

**CDFA Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program Equipment RFA
Summary of Public Comments and CDFA Responses December 2022**

Topic	Comment/Question	CDFA Response
	<p>Are any of the RFA documents, such as tips for applicants, appendixes, and application questions, available in Spanish? We have a few farmers operating farm stands (small farms/businesses) interested in this opportunity. It would be helpful to have this information in Spanish for them to review and understand what it all entails.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. While the draft RFA and documents posted to our website for public comment were not available in Spanish, the final RFA with appendices, copies of application questions, and Quick Tips for applicants and grantees, will be made available in Spanish on the program webpage for reference. CDFA-F2F was pleased to offer a Spanish-language virtual listening session on December 1, as well.</p>
	<p>Technical assistance (TA) and application documents should be provided in multiple languages in addition to English and Spanish.</p>	<p>Thanks for this important comment. All seven TA providers (TAPs) listed on the program webpage offer program materials in English and Spanish, minimum, and most offer materials and/or TA in multiple languages either through program staff or interpreters for additional support, including Arabic, Mixtec, Punjabi, Hindi, Ibo, Somali, Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, Vietnamese, Persian (including Farsi, Darsi), and Tagalog. CDFA-F2F would like to know which languages are high priority for grantees and stakeholders, and is also collecting data about this through the program evaluation. The evaluation of the pilot program will soon be published. CDFA-F2F can schedule calls with an interpreter for stakeholders needing to communicate in languages other than English. Please continue to be in touch about language needs and with any suggestions for different or more comprehensive language access for the program.</p>
	<p>Just wanted to check to make sure that rural Tribal communities can access this funding for fish.</p>	<p>Absolutely, funding to refrigerate or freeze fish for sale or charitable donation in low-food access and/or low-income communities would be eligible, and Tribal organizations, governments, and small businesses are encouraged to apply.</p>

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<p>Are places without access to power eligible? For example, settings where there is no electricity, but food is stored for pickup, such as in a rural area lacking electricity, at a farm setting, or for a food locker in a low-income area for free food. Could trenching to extend a utility line be covered?</p>	<p>Yes, sites without electricity are eligible and may apply for solar or other energy solutions to power the equipment. This was added to p.4 of the Eligibility section of the RFA to clarify, and see also RFA p.11 on Allowable Costs. Consult Allowable Costs on the kinds of infrastructure upgrades allowed within the scope of the program, and reach out individually to cafarmtofork@cdfa.ca.gov if you still have questions.</p>
<p>In addition to priority populations, will only the USDA Food Access Research Atlas be used to determine low income eligibility, or can we also use census data that show income inequality?</p>	<p>CDFA-F2F can consider all information submitted, including data about income inequality as well as poverty rates in locales. This has been added to the RFA on p.4, in the bullet point under Low-access areas.</p>
<p>Will applicants working with Technical Assistance Providers be prioritized, or can a small corner store apply without TA?</p>	<p>Applicants working with Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) will not be prioritized and corner stores can still apply directly for a grant. The intent of the program is to make resources accessible for corner stores and small businesses. TAPs are there to help lower barriers when needed, including linguistic and other barriers, and to promote the program on the ground throughout the state. Application questions for corner stores and small businesses can be viewed on the webpage. Applicants will be scored based on locations and communities reached and whether projects meet program goals.</p>

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Access & Equity	<p>What's the likelihood of negotiating indirect cost? Our nonprofit wants to see higher indirect cost rates and we may not be able to apply if the 10% rate is not flexible. Has the indirect cost cap of 10% been an issue for other organizations?</p>	<p>Thank you for the comment. CDFA-F2F has received a few comments about the indirect cost cap. We recognize that many organizations have indirect cost rates higher than 10% and inflexible program rates can pose a hardship and barrier to access. The indirect rate has been made flexible, and rates between 10% - 30% of total direct costs can be used with justification and documentation. This was changed on p. 8 of the RFA under Allowable Costs for applicants providing both equipment and technical assistance.</p>
	<p>The HRGP should allow agencies with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement to use those rates instead of capping the indirect cost rate at 10% for all non-University of California and California State University agencies. This would allow agencies to capture their operating costs and makes the RFA more accessible for all organizations.</p>	<p>Thank you for this important point. We have updated the indirect cost rate to between 10-30% with justification, and have also added that all organizations may use their federally negotiated indirect cost rate for the program on p.8 under Indirect Costs.</p>

