

Food Hub Worker Safety and Infrastructure Grant Program

Guidelines and Request for Proposals

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Program Overview:

During the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session, funding was allocated to the Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN) for farmer and food hub disaster resilience granting programs. One of those awards is the \$1.5 million for the Food Hub Worker Safety & Infrastructure Grant Program. This essential and nationally unique funding will support building local economies and disaster resilience by investing in existing Oregon Food Hubs and regional food system infrastructure. This funding was initially included in the expansive 2023 Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) and was advocated for by a broad cross-section of OCFSN members. Late in the session, the funding was moved to the Budget Reconciliation Bill ([Senate Bill 5506](#)) and passed at the end of session.

The COVID pandemic and recent catastrophic wildfires together heightened existing levels of food insecurity and made clear that our conventional food system lacks resilience, not just to short-term disasters like pandemics and wildfires but also to long-term stressors like climate change. Additionally, local food connects communities with their farmers and ranchers and has an important economic value throughout the state. Money spent by farmers and ranchers on their supplies, such as seeds and gas, creates additional indirect jobs and millions in additional sales throughout a region's economy.

This project will build local economies and disaster resilience by investing in Oregon Food Hubs and **regional food system infrastructure**. Hard assets funded by this project will **expand and improve on regional cold storage, dry food storage, and transportation capacities** by leveraging the expertise and services of existing networks and partners throughout the state. Increased system capacity improves regional disaster resilience while simultaneously building regional economies with capacity to serve and develop regional markets.

The 2024 - 2025 Hub Network Worker Safety & Infrastructure Grant Program will invest in food hub infrastructure through two separate grants.

- 1. Worker Safety Grants:** Improving worker safety equipment & infrastructure grants.
- 2. Infrastructure Grants:** Strengthening local food distribution and regional food system resilience with increased warehousing & cold storage capacity.

This document outlines the Grant Program Guidelines and Request for Proposals (RFP). With guidance from food hub operators, a diverse group of community members, and nonprofits, this program will quickly and fairly distribute these funds to food hubs across Oregon to build more resilience in our local and regional communities.

As you are thinking about applying for funding, be sure to consider that the project(s) that you are proposing is/are:

- appropriately sized for your hub and for your project goals
- a project/projects that you have the capacity to implement
- achievable within the grant period
- achievable and reasonable with the amount of funding you are requesting

Grant Program Goals:

- To create an accessible grant program that provides resources to improve safety and capacity of food hubs in Oregon.
- To create a grant program that prioritizes food hubs building local economies and disaster resilience.
 - Through the grant application review rubric, we will prioritize hubs located and/or serving a rural community and
 - hubs led by and serves Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and refugee communities
 - Hubs that have limited access to grant funding & have demonstrated commitment

to delivering on OCFSN mission: strengthening local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state.

- Direct individual support to grant applicants to strengthen applications.
- Robust reporting and testimonial gathering to show impact of this funding on regional and community food systems in Oregon.

Grant Eligibility (all grants):

In Oregon, food hubs show up in all corners of the state as local and regional distributors for hyper locally produced foods, online marketplaces, food businesses of varying stripes including small scale co-packers, shared kitchen facilities, farm to school programs, mobile markets & veggie RX distribution. Food hubs can be organized as cooperatively owned, non-profit, and privately owned for profits.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet the working definition of a Food Hub below.

Our **Working definition** of a Food Hub includes an organization and/or business that engages in hub & hub-like activities that create economic value in their communities by providing dedicated physical and logistical infrastructure and creating markets for locally or regionally produced ranch, agricultural or value added products. The hub must serve **more than** one farm or ranch.

Examples of activities that are eligible for funding include but are not limited to:

- Purchasing, delivery, distribution, and/or aggregation of local or regional ranch, agricultural or value added products (must serve more than one farm or ranch)
- Online marketplaces and retail storefronts that primarily serve as marketplaces for local or regional ranch, agricultural or value added products. However:
 - This is not intended for farmers markets
 - Food pantry funding is available from [Oregon Food Bank](#).
- Shared kitchens and micro food manufacturing facilities that serve as incubators
- Mobile marketplaces
- Veggie Rx distribution

Eligibility requirements for all grants:

1. The organization or business must be a legal entity.
2. Your organization is covered under the above working definition of a food hub.

