Thank you!*

**Questions?** Email us at cafoodhubs@cdfa.ca.gov

*www.cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/F2CFHP.html*

# *Thank you!*

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