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<p>Looking at the definition of small business - from an equity standpoint, there's a huge difference between those on the higher end and your everyday small business. I hope this can be reviewed from a policy perspective. Sometimes opportunities like this program come after years of scraping by and the program can be flooded with applications, many of which are called small businesses. But if you have 89 employees, that's a big business. This is something to consider in the future if we are going to elevate equity in access continually.</p>	<p>Thank you for the insightful comment and attention to equity in access to programs supporting small businesses. CDFA is committed to making programs accessible to all, including the smallest businesses. CDFA-F2F has added to p. 2 of the RFA and to Scoring Criteria on p. 15 that business size within the small business category can be considered, and very small businesses that serve priority populations, and those with owners from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, will be prioritized in scoring. Questions about business size and whether owners are from socially disadvantaged backgrounds have also been added to application questions.</p>
<p>Are small businesses prioritized over organizations?</p>	<p>No priority for small businesses over other organizations has been set at this time. CDFA-F2F recognizes the value of organizations providing technical assistance to small businesses, and does not expect the program to become so competitive that this type of prioritization will be necessary. CDFA-F2F can assess response to this grant round in gauging whether further prioritization may be necessary next time.</p>
<p>Are farms considered small businesses?</p>	<p>Yes, if they meet small business criteria described in the RFA.</p>

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<p>When using the USDA Food Access Research Atlas to determine the eligibility of our Reservation lands, I am finding there is insufficient census data to determine low-income or low access status.</p>	<p>Thank you for bringing this important issue to our attention. CDFA-F2F's highest priority when awarding grants is to fund organizations and businesses led by or serving communities from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. CDFA-F2F consulted with our Tribal liaison to make adjustments to our applications to ensure Tribal applicants are not subject to the justification and qualification of the USDA-ERS Food Access Research Atlas, as Tribal Census tract data is not included or accurately captured in that tool. Applicants can add information about a business or project operating within the jurisdiction of federally recognized Tribal lands to Question 8.</p>
<p>While we appreciate that food donation organizations are eligible for the HRGP, we recommend that preference goes to small businesses and corner stores as well as smaller community pantries. Large food donation organizations likely have more capacity (e.g. entire development teams and/or grant writers) and other mechanisms (e.g. fundraising and donations) to acquire equipment, which other smaller entities in underserved communities do not have access to.</p>	<p>Thank you for this feedback. We have added to scoring criteria on p. 16 of the RFA that smaller businesses are prioritized, and that, for food donation programs, organization size and access to resources can be considered in addition to clients reached. CDFA-F2F has added to the RFA that smaller organizations and community-based food pantries that lack access to other funding sources for equipment and serve priority populations will be prioritized in scoring. We have also added a question about access to other funding for equipment to the application questions for nonprofits, cities, and counties.</p> <p>A larger organization applying for TA and equipment in order to provide access to smaller, community-level programs would still meet this criteria and not necessarily be de-prioritized. CDFA-F2F can also evaluate response to this RFA and consider whether further prioritization may be needed in future.</p>
<p>Can an organization that applies for funding to provide equipment and TA at a local level still consult with the seven program TA Providers?</p>	<p>Yes. Organizations may still consult with the TAPs - those resources are for everyone and contact information for the TAPs is on the program webpage. Overall materials and Quick Tips regarding selecting, installing, using, and maintaining equipment are provided for everyone, and Effecterra, the refrigeration expert, can consult with other organizations as needed if the available resources created for this program don't answer your questions.</p>

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Access to Technical Assistance	<p>Is a training session with Effecterra possible? A step-by-step they can suggest to assess a business's equipment needs, or a form to fill out, or parameters to look for, how to test electricity needs even though we're not electrical experts, etc.?</p>	<p>Thank you for the feedback on your interest in this kind of training. Effecterra is developing plans to offer resources such as a training/slides/video in the new year. Stay tuned, and please let us know any more specific questions you would like covered. As a first step, please look through the resources created, including equipment guidelines in the RFA, appendices of pre-vetted equipment/manufacture lists, and Quick Tips for Applicants and Grantees (all available on the program webpage).</p>
	<p>I'd love to see an Effecterra webinar for environmental health service departments in counties across the state, so we can make sure there's no siloing and get on the same page about what equipment is allowable. In our region in the central coast, food producers and small businesses are saying that CDFA may have signed off on X equipment, but Environmental Health comes and shuts them down for two weeks because there's fine print on the side of the fridge that XYZ is not allowed. We're pumping millions of dollars for good use but sometimes it might be in vain for small producers who don't have their regulators on board.</p>	<p>Thank you for raising this important issue. We want to know more about the specific problems and equipment in question and will follow up about this situation individually. We are also reaching out to contacts at the Department of Public Health & Environmental Health to uncover and resolve any problems. A joint webinar could be possible.</p>
	<p>It's so great Effecterra is providing TA around equipment and creating resources for the program. Will they also be available for one on one consulting if we have a question about a store and which unit is best for them?</p>	<p>Yes, individual consulting is possible, and Effecterra can be available to other TA providers. Individual requests are intended mostly for unusual cases or questions that are not covered in the available program resources that Effecterra is reviewing and/or creating, which will include Frequently Asked Questions. They have created a webform for inquiries (tinyurl.com/hrgp-technical) and will batch questions to create the FAQ, so expect a response to take several days.</p>

