

## California Department of Food and Agriculture Farm to Community Food Hubs Grant Program Summary of 2025 Grant Applications

### Background

This brief summarizes the characteristics of grant applications the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) received for the Farm to Community Food Hubs Grant Program (Program). CDFA accepted grant applications for a 62-day period (February 12, 2025 – April 14, 2025).

The Program aims to 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 aggregation and distribution infrastructure needed to (1) increase purchasing of local, environmentally sustainable, climate-smart, and equitably produced food by schools and other institutions, (2) build a better food system economy, (3) support the local farming and Indigenous food production economies, (4) accelerate climate adaptation and resilience and (5) employ food system workers with fair wages and working conditions. The Program has two funding tracks: Track 1 Planning, which will fund planning efforts to support the development of community food hubs, and Track 2 Infrastructure and Operations, which will fund food aggregation and distribution infrastructure and operating costs to support community food hub operations.

### Overview of Application Period

During the application period, CDFA staff responded to questions via email and:

Hosted **6 webinars** with a total of 429 attendees

Spent approximately **15.75 hours on 63 phone calls** with applicants

Provided **one-on-one feedback** on draft applications for **29 qualifying applicants**. Four sessions included Spanish interpretation.



## Overview of Applications

**165** submitted applications, collectively requesting **\$148,332,630.87**.

That is almost **11 times** more than what CDFA had available (\$13.75M) to award in 2025.

**Forty-six (28%)** applications were disqualified, meaning **119 (72%)** applications qualified for a technical review (i.e. score) by CDFA's technical reviewers.

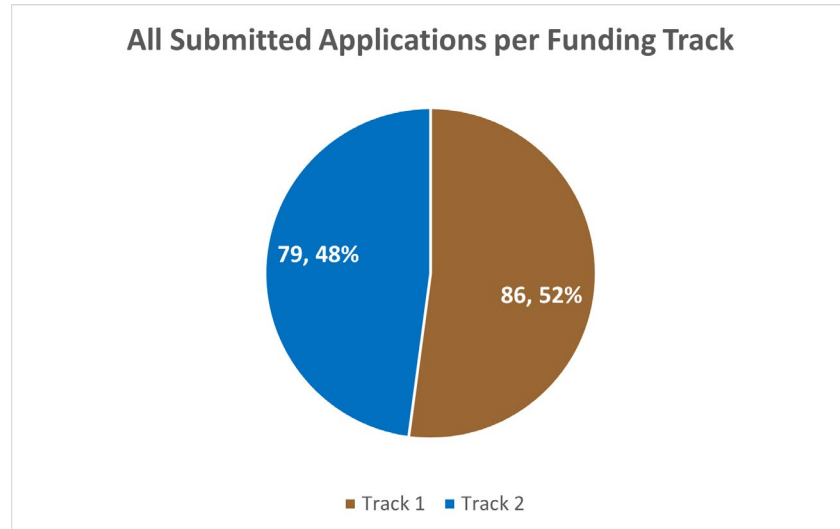


Figure 1. Of the 165 applications that CDFA received, 86 (52%) were for Track 1 Planning and 79 (48%) were for Track 2 Infrastructure and Operations.

Most applicants were **nonprofit organizations**, followed by **food and agriculture-related businesses**, such as farming and ranching businesses or for-profit food hubs.

