

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

1. Q: It appears your current RFP is for technical assistance providers. Are you still accepting grant applications for the refrigeration units themselves, or will you be issuing new grant applications or RFPs later this year?

A: Yes, this grant round seeks technical assistance providers for the program. An RFP is planned for December for people to secure refrigeration equipment (and a second equipment RFP is planned for fall 2023).

2. Q: We are an equipment manufacturer and would like to do outreach and provide our innovative equipment to customers for free through this grant program – would this be eligible?

A: The current grant round seeks technical assistance providers and does not fund refrigeration equipment. If you are doing outreach in order to secure sites that want the solar freezers, you should apply in December when we release an RFP for equipment, when up to 20% of the grant can also fund technical assistance, including outreach. (Technical assistance typically consists of more than just supplying the unit – we recommend you review the RFP and scoring criteria when they are published later this year for more information about what types of projects may score best.) If you can offer the broader technical assistance described in this current RFP and your company meets eligibility including small business criteria, you could apply now.

3. Q: How is regional defined for this program? Does “smaller region” simply mean delivering programs in one city?

A: We don't have a strict definition of “regional” for the program at this time. Proposals that cover broad regions of the state (or the entire state, if a provider has that capacity), multiple counties, or large metropolitan areas, are encouraged. Smaller regions including delivering programs in one city, or, for example, to a number of sites from one or more particular ethnic/language communities in one or more cities, can be considered.

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

4. Q: Can we add visual materials to a proposal?

A: Pictures can be uploaded through Amplifund – but would need to be added to an existing upload field as an additional, optional item and you should add a note about it in a different field. Optional pictures can also be emailed to the Farm to Fork office.

5. Q: We currently use a refrigeration vendor who advises about the energy impact of each unit. We plan to continue working with them on purchasing units. Would it be a conflict of interest to also list them as consultants to stores about energy efficiency – and if so, would they need to work pro bono?

A: This does not necessarily sound like a conflict of interest and could be included in a proposal. Just clarify what services will be provided and why there is additional cost, as opposed to part of vendor services already covered through sales commissions, etc. As a reminder, CDFFA reserves the right to make partial awards, and all proposal elements are not guaranteed to be funded even if a grant is made.

6. Q: We are a fiscally sponsored organization, and that fee is separate from our overhead/indirect fees. Is that an allowable expense and can we list it as a separate line item?

A: ***This answer has been revised*** Fiscal sponsorship fees are allowable in a budget but are considered by CDFFA to be part of indirect costs and should be included in the indirect line item.

7. Q: We want to add staff time to support stores that are awarded equipment grants with healthy retail practices and connect them to produce suppliers. Does this fit into the TAPs grant round, or the December equipment grant round?

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022**

A: If you will be offering technical assistance in the form of providing healthy retail advice and produce procurement connections, but not providing refrigeration equipment directly through your project, this would fit Category 2 (Technical Expertise) of the current TAPs grant round. Outreach conducted to finalize a set of stores you wish to provide equipment and technical assistance for would fall in the equipment grant round in December.

8. Q: Will equipment grants be multi-year? Will there be an RFP for equipment held every year through 2025?

A: CDFA is currently committing to hold two equipment grant rounds – this December and in fall 2023. Each of those can include multi-year grants. If all funds are not expended after two rounds, additional rounds may be held. But an RFP for equipment every year through program duration is unlikely.

9. Q: Can individuals apply for a grant, and not just registered businesses?

A: Yes, it is possible for individuals to apply for a grant through this program.

10. Q: Can budgets increase over the course of implementation?

A: No, grant budgets cannot increase over the course of project implementation. If additional funds remain, CDFA will most likely hold another RFP and grantees could be eligible to re-apply.

11. Q: What does optional match or in-kind mean in the budget?

A: ***This answer has been revised*** These are resources or funding the applicant brings to the project not charged to the CDFA grant – see definition in California regulations [here](#). For example, volunteer time for the project would be in-kind support, while a cash contribution from another funder would be a

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

cash match. Other federal and state grant resources are not typically considered appropriate as match.