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<p>Can someone apply for funding for a portion of a refrigeration need, such as a portion of the budget for a large refrigerated truck?</p>	<p>This is possible, with justification and documentation of other funding. The situation can be considered during scoring, with respect to how high the need is for HRGP funding. In general, HRGP encourages grantees to leverage multiple funding sources - just be aware that some state incentive programs don't allow multiple state programs to be used simultaneously. We added this information to p. 7 of the RFA under Allowable Expenses.</p>
<p>Is there a limit on how much money a grantee can receive, or how many advance payments can be issued? Given that advance pay can only be for up to 90% of expenses - can another organization front the remaining 10% on behalf of the small business owner?</p>	<p>There is no cap on how much a grantee can receive - and no cap on how many advance payments can be issued. CDFA can only reimburse the party on the grant agreement for expenses - but organizations, TA providers, and small businesses are free to make any arrangements desired to come up with the 10% that can't be advanced.</p>
<p>How long after the application deadline will funds be awarded?</p>	<p>CDFA-F2F tentatively plans to announce awards in early July. It can then take up to three months to execute grant agreements, so grantee projects are expected to begin in the October-November range. Delays could occur to this timeline if an unexpectedly high number of applications are received or for other administrative reasons.</p>
<p>Is there a certain number of years the equipment must be used by the recipient?</p>	<p>There is no specific number of years in grant regulations. Equipment is certainly expected to be used as outlined in the RFA for the duration of the grant term and ideally for as long as the equipment remains in good condition, which could be a decade or longer. If equipment must be disposed of when its fair market value is at least \$5,000, CDFA must approve the disposition and can make suggestions. If the fair market value of equipment is under \$5,000, it is not considered equipment that needs CDFA approval for disposition - although the program would still like to weigh in and for equipment to be used for its intended purpose.</p>

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How the program works	Should nonprofits consolidate applications regionally, or apply individually on behalf of the store/organization?	A nonprofit planning to apply for equipment on behalf of multiple sites and offer TA should consolidate sites into one overarching application. The nonprofit would then be the grantee, responsible for managing grant funds, fronting any funds necessary, meeting program requirements, etc. A current TAP whose project plan includes helping sites with individual applications is expected to be available for that planned application assistance and should communicate with CDFA-F2F about any changes.
	We are a food bank with about 20 agency partners that need support with refrigeration. Does it make sense for us, as the food bank, to apply on behalf of all of our agencies? Or would it be best for them to apply individually?	Both ways could work - it depends on what makes sense for your region and organization, your capacity and interest to consolidate and manage a grant on behalf of your partners, and whether you plan to provide TA and need funding through this grant for TA provision. CDFA-F2F has not stated a priority for either type of application (consolidated or individual). However, the size and access to resources of each site can be considered in scoring, and providing program & equipment access to smaller, community-based food pantries is prioritized.
	Can an organization apply regionally and subcontract out TA and/or outreach? Or conversely, subcontract out purchasing?	Yes, sub-contracting can be included in grant budgets, with justification. The plan and budget context can be considered in scoring, including the cost-effectiveness of the project.
	Is the 25% Indirect Cost Rate honored UC/CDFA state negotiated rate?	Yes, UCs and CSUs may use their state negotiated indirect rate, as specified in the RFA p. 8, which is 35% effective July 1, 2022.
	If there is something incorrect in the application, are we able to correct the application and resubmit, even if past the March deadline?	CDFA-F2F has reserved the right to ask clarifying questions and it's possible applications could be updated even after the submission deadline in case of an error or miscalculation.