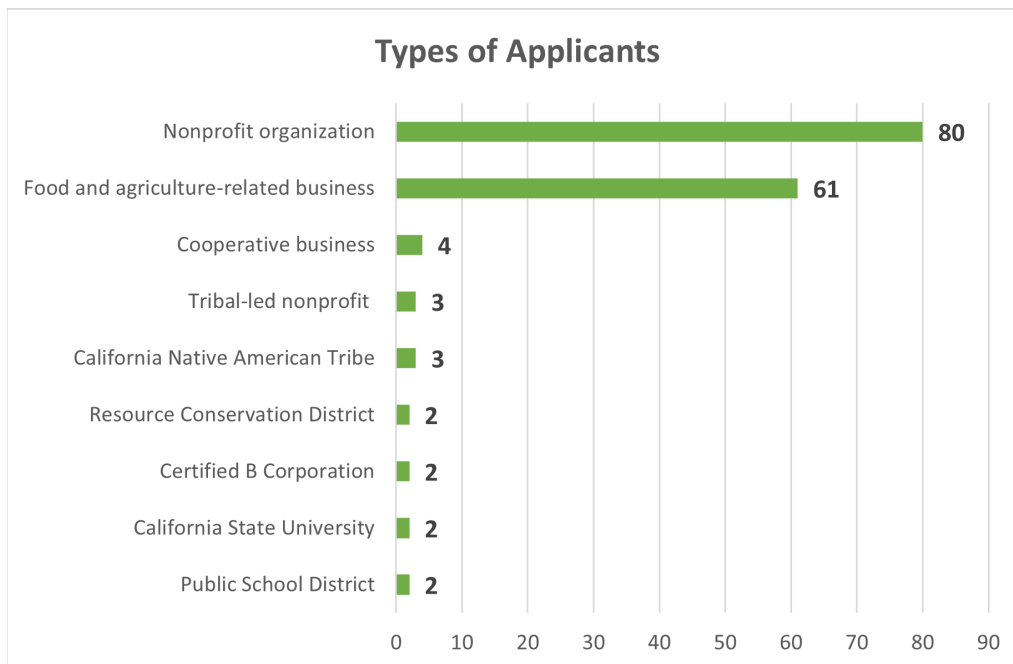


Figure 2. Across all applications, the types of eligible entities that applied were nonprofit organizations (80, 48%), food and agriculture-related businesses (61, 37%), cooperative businesses (4, 2%), Tribal-led nonprofit organizations (3, 2%), Resource Conservation Districts (2, 1%), Certified B Corporations (2, 1%), and public school districts (2, 1%). The entity types of five (3%) applicants are unknown due to incomplete applications.

Most applications were submitted from organizations in the **Greater Los Angeles region**, followed by the **South Coast** and **Bay regions**.<sup>1</sup>

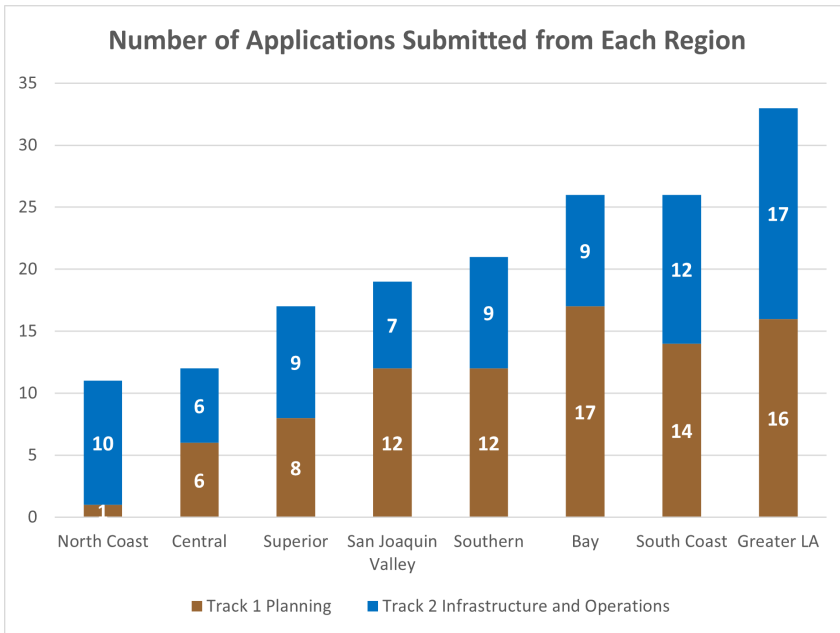


Figure 3. Bar graph shows the number of applications submitted for each funding track (Track 1– brown; Track 2 – blue) in each region of California. Most applications were submitted from the Greater Los Angeles region (33, 20%), followed by the South Coast (26, 16%), the Bay (26, 16%), Southern region (21, 13%), San Joaquin Valley (19, 12%), Superior region (17, 10%), Central region (12, 7%), and North Coast (11, 7%). The Bay area submitted the most Track 1 applications (17). The Greater Los Angeles region submitted the most Track 2 applications (17).