Working definition of a Food Hub includes an organization and/or business that engages in hub & hub-like activities that create economic value in their communities by providing dedicated physical and logistical infrastructure and creating markets for locally or regionally produced ranch, agricultural or value added products.

3. Your organization must be an active participant, collaborator in the [Food Hub Network](#) **OR** participate and collaborate with other parts of OCFSN, **OR** gain sponsorship from a participating or member organization.

- a. Participation and collaboration can include attending working group meetings, knowledge and resource sharing, attending convenings, partnering with OCFSN member orgs, or engaging TA resources
- b. Collaboration with the Food Hub Network includes partnership with participating organizations, and partnership with OCFSN member organization
- c. A participating or [member organization](#) can provide a reference to sponsor a non-member, non-participating or collaborating organization.

Required Components of Low Barrier & Capacity Building Worker Safety Grants:

- 1. Must improve job quality or worker safety
- 2. Must include a worker safety plan to integrate any new equipment. A worker safety plan can include but is not limited to:
 - a. Using provided templates to identify risks and hazards of new equipment
 - b. Describing how you will build a culture of safety around your new equipment and train workers to use it safely

Required Components of Capacity Building Infrastructure Grants:

- 1. Hub must be fully operational and well established (**over 1 year in operation**)
- 2. Must strengthen and expand regional food system capacity. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Adding storage or transportation capacity explicitly to facilitate cross regional sales
 - b. Adding appropriately scaled storage or transportation capacity to support growing sales volume
 - c. Adding storage capacity to relieve on-farm storage constraints for the purpose of developing local or regional supply
- 3. Must demonstrate the need for the equipment. Examples include
 - a. matching equipment purchased to volume usage, i.e. no need for a box truck if moving low volumes
- 4. Hub must demonstrate commitment to worker safety & have a worker safety plan to integrate new equipment (this can look like, but is not limited to, regular safety meetings, investments in worker safety equipment, safety evaluations, written worker safety plans)

Priority for all grants: Review the Scoring Rubric below for more details.

- 1. Hubs led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and refugee communities.
- 2. Hubs that have limited access to grant funding & have demonstrated commitment to delivering on OCFSN mission: strengthening local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state.
- 3. Hubs rurally located

Scoring Rubric:

We have provided our review rubric so applicants know how their application will be scored/reviewed. We recommend applicants review the rubric so their applications can be as strong as possible.

	Criteria	Points
!	Actively operating a Food Hub within the State of Oregon	Required
!	A worker safety plan is shared in application	Required
!	<p>Active participant of the OCFSN: participant or collaborator in the Food Hub Network OR participate and collaborator with other parts of OCFSN, OR sponsored by a participating or member organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation and collaboration can include attending working group meetings, knowledge and resource sharing, attending convenings, partnering with OCFSN member orgs, or engaging TA resources ● Collaboration with the Food Hub Network includes partnership with participating organizations, and partnership with OCFSN member organization ● A participating or member organization can provide a reference to to sponsor a non-member, non participating or collaborating organization 	Required
!	The project budget and plan is clear, accurate, and financially sound.	Required
	<p>This Food Hub is led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and refugee communities.</p> <p>“Led by” is defined as 50% of leadership identifies as a Person Of Color</p>	<p>4 for yes 0 for no</p>
	Hubs that have limited access to grant funding & have demonstrated commitment to delivering on OCFSN mission: strengthening local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state. (i.e. Cooperatives and LLCs)	<p>1 for yes 0 for no</p>
	<p>Hub with headquarters located in a town with a population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under 19,999 people (2 points) ● Between 20,000 - 49,999 (1 point) 	<p>2 for below 19,999</p> <p>1 for between 20,000-49,999</p> <p>0 for no</p>
	Possible Number of Points	7

Funding Details:

The **Worker Safety Grants** and **Infrastructure Grants** each have a small and a large funding categories. Having two grant pools helps us meet two granting priorities:

- 1) get safety and infrastructure dollars to as many hubs as possible and
- 2) include larger grants that will have a greater impact on individual operations.