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<p>How do we ensure compliance or enforcement? We've had some retailers do great with the CDFA funded units in regards to stocking but also have had some not necessarily follow the guidelines (as in they did so for a couple of months but then didn't fully stock the unit with appropriate items).</p>	<p>Organizations focused on healthy retail emphasize that careful selection of participating stores is important, and that store ownership has to be really committed to offering fresh, healthy foods in their communities. As just one example, Healthy Retail SF offers assessment forms, visits stores and generates "report cards" and provides ongoing TA to support meeting goals (See online resources at www.healthyretailsf.org/programs). Other projects also have information available on websites. See the HRGP webpage for previous grantee information and reach out to our office if you'd like help making a connection). Assisting with produce procurement, to build those connections and contracts, and working with owners and shoppers to stock items truly in demand for the site also helps (see Quick Tips for more feedback from past grantees on stocking). Some projects find it useful to build incentives or procurement subsidies into their plan. Additionally, CDFA expects sites to comply with program terms and can conduct an audit at any time. Grantees should communicate with CDFA-F2F program staff about implementation challenges like these.</p>
<p>Commonly, retail stores change ownership and/or sell their store or cease operations. As a previous grantee, we worked with five retailers that received refrigeration units: one store is no longer in business and two more stores are in the process of selling their businesses. The HRGP currently does not include clear guidelines regarding the status of refrigeration and freezer units in the event a retailer sells its business or ceases operations. Accounting for such events will ensure the refrigeration and freezer units in place can continue to provide access to healthy foods for the community.</p>	<p>Thanks for this very important point. We have added an Equipment Disposition section to p. 12 of the RFA, which stipulates that grantees should contact CDFA-F2F to approve equipment disposition if a site is no longer able to use grant-funded equipment for its intended purpose. CDFA-F2F can also help find appropriate sites or programs with similar goals ready to accept equipment transfers.</p>

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<p>What kind of licensing and permitting are required for sites selling produce? When I was a kid and worked in the produce section of a grocery store, we had to double/triple wash all produce - does that take a special license?</p>	<p>The California Retail Food Code is enforced by county environmental health organizations (see www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/RetailFoodProgram.aspx for more information). Sites that will be preparing food or drinks, such as washing and cutting produce and making smoothies (a good healthy retail practice for produce not selling), will need health licensing in addition to their retail license. All grantees are expected to hold required licenses and permits to operate.</p>
<p>Is there a deadline to complete the procurement and installation process?</p>	<p>Equipment must be purchased during the grant term identified on the grant agreement (which could be 6 months, 1 year, or multiple years, per your application or discussion with CDFA). The intent is to get this funding out in communities and new equipment functioning as soon as realistic after grant agreements are executed (up to 3 months after awards are announced). Grantees should be in touch with CDFA if there are any delays. The final deadline for multi-year projects is December 2026.</p>
<p>Where can we find the list of TA Providers? Will additional resources including Quick Tips be released along with the RFA? Can we get the listening session presentation and the comments and CDFA responses emailed to us?</p>	<p>The list of TA Providers is available on the program webpage, at https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/hrgp.html. Additional resources including Quick Tips were posted as drafts for public comment, and final versions will be posted along with the RFA. We will post the listening session presentation and summary of comments and responses to the website, and can also send them by email to those who registered for the sessions or who contact us to request them.</p>
<p>As a full service co-op grocery store, we plan to source as much of our food as possible from regional and California sources, but some of our items will come from outside the state as well. Can we sell products from other states and countries in the same grant-funded refrigerated case as products from CA?</p>	<p>Grant-funded equipment should stock fresh produce, nuts, meat, dairy, eggs, minimally processed, and/or culturally appropriate foods grown in California to the extent possible. Most of the items in a fridge should be California-grown, but at this time it's not required to stock 100% CA-grown at all times. We understand that seasonality and cultural needs play a role in items stocked.</p>

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<p>Is there a limit to how many applications a TA provider can submit? Is it best if we submit client applications individually or batch them together?</p>	<p>There is no limit to how many applications current TA providers offering outreach & application assistance can support or submit on behalf of applicants. Individual applications must be used, unless your organization plans to consolidate into a single equipment application and offer both equipment and TA to partner sites. There is no other way to batch multiple applications. Business/organization size and access to resources can be considered, and providing access to smaller, less-resourced sites is prioritized. However, there is no priority articulated for applications from individual sites directly vs. organizations providing TA and equipment to sites.</p>
<p>As outreach grantees are providing general outreach and basic application assistance, and the TA portion of the equipment grant would require additional tasks (such as site visits, inspections, assessments of electrical infrastructure, specifying equipment, introducing fresh food vendors, purchase and installation assistance), outreach grantees are eligible to apply for TA and equipment funding, if applying on behalf of a store or organization. Is that correct?</p>	<p>Yes. Current TAPs focused on outreach may also apply to provide equipment and TA to one or more stores or other eligible sites.</p>
<p>Would the grant reimburse for equipment that meets specs but is purchased before the grants are approved/funded?</p>	<p>No, CDFA is not able to reimburse for purchases made before grant agreements are fully executed and grant terms begin. If there is a business or other need for equipment ASAP, be in touch and we can attempt (but not guarantee) that the grant agreement be expedited, with justification.</p>