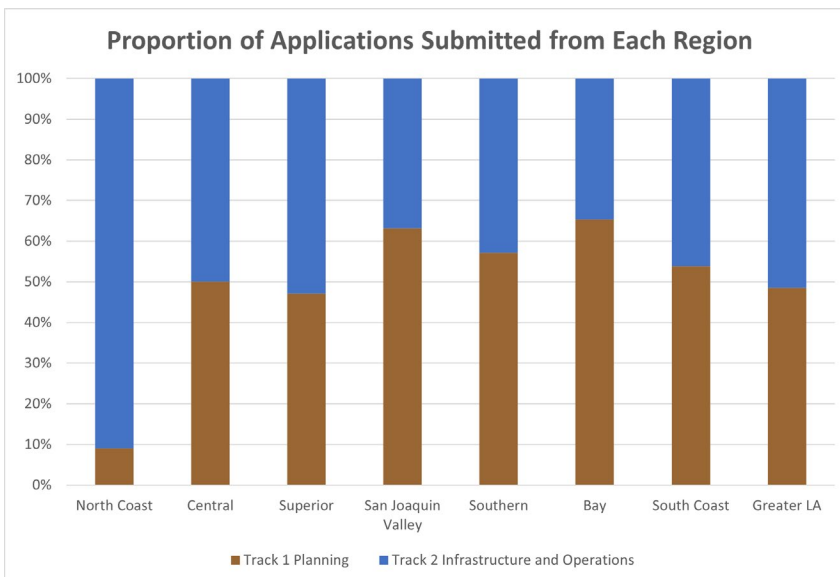


Figure 4. Bar graph shows what proportion of Track 1 (brown) and Track 2 (blue) applications were submitted from each region of California. The Bay region submitted the greatest proportion of Track 1 applications – of the 26 applications from the region, 20% were for Track 1. The North Coast region submitted the greatest proportion of Track 2 applications – of the 11 applications from the region, 90% were for Track 2.

<sup>1</sup> Region boundaries are based on regions used for CDFA’s Farm to School Program- [view the map](#)

Among all Track 2 applications, projects proposed to serve:

**At least 1,318** California food producers<sup>2</sup>

**At least 134** California buyers representing a range of public institutions<sup>3</sup> and nonprofits.<sup>4</sup> The most common buyer supporting projects were K-12 public schools.