12. Q: Should we write a proposal in a structure per the proposal questions or per the criteria scorecard?

A: You should refer to the scorecard for clarity on review criteria and scoring and to inform your answers, but you'll need to answer each question as asked through the Amplifund system.

13. Q: Can we include both categories of technical assistance in our proposal?

A: Yes, applicants may include both categories of technical assistance.

14. Q: Do you have to be a small business or organization to qualify or work under one?

A: No, individuals are eligible to apply, and applicant organizations could propose to contract with an individual or business that doesn't meet small business criteria as part of the project – with justification for the services provided, need for services, and how cost is calculated.

15. Q: Can out-of-state organizations apply if working in California?

A: Yes, if they have a California office and established working relationships and experience in California. Highlight established relationships for this work in California to receive maximum points in scoring.

16. Q: Can we propose expanded services not described in the RFP as part of our proposal, such as using legal expertise to assist grantees and CDFA with process and program improvements?

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

A: No, it is not possible for CDFA to consider expanding the scope of this current RFP, even if suggested new elements could be beneficial for the program.

17. Q: Could you share information about which nonprofits or CBOs have expressed interest in applying for this RFP? We work with food systems and are interested in partnering with an energy-focused organization and would like to know if we already have contacts with any organizations already interested in applying.

A: Just a few nonprofits have proactively expressed interest in applying so far, and all work in healthy retail/food distribution/food rescue areas. No energy-focused organization has contacted the Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F) about their interest to date, although there is no requirement to contact our office before applying. CDFA-F2F is not able to share applicant information with other applicants during the open RFP stage. It may be possible to share with other state agencies helping promote the program that have expertise and partnerships in clean refrigeration and energy technologies. A list of awarded grants will be made public once awards are finalized.

18. Q: Does HRGP fund upgrades as well as new equipment installations?

A: The equipment grants fund new cold storage equipment, which in some cases may replace old, inefficient equipment. It does not fund upgrades alone (for example, simply converting on-farm existing cold storage to use solar power, without purchasing a new unit, has not been allowable). There were a couple of cases during the pilot program when existing equipment was repaired, mostly in the case of vans that could be retrofitted to include refrigeration or when parts of broken refrigeration equipment could be repaired/replaced, including switching to lower global warming potential refrigerants - but generally the program requires new equipment to be purchased. Equipment guidelines for the December grant are still being finalized and more information will be available closer to then.

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

19. Q: Will refrigerated trucks continue to be eligible during equipment grant rounds?

A: Yes, refrigerated trucks will continue to be eligible.

20. Q: Q: Can grant funds be used to reimburse for expenses already incurred, especially considering production and delivery delays for refrigerated trucks?

A: No, it is not possible for CDFA to reimburse for expenses incurred before a grant term begins (and CDFA-F2F also cannot guarantee that any particular grant will be funded). There should be plenty of time to lengthen grant timeframes to accommodate build out and delivery of desired, allowable items.

21. Q: Could a program that delivers soups made from ingredients sourced from local farms to low-income clients be eligible for an equipment grant?

A: This program focuses on equipment for organizations selling or donating CA-grown produce, nuts, minimally processed (which can include frozen items), and culturally appropriate foods. Delivery of cooked meals is not the focus, but soups made from local produce could potentially meet criteria for minimally processed foods.

22. Q: Can college food pantries, offering foods to students using CalFresh, qualify for this program?

A: Yes, the program has expanded and can now include food donation programs. If your food pantry is seeking refrigeration equipment, you'll want to apply during the grant round for equipment in December.

23. Q: Our program works with retailers and also food pantries. Should we include existing partners we support in a TAPs proposal and then build on that to pursue an equipment grant next?

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

- A. If you already have a fairly defined local program with existing partners, you can apply in December for equipment funding plus up to 20% of that grant award can support TA provision including signage, etc. This current TAPs round is not meant for healthy retail programs that plan to work just with existing partners – and even a program that needs to do some outreach to finalize partners, can get that TA cost covered through the December equipment round.

The two grant rounds are not exactly planned to build off each other – they have different purposes with the potential for some synergy to develop. There may turn out to be cases when an organization awarded a TAP grant may also reapply in December to provide equipment and TA on the ground to a limited set of partners – but this is not required or the intention.