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	<p>If a business has the intent to register to accept CalFresh, must it be authorized before the proposal deadline? Or can it apply with the plan? How should we fill out this section in the application, must additional documents be provided afterwards, and within how many days?</p>	<p>Yes, a business can apply with the intent to apply to accept CalFresh, but will need to describe and document where it is in the authorization process, and this status can be considered in scoring. It will need to have the authorization before the grant can start. We have added this information to the RFA p. 4-5 and added questions about authorization status to application questions. CalFresh application status should be described in response to Question 9, and any relevant documentation showing that you've applied or where you are in the process should be attached to the application and could make the application more competitive.</p>
	<p>On p.4 of the draft RFA it says that small businesses must be authorized to accept CalFresh benefits. We are a startup grocery co-op and will not be open until late 2023/early 2024 but our intention is absolutely to accept these benefits. Can we just describe our intent in the application and any steps taken towards authorization?</p>	<p>Yes, you may apply before the site is open and before you have CalFresh authorization, with a description of where you are in the process. However, this status can be considered during scoring. This information has been added to p.4-5 of the RFA and questions about authorization status have been added to the application questions.</p>

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CalFresh Requirement	<p>I see in the draft RFA that small businesses must be independently owned, with 100 or fewer employees, average annual gross receipts of \$16 million or less, and, if conducting food sales, must be authorized to accept EBT/SNAP/CalFresh benefits. Since small farm operations fall under the definition of small businesses, are they required to accept EBT/SNAP/CalFresh benefits at their farm stand or store in order to be eligible for grant funding?</p>	<p>Yes, to be eligible for HRGP funding, small farm operations are required by legislation to accept SNAP (or another nutrition benefit as listed in the Food and Agricultural code 49012.) Small businesses are eligible to apply before they have SNAP certification, but they must have it by the time a grant begins. We encourage small businesses including farms to work on completing SNAP certification now. Farms can find information about applying for SNAP authorization at https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept (for corner stores see https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer.) CalFresh (as SNAP is called in California) is supervised by the Department of Social Services and operated by counties – see https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/calfresh for more information and https://www.cdss.ca.gov/county-offices to find contact info for your county social services agency. This information has been added to p.4 of the RFA in the Small Business Section and also to scoring criteria under Track Record on p. 14.</p>
	<p>We provide locally raised, grass-fed beef to local stores in Northern California and some restaurants, and have freezer beef for shoppers. We don't accept SNAP now. Can TAPs help us figure out SNAP enrollment? Also, most of the businesses we work with may accept SNAP in their stores, so this seems like a gray area for us.</p>	<p>If you apply as a small business, you are required to be SNAP-certified (and to meet other eligibility criteria including serving low-income or low-food access populations). Distributing to restaurants is outside the scope of this program. As described above, we have added information about SNAP authorization to the RFA on p. 4 and TAPs may also be able to help with becoming SNAP-authorized. At present, intermediary businesses distributing produce to stores are not directly eligible for HRGP, since they would not be SNAP-authorized. However, produce procurement solutions including supporting distributors or subsidizing corner store produce orders can be included as part of Technical Assistance that some grantees provide. A business selling eligible items directly to shoppers could be eligible if SNAP-authorized.</p>

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	<p>Given the requirements for the program and regulations from the USDA regarding SNAP/EBT benefits - only bigger corporations are able to accept online SNAP benefits as of now, creating a barrier and disadvantage for small businesses that sell online. It would be a great deal if CDFA and Farm to Fork could work on expanding the program to farmers, small business, and organizations. The online SNAP pilot has been effect since 2019 - 4 years in April - and that is equivalent to a 10-year disadvantage for small businesses, given the technology, information, and resources those corporations have. By the time they conduct a pilot with small businesses, it will take another 5 years to make it public, thus complicating the farm to fork movement and posing a barrier to accessing this program.</p>	<p>Thank you for the comment. We can understand your frustration not being able to accept SNAP online and hope that the USDA online SNAP pilot program continues to grow to include more types of participants. In regards to CDFA's HRGP program, the requirement for small businesses to accept nutrition benefits is written into the authorizing legislation for the program (see Food & Agricultural Code 49015 at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=49015&lawCode=FAC). Accepting CalFresh is a major way we can be sure that small businesses serve low-income shoppers and make healthy foods more accessible.</p> <p>Small businesses cannot be exempted from the CalFresh requirement for this program. We recognize that some small businesses, such as produce distributors that sell to corner stores but not individual shoppers, or that only sell online, could be relevant for this program but can't meet the SNAP authorization requirement.</p> <p>Stakeholders and advocates desiring program changes that may entail legislative changes may contact their state representatives or CDFA's Legislative Office. Reach out to CDFA to be connected.</p>
	<p>During the pilot phase, we had some issues with some refrigerators not available with our county-approved vendor. Are certain refrigerators more likely to be available - and some where production may be slow/delayed?</p>	<p>We would like to know which equipment was unavailable. Although there have been many supply chain delays in equipment delivery in the last few years, equipment listed in the RFA appendices should be sold statewide.</p>