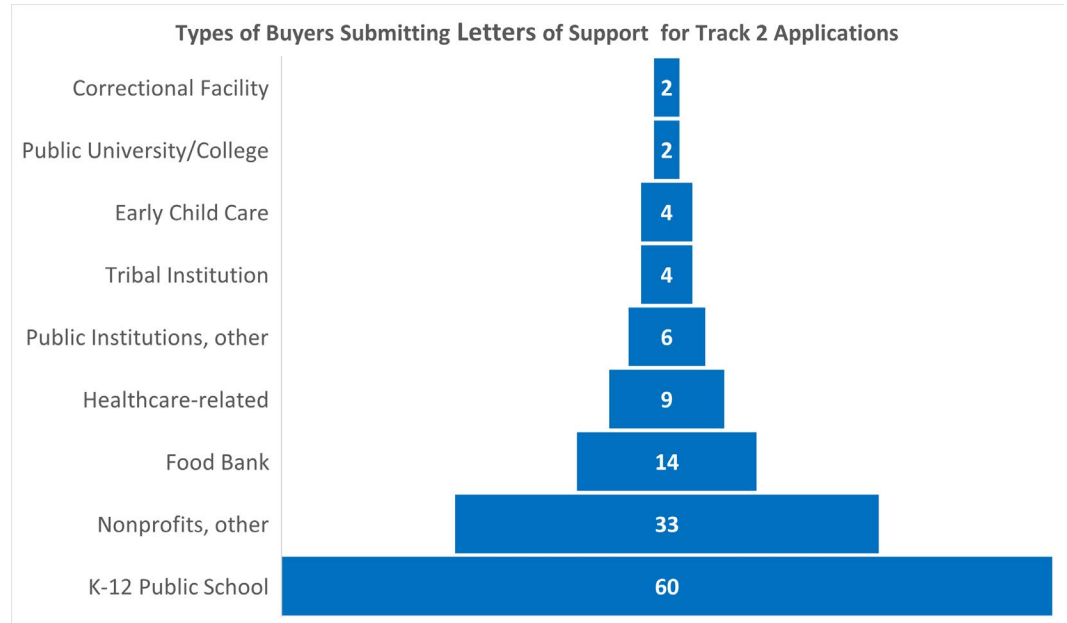
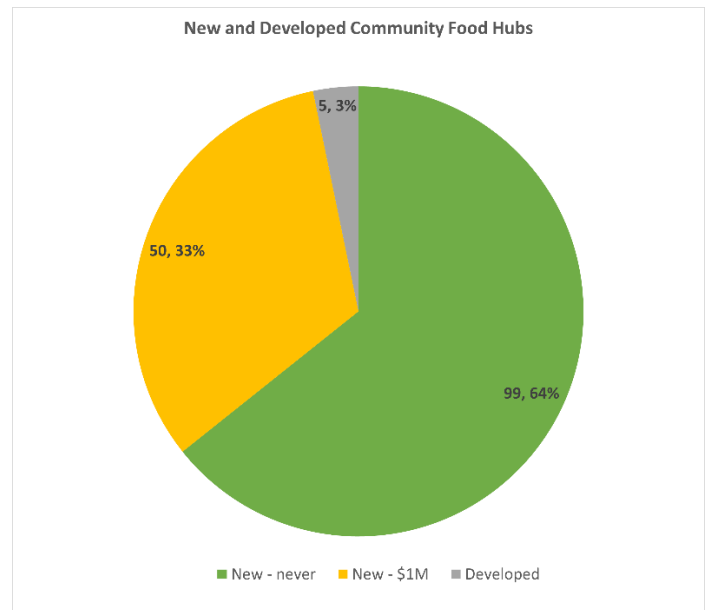


Figure 5. Public institution and nonprofit buyers submitted letters of support for Track 2 applicants. From most frequent to least, the types of buyers that submitted letters were: K-12 public schools (60, 45%), other types of nonprofits (33, 25%), food banks (14, 10%), other types of public institutions (6, 4%), institutions operated by California Native American Tribes (4, 3%), early child care facilities (4, 3%), public universities or colleges (2, 1%), and correctional facilities (2, 1%).

Most applicants – **90%** - reported to qualify as “new community food hubs” according to the definition in the Request for Application.

Figure 6. Most applicants (149, 90%) reported to be “new community food hubs”. Shown in green, 99 (64%) reported to have never conducted food hub operations; shown in yellow, 50 (33%) reported to have an average annual income of \$1M or less the previous three years; and, shown in green, five (3%) reported to have an average annual income between \$1,000,001 - \$5M the previous three years.



<sup>2</sup> The data does not represent unique entities – there could be duplicates.

<sup>3</sup> “Public institution” was defined on pg. 7 in the Farm to Community Food Hubs Grant [Request for Application](#).

<sup>4</sup> The data does not represent unique entities – there could be duplicates.

Most applicants have **never operated a food hub**, while most operational food hub applicants have only been **operating three years or less**.