The current TAPs grant round is to onboard broader TA for the program as a whole, for outreach and application assistance (ideally in multiple languages) for corner stores and other eligible equipment applicants; and/or providing TA to applicants who may not have a local healthy retail program to join. If you are providing that broader TA at a regional level and planning to offer it to equipment applicants with no local program, this grant round is a fit.

24. Q: We are an international company offering innovative, energy-efficient refrigeration solutions. Could we have a virtual meeting to show you some of our solutions, talk about the program, and how we could help low-income and low-food access areas?

- A: If you would like to provide product information to equipment applicants (who will apply for grants in December), CDFA-F2F in partnership with the CA Air Resources Board will soon put out a call to manufacturers to provide specs and information about products meeting GWP and energy-efficiency standards.

If you are interested in the current TAPs RFP, while we can't guide individual applications while the grant round is open, CDFA-F2F is happy to meet and answer any questions (and anonymized questions and CDFA responses will continue to be updated in this summary document via the program webpage.)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

25. Q: If we apply for refrigeration units for partner stores, will we be required to work with the designated technical assistance provider in our area?

A: You will not be required to use a regional TA provider – and can still include technical assistance in your equipment proposal. The cap on that type of TA has been raised to 20% of the total grant award. (You can also apply for an equipment grant without including technical assistance if it's not needed.)

26. Q: We need a large walk-in refrigerator/freezer repaired – would this program cover the repair?

A: Please see Answer 18 above. Generally, repairs of existing equipment are not the focus of the program and likely won't be included, but since guidelines for the December grant round have not yet been finalized, you may double-check then.

27. Q: If applying for the Outreach category of the TAPs round, may we still participate in the equipment grant round? We are confused by the statement in the RFP that "TAPs applying solely in [Category 1] should provide services to interested applicants in the pre-award period, before equipment grants are made, and not continuing through grant implementation at selected sites."

A: Applicants are allowed to apply to both the TAPs and equipment grant rounds (and could potentially have both proposals funded). This sentence from the RFP is about TAPs working solely in the first TAP category, and does not speak to their also being funded for equipment grants.

Note that TAPs applicants are encouraged to create project plans covering both equipment grant rounds (in December 2022 and in fall 2023) if desired. Projects solely funded for outreach and application assistance will be active in the pre-equipment award periods of both grant cycles (and may have an inactive period in between).

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

If also funded for an equipment grant, grantees should be prepared to track funds used carefully in order to invoice the correct grant if there are overlapping grant terms.

As a reminder, organizations wishing solely to finalize sites on the ground to work with should instead apply during the equipment grant round, and can use up to 20% of those total grant awards to provide technical assistance including outreach/site finalization.

28. Q: I am inquiring to see if additional energy efficiency measures can be funded using the equipment round funding for newly installed units and, possibly, existing units. Some examples of energy efficiency measures being considered are:

- Anti-Sweat Heater Controls
- Electronically Commutated Motor Retrofit for a Refrigerated Display Case
- Electronically Commutated Motor Retrofit for Walk-in Cooler or Freezer
- Auto Closer for Refrigerated Storage Door

These measures are incentivized by the utility companies but do not come without a customer co-payment. We are looking to see if the co-payment portion of the cost can be covered with grant funding.

The purpose of installing the additional measures is to help offset the added electricity load from installing refrigeration units where they did not exist before. This additional load is unavoidable no matter how energy efficient these units are. We would like to do what we can to offset this additional load/cost and allow the stores more resources to allocate toward purchasing minimally-processed foods.

A: Yes, these additional energy efficiency measures could be allowable at the time of purchase of new refrigeration equipment. This program can unfortunately not accommodate retrofits alone of existing equipment – but can allow the cost of additional EE measures along with the purchase of new equipment. Leveraging rebates from utility companies could be very helpful. If your organization is looking for additional funding sources, be aware that some incentive programs may not allow use of multiple funding sources to

California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022

support the same project. Applicant organizations are responsible for determining whether program guidelines allow combination of funding sources. CDFA is not able to increase grant budgets after grant agreements are executed, even if other, expected funding sources do not materialize.