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<p>Several food businesses have shared with us that refrigeration approved by CDFA may not pass muster with county level regulations. Did CDFA run this list through county governments? Our organization will partner with our local regulators, but would be great to know if you've done that already.</p>	<p>Thanks for raising this important issue. We have not run the equipment guidelines or pre-vetted equipment lists by county governments. CDFA-F2F partnered with the CA Air Resources Board to create the guidelines and put out a call for equipment to manufacturers. We'd like more information about the equipment in question and the county's objections. Please be in touch with more information. We have also contacted colleagues at the Department of Public Health to learn more about this issue and collaborate on solutions.</p>
<p>Does this grant cover repairs to existing equipment as well?</p>	<p>Repairs of existing equipment is not the focus of this program and generally beyond the scope. Some retrofits can be considered on an individual basis, mainly to retrofit existing vans with refrigeration units. You may contact our office with a specific circumstance or eligibility question.</p>
<p>Are open (no doors) retail produce cooler display units allowed?</p>	<p>Units with doors are required, since they are most energy-efficient (and should cost less to power) - with exceptions. If the space can't accommodate a unit with doors, or there's need for a unique unit type that doesn't come with doors, applicants must supply justification for why a doorless case is needed.</p>
<p>How have businesses responded to using refrigeration with doors for produce?</p>	<p>We have not heard any feedback about this guideline to date. Please submit any feedback on this question by December 12.</p>
<p>We are an equipment manufacturer and would like our equipment included in program materials. How can we make this happen?</p>	<p>Thanks for your interest and sending this information. Please reach out to CDFA-F2F if you haven't already done so, and we'll vet proposed equipment to include in the final RFA materials.</p>

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Allowable costs & equipment	Is replacement of a refrigerated unit in a truck allowable?	Yes, this would be allowable, assuming all eligibility criteria are met. You can always reach out to CDFA-F2F with an individual question to discuss in more depth. Questions and CDFA answers will continue to be anonymized and posted for all to view on the webpage.
	Can we install/create reach-in coolers by a professional, or do we have to purchase a premade, stand-alone cooler?	Custom-built solutions are allowable with justification, and a broad variety of equipment beyond stand-alones is allowed. See the equipment guidelines on p. 9 of the RFA and the appendices and Quick Tips for equipment selection, installation, and use.
	Will this grant cover refrigerated food market trucks, such as The Farmers Truck? I've heard this previously but is it still the case? Are cold trucks on the list? Walk-in units? Mobile cold storage?	Yes, refrigerated food market trucks such as for mobile markets are still allowable, as are other types of refrigerated trucks and vans, walk-in units, and mobile cold storage. See the RFA p. 9, appendices, and Quick Tips, and feel free to reach out to CDFA-F2F if you have an equipment question not covered in the materials.
	Can a mixed application for both refrigerated vans and in-store refrigerators be submitted?	Yes, multiple types of allowable equipment can be included in one application.
	Are dehydrators allowed? Farm stands are interested in reducing food waste by dehydrating imperfect produce.	Dehydrators are beyond the scope of this program and would not be allowed as part of a refrigeration equipment application. However, an organization providing TA and applying on behalf of a farm stand could choose to include dehydrators as part of program supplies and materials in their TA budget (limited to 20% of the total grant amount).