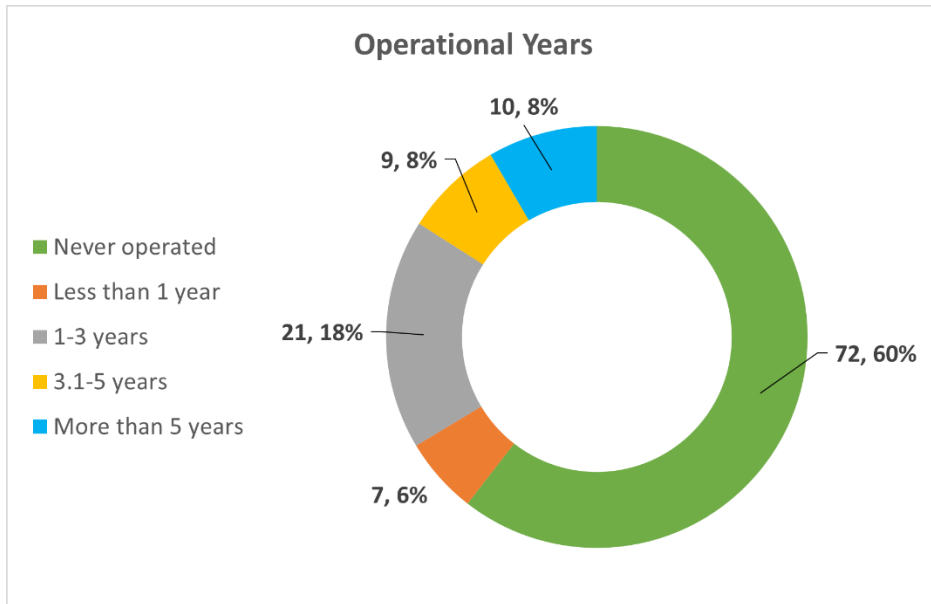


Figure 7. Chart shows how long applicants' food hubs have been operating, if at all. Most applicants the majority (72, 60%) have never operated a food hub before, while 18% (21) have been operating between one to three years, 8% (10) have been operating more than five years, another 8% (9) have been operating for between three and five years, and 6% (7) have been operating less than one year. Note: this data only relates to applicants that were eligible for scoring (i.e. not disqualified).

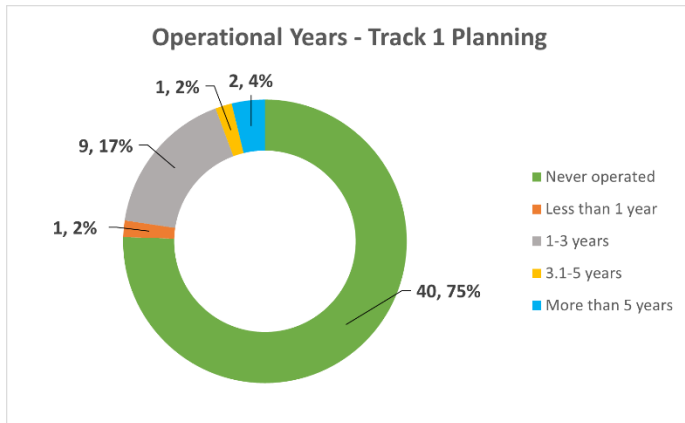


Figure 8. Chart shows how long Track 1 applicants have been operating their food hubs. The majority (75%, 40) have never operated a food hub before, while 17% (9) have been operating between one to three years, 4% (2) have been operating more than five years, 2% (1) has been operating less than one year, and another 2% (1) has been operating between three and five years. Of those that have been operating, most (10) have been operating three years or less. Note: this data only relates to applicants that were eligible for scoring (i.e. not disqualified).

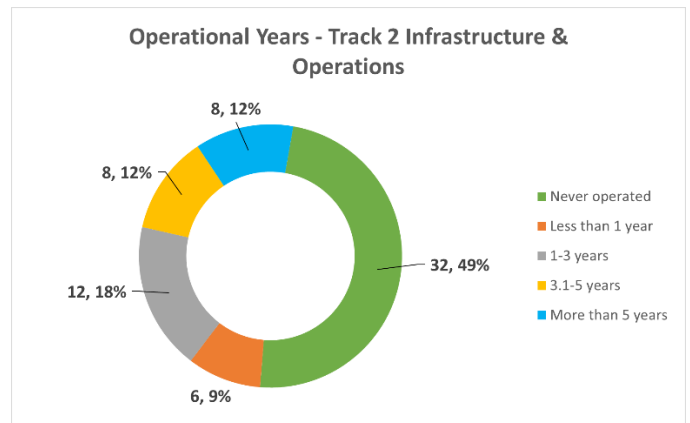


Figure 9. Chart shows how long Track 2 applicants have been operating their food hubs. Most applicants (49%, 32) have never operated a food hub before, while 18% (12) have been operating between one and three years, 12% (8) have been operating more than five years, another 12% (8) have been operating between three and five years, and 9% (6) have been operating less than one year. Of those that have been operating, most (18) have been operating three years or less. Note: this data only relates to applicants that were eligible for scoring (i.e. not disqualified).