Applicants cannot apply for both small and large grants in one funding cycle. You must apply for one or the other. **However, you can apply for one Worker Safety Grant and one Infrastructure Grant in the same year. If you received a grant in 2024, you cannot apply again in 2025. If you were not awarded in 2024, you can reapply in 2025.** Applicants may be awarded partial funding for their food hub project depending on funds availability and Grant Review Committee project assessment.

- There is no requirement for matching funds for this grant.
- Grant recipients will receive up-front payment.
- Funding from this grant program may be able to be used for match (also known as cost-share) or other funding.

Worker Safety Grants:

- **Low Barrier Worker Safety Grants** of up to \$4,999 for any needed safety equipment, training, and supplies such as:
 - Pallet jacks
 - Electric jacks
 - Racking
 - Fatigue mats, rolling carts, handtrucks, cargo tie downs, etc
 - Water stations & bev coolers for extreme heat, fans, N95's etc, gloves
- **Capacity Building Worker Safety Grants** of \$5,000 - 25,000 for needed safety equipment
 - Vehicle lift gates
 - Vehicle ramps
 - Extensive racking
 - Cargo management equipment
 - Equipment install costs

Infrastructure Grants:

- **Low Barrier Infrastructure Grants** of up to \$4,999 for emerging and lower volume hubs
 - Chest freezers
 - Bins, tables, rolling carts & other packing equipment
 - Coolers
 - Storage equipment
 - Reach in coolers or merchandisers
- **Capacity Building Infrastructure Grants** of \$5,000 - \$75,000 for established hubs and high volume hubs (1 or more year operation). Can include:
 - Vehicles
 - Vehicle refrigeration install

- Walk ins
- Walk in install costs, including electrical upgrades

Program Timeline:

There will be two rounds of funding-- one in 2024 and one in 2025. Our goal is to have all funds distributed to producers by May 15th in 2024 and Feb 28th in 2025. The application and reporting timelines are the same for the small and large grants.

- **2024 Program Timeline:**
 - **Dec 22, 2023** - Grant opportunity announced publicly with details on OCFSN website
 - **Feb 1, 2024** - Grant application period opens
 - **March 15, 2024** - Grant application period closes
 - **Apr 15, 2024** - Awards announced, applicants complete acceptance form
 - **May 15, 2024** - All funds for 2024 grants delivered
 - **November 1, 2024** - Projects completed, final expenditures completed, and all reporting submitted from awardees (*reporting may be completed any time before this deadline, earlier reports will help communicating program success to Oregon Legislature*)
- **2025 Program Timeline** (*may be revised based on lessons learned from 2024*)
 - **November 1, 2024** - Grant opportunity announced publicly with details on OCFSN website
 - **December 1, 2024** - Grant application period opens
 - **January 31, 2025** - Grant application period closes
 - **February 28, 2025** - Awards announced, applicants complete acceptance form
 - **March 30, 2025** - All funds for 2025 grants delivered
 - **September 1, 2025** - Projects completed, final expenditures completed, and all reporting submitted from awardees (*reporting may be completed any time before this deadline, earlier reports will help communicate program success to Oregon Legislature.*)

Budget and Allowable Expenses:

In the application budget, applicants will need to provide a best estimate of the costs of items to be purchased and/or activities planned. All grant costs must directly support the grant purpose to improve Food Hub worker safety or infrastructure. Reasonable staff time to plan and implement the project may be included under .

Budget details:

Both small and large grant applications require a simple budget. Use this [budget template](#) and follow all instructions on the template. Budgets will be uploaded as part of the application.

Impact and Reporting:

Acceptance Form Questions and Uploads

- Upload W9 and confirm mailing address
- Testimonial - what does being awarded this money mean for your food hub's resiliency?
- Upload pre-project photos if any

Reporting requirements will include:

- Final Reports are expected 6 months after awards are received
- Upload no more than 6 post-project photos or provide other documentation of project completion such as video or receipts.
- Write a short paragraph on project outcomes/challenges. Make sure to reference the application project description and how this grant funding impacted your food hub's resiliency.
- For **Capacity Building Grants**: receipts and accounting of the hours spent (Budget Actuals)

How to Apply:

Application Directions:

- Applications will be hosted on Jotform
- The Jotform application will be available on **Feb 1, 2024**. Please check back on ocfsn.org/food-hub-grant.

Contact Us:

Please email grants@ocfsn.org if you have any questions. Complete grant application materials will be available in January 2024.

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