29. Q: How should we think about the proposal budget – per number of stores we expect to reach? Should we budget on a monthly or annual basis?

A: You must complete the budget template through Amplifund, which asks for the total budget for the entire project. If you would like to break out the costs by year for a multi-year proposal, you can include that information in the comments/justification field for each line item (and you may be asked for that more detailed annual information if the project is funded).

Different organizations may approach their cost projections differently based on their overall activities and other sources of revenue. Think about your capacity to work with sites and which costs would be charged to this grant. It may be helpful to estimate how many sites you expect to reach, and/or how much staff time you could provide to consult with sites, as an up-to number.

As long as you complete the required budget template, you may also provide additional budget details in an optional attachment to your proposal. This would need to be uploaded in one of the existing upload fields in Amplifund. Multiple documents can be uploaded in those fields.

30. Q: What happens after proposals are submitted? Will someone from CDFA visit each site before grants are made?

A: Submitted proposals will be subject to administrative review to determine eligibility and then passed on to the technical review committee for scoring. CDFA will aggregate scores and make final funding recommendations. Site visits before grants are made are not part of the process. Program evaluators could visit sites to gather information after awards are made. Once awards are announced, it can take approximately three months to execute grant agreements, after which grantees may begin their projects.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022**

31. Q: How are funds distributed? Will we receive the grant as a lump sum, or be reimbursed monthly or annually?

A: Grantees can be reimbursed monthly, quarterly, or annually – it is their choice. It is also possible to receive grant advances for this program, which would be up to three months of expenses at a time, not a lump sum, if criteria are met. See grant advance payment regulations [here](#).

32. Q: Who is on the technical review committee and is it a volunteer position for external reviewers?

A: Yes, technical review committee members are volunteers. Participating members have relevant expertise and informed perspectives to share. Typically there are members from other public agencies and nonprofits. Past grantees who are not currently applying for funding are eligible and encouraged to serve in this capacity. Members must disclose potential conflicts of interest.

33. Q: Can organizations with an indirect cost rate of more than 10 percent claim unrecovered indirect as cost share?

A: ***This answer has been revised*** While federally negotiated indirect cost rates are not applicable to this state funded program, organizations with an established indirect cost rate greater than 10% may claim unrecovered indirect cost as an in-kind contribution. Note that the applicant must have adequate internal controls to document and report on any unrecovered indirect claimed as in-kind contribution, if selected for funding.

34. Q: Is the equipment grant round separate from this current TAPs RFP? Do I need to submit an RFP on June 10th to be eligible for the equipment grant round in December?

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022**

A: These are separate grant rounds. You do not need to submit an RFP now in order to apply in December for refrigeration equipment.

35. Q: We want to offer a stipend of \$50 to potential equipment grant applicants who attend our webinars/workshops, as an incentive for hard to reach businesses in low food access areas to take the time to engage. Would this be allowable?

A: Yes, participant support costs, such as stipends or focus group participant payments, are allowable if included in the approved budget. Grantees would need a way to document this expenditure. The most convenient method may be a gift card, in which case the grantee would show receipts for each gift card purchased and document how it was used and who received it.

36. Q: Can program staff review our application before we submit?

A: No, it is not possible for program staff to review or guide draft applications. As with any grant application, you should refer back to the scoring criteria and make a case in narrative answers for how your organizations meets the criteria to score well – in this case, having the specific skills, relationships, and/or technical expertise desired, in addition to a sound plan and budget. Be as specific as possible about your scope of work and if you're planning to work with one or more particular populations or language communities, locations, etc. so reviewers understand the plan and your capacity to implement.

37. Q: Can program staff we've talked/worked with previously during the pilot program be a reference for this grant round?

A: No, CDFA program staff cannot be a reference for any applicant.

**California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Farm to Fork
Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program TAPs RFP
Questions & Answers
Updated June 9, 2022**

38. Q: How can I specify in the budget that half of a staff salary will be covered by match funding?

A: Select and complete the optional “Matching or In-kind” budget item – it is one of the budget categories provided. Clearly describe the match or in-kind contribution. Email our office if you need more technical support. We are available by phone and can get more technical support if needed.