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<p>Besides refrigeration, would the program cover recyclable bags for bagging food for giveaways? Could funds be used to purchases computers or printers? Currently, everything is handwritten and it takes a long time to process. As a food recovery program, could we use funding for coolers, insulated bags, blankets, etc.? Not everyone can drive a refrigerated truck and frankly, some pickups will be smaller.</p>	<p>This program focuses on refrigeration equipment, and items including recyclable bags, computers, printers, coolers, insulated bags, and blankets are beyond the program scope and would not be allowable as part of the equipment budget for a site applying directly. However, an organization providing TA and applying on behalf of sites could choose to include these items, with justification, as part of their TA budget. As a reminder, CDFA reserves the right to make partial awards and all proposed items may not be allowable or funded. See the list of TA providers on the webpage and contact our office for further inquiries.</p>
<p>How are minor electrical costs defined?</p>	<p>See p. 9 of the RFA, which states, "Minor electrical work such as installing outlets to accommodate new equipment. CDFA recommends determining whether this will be necessary and obtaining an estimate to include in the application budget. Costs of over \$500 will require justification. Wholesale electrical and infrastructure updates cannot be covered by this grant and will be the sites' responsibility. Costs of over \$1000 are unlikely to be approved and would be considered to be the responsibility of the site.</p> <p>Documentation of all final costs incurred will need to be submitted."</p>
<p>Can we apply for the TA grant if we're not on the current list of TAPs? We offer both equipment and technical assistance for mobile refrigerated trucks.</p>	<p>The specific TA grant round is closed. However, organizations wishing to apply for both equipment and to provide TA can absolutely apply now, during the equipment grant round, provided you meet eligibility requirements.</p>

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<p>Do stores have to be currently open to apply? I am on the Board of a food co-op start-up in Imperial Beach near the Mexican border. We are a high need, food desert community. We have signed a lease on our grocery store space and are preparing to submit our application for building permits. Funding from the CA Healthy Refrigeration grant program would help us tremendously with our equipment costs and allow us to open our store with energy efficient refrigeration which is consistent with our values. I would just like to confirm that we are eligible to apply. I didn't see anything in the draft RFP that says you have to be open already to apply but I just want to make sure. Although our storefront isn't open yet, we do run a monthly Farmers Market to bring more fresh, locally grown produce and locally produced food products to our community.</p>	<p>This sounds like a potential fit for the program. Stores not yet open are allowed to apply, but we'd need to know the projected timeline and where you are in the process, and this status can be considered in scoring. There are deadlines for use and liquidation of program funds by 2027 and we'd need to be sure timing aligns. If the store is much closer to opening, with permits in hand and building well underway, your application could be seen as more competitive to the review committee. We're also interested in how large a refrigeration system you plan, with how many lbs. of refrigerant, if known, and there could be other relevant state programs.</p>
<p>How do worker-owned grocery cooperatives fit in? We are a legacy small business.</p>	<p>If the site qualifies as a small business and is located in a low-income or low-access area, serving low-income or low-access populations, it would be eligible.</p>

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<p>We are a legacy, worker-owned cooperative and donate all culled food to local nonprofits. How should we highlight this in our application?</p> <p>We are located in a relatively affluent, high cost of living area, but our median worker-owner income is \$24/hour. How can we highlight this in our application?</p> <p>Although we need to upgrade some stand-alone and walk-in units as well, we were also hoping to replace some aging open air produce coolers that were donated from another co-op. Do you think that including a request for replacement open produce cooler displays would hurt our overall proposal's approach?</p>	<p>This kind of information can be supplied in response to Question 6, Type of Business as seen in the copy of application questions for corner stores & small businesses linked on the program webpage - and especially in answering Question 15 requesting optional additional information, including how the business serves low-income or low-food access clientele, how small the business is even within the small business category, whether owners come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, etc. While CDFA cannot guarantee how applications will be scored or advise specific applications, since partial funding is possible, we generally recommend applying for everything needed/desired, since individual items can be funded or stricken. Remember that the need for open units at all must be justified.</p>
<p>We make soups that are stored frozen. Would soups be considered minimally processed foods?</p>	<p>Frozen soups made from primarily California-grown or raised ingredients can qualify as minimally processed. If applying as a small business, you'll need to be SNAP-authorized to be eligible.</p>
<p>What are the requirements to be considered a small business?</p>	<p>See p. 5 of the RFA. Small businesses must be independently owned, with 100 or fewer employees, average annual gross receipts of \$16 million or less, and authorized to accept EBT/SNAP/CalFresh benefits.</p>
<p>Can prior grantees apply again?</p>	<p>Yes, there is no limit on the number of times grantees or applicants can apply.</p>
<p>Are Joint Power Authorities eligible applicants?</p>	<p>Yes, and this information has been added to p.4 of the RFA. Additionally, general partnership applications may be submitted, with one lead grantee for administrative purposes.</p>

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Eligibility	Is a nonprofit farm which donates all produce directly to the poor or through Catholic Worker eligible?	That sounds eligible.
	Our nonprofit provides transitional housing for veterans. The VA provides payment for housing and food. We need a large capacity refrigerator because we have up to 60 vets in the program.	If your site sells or donates California-grown foods to low-income or low-food access populations, and stocks allowable food items, it is likely eligible. However, the focus is on fresh foods, minimally processed foods, and culturally appropriate foods, that clients might generally eat or prepare themselves. Fridges to stock ingredients for restaurants are outside the scope of the program.
	We are a migrant seasonal center - does that qualify us? We get food donated to provide to the tenants from the food bank and we need it refrigerated. We pass it along to tenants - does this allow us to participate?	That sounds eligible, if stocking requirements are met.
	Are liquor stores eligible (assuming they meet all other requirements)?	Yes, liquor stores that meet criteria are eligible, and several participated in the pilot program.
	Would an elderly care center that is a small business be able to apply, or is it only for retail stores? We are a retirement home in a low-income area caring for the elderly and need a new fridge/freezer for residents? The restaurant is open to the public.	Restaurant operations are beyond the scope of this program. But a small business selling or donating fresh produce/other eligible foods to clients could be eligible, if SNAP-certified. The focus is on small businesses making fresh foods accessible where there are barriers to access. A restaurant operation in a residential center doesn't sound on point for the program, but look through the RFA and you're welcome to get back in touch with more questions.

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<p>Does a small business that has an online presence, rather than a retail front, qualify? We deliver directly to households in remote areas.</p>	<p>A small business meeting eligibility and program criteria with an online presence could qualify. It's not necessary to have a physical storefront. A small business selling food directly to customers must accept CalFresh. A produce delivery business operating a distribution center might also be interested in our new Food Hubs program: https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/F2CFHP.html.</p>
<p>On the topic of online shopping, which has become imperative in remote locations without access to purchase, grow fresh produce, or otherwise have a means of transportation: are small business that work with local farmers and take online orders for them, as well as deliver to customers in these underserved and remote areas, able to qualify for the program? If so, are these small online businesses bound by the same general requirements for a small business.</p>	<p>A small distributor selling produce to customers could be eligible, and must meet all general small business requirements to participate.</p>
<p>Would family childcare home providers be eligible? Most are on the CA Food Program. They provide healthy meals and need a bigger fridge to hold more food for the kids.</p>	<p>This sounds outside the scope of HRGP, since it's not selling or donating fresh foods to make them accessible, but rather a paid service that happens to include meals. But you're welcome to look through the RFA and reach back out if you have more eligibility questions. The federal Child and Adult Care Food Program gives reimbursement for equipment - you may want to ask your service provider. You may also be interested to join our Farm to School newsletter, as our Farm to School Incubator Grant Program has a track for Farm to Early Childhood Education centers (see https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/CaFarmtoSchoolProgram.htm).</p>
<p>Where can we check if our business falls in a "low-income" or "low-food access" area?</p>	<p>A few sources have been added to the RFA p.4, and CDFA will accept information from other sources that applicants can supply, as well. A primary tool is the USDA Food Access Research Atlas (ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas).</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">Comments on Program Updates and Other</p>	<p>The new coverage of installation, removal, and minor electrical work is fantastic!</p> <p>Love all the updates!</p> <p>Advance pay is so helpful for small businesses!</p> <p>Thank you for the presentation & listening session - looking forward to applying!</p> <p>Great job reworking this grant - tons of improvements!</p> <p>Really grateful...thank you...awesome moderators for the listening session...</p>	<p>Thank you very much for your comments and participation! CDFA-F2F is grateful to have such engaged stakeholders providing feedback to improve the program for all Californians.</p>
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<p>Listening Session Participants Offering Technical Assistance or Connections</p>	<p>Businesses in South Los Angeles can contact Sandrine Cassidy at scassidygreenbusiness@gmail.com.</p> <p>The California Green Business Network is focusing technical assistance in West Oakland, Salinas, Soledad, San Benito County, Lompoc/Guadalupe, South Los Angeles, and Kern County, and may be able to provide assistance Statewide. Please contact me if you need help applying for a grant! ahirst@environmentalin.com</p> <p>People in the San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, or Ventura counties can contact info@sbcfoodaction.org to be connected to TA in our area.</p> <p>For those on this call in the Sierra Nevada Region please visit us at https://www.sierrafridgegrant.org/ regarding grant assistance!</p>	<p>CDFA-F2F is thankful for your participation. Be sure to see the program webpage for the full list of TA Providers: https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/hrgp.html</p>
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