

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Request for Applications

2025 SNAP-Ed Food Box Grant Program

RFA 0347

| GRANT PROGRAM COVER SHEET | |
|--|--|
| Release Request for Applications (RFA) | October 23, 2024 |
| Question & Answer Period Duration | October 23, 2024 to November 20 at 4:00pm |
| Updated RFA Posted | November 25, 2024 |
| Funding Available | \$300,000 Total Available |
| Funding Match Required | None |
| Deadline for Applications | December 6, 2024 at 4:00pm |
| Estimated Announcement of Grant Awards | February 2025 |
| Project Term | March 1, 2025 to September 15, 2025 |
| Program Manager: | Steven Affat NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets 55 Hanson Place Brooklyn, NY 11217 Fax: (518) 457-2716 Steven.Affat@agriculture.ny.gov |

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- a. Program Description:** New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (the “Department”) administers SNAP-Ed Grants with funding from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). OTDA receives funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). For additional information on SNAP-Ed, please visit the USDA’s website: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/>.

The Department’s Food Box Grant Program supports nutrition education through programs that increase the availability and accessibility of local produce in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligible communities.

- b. Funding Available:** A total of \$300,000 is available for this grant program. A maximum of \$10,000 is available per award.

The 2025 SNAP-Ed Food Box Program does not require a match.

- c. Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants include:

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Indian tribal organizations
- Local or municipal governments

- d. Ineligible Applicants:** The following entities are not eligible to apply for funding:

- For-Profit organizations
- Individuals
- SNAP-Ed Community Growers Technical Assistance Awardees

- e. Number of Applications:** Applicants may apply for only one grant per funding period.

- f. Eligible Projects:** Eligible projects must provide nutrition education while establishing and/or operating SNAP-eligible food boxes, farm stands, CSAs, or farm stands that serve low-income priority populations.

1. The project site must be located in New York State.
2. All Food Box projects must be able to accept EBT/SNAP benefits. If not, the organization must share a plan to become EBT/SNAP capable for the duration of the project.
3. Projects must operate continuously for at least 12 weeks (weekly or biweekly pick-up/stands).
4. All Food Box projects should serve SNAP-eligible communities. SNAP-eligible communities are defined as:

a. Locations where at least 50% of the population is SNAP-eligible. If you are in a region that does not meet the 50%, please make the case and illustrate how your program will serve low-income and SNAP-eligible individuals and households. Data is available at https://map.feedingamerica.org/?_ga=2.27135032.426020567.1672341888-1377893556.1672341888.

b. "Priority sites" including senior centers, Naturally Occurring Retiring Communities, settlement houses, low-income schools where more than 50% of children are on free and reduced-price lunch, WIC clinics, community health centers, etc. The location of services must be in areas or at site locations where SNAP-eligible clients frequent.

5. Funded projects must supply the community they serve with direct education on nutrition. Direct education is an evidence-based, behavior-focused nutrition education and physical activity intervention conducted at the individual and interpersonal levels with an intensity and duration that supports behavior change and allows for active engagement in person or through interactive media.

a. This must include the distribution of USDA-approved nutrition materials. Materials can be found at <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/resources/nutrition-education-materials>.

b. Additional activities may include conducting healthy cooking demonstrations, creating and distributing recipes, social media campaigns and activities, etc.

c. Grantees are responsible for self-reporting nutrition education data throughout the grant term. Data must be uploaded to the Program Evaluation and Reporting System (PEARS). For more information on Required Reporting, navigate to the Award Details section.

6. Food must be sourced from a wholesale/distributor that specializes in local foods and/or a local farm.

Projects and expenses must be kept separate and distinct from other grant-funded projects and expenses may not overlap with other state grant funding, such as the NYS Urban Farms and Community Gardens program.

- g. Project Term :** Projects must be completed within the term listed on the cover sheet.
- h. Eligible Costs:** Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project, including but not limited to:

| Category | Example Eligible Costs |
|--------------|--|
| Salary/Wages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff salaries to teach the benefits of nutrition and physical activity • Staff salaries to administer programs |
| Fringe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance related to staff |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel or milage to transport program materials |
| Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small kitchen equipment and supplies necessary for food storage, preparation, and display of food prepared for demonstration purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All purchases must be inventoried to ensure the same types of equipment are not being purchased annually by the same provider • Equipment expenses over \$500 require 3 quotes and Department approval |
| Operating Expenses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition education materials and supplies such as the printing of USDA-approved materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nutrition Education Reinforcement Items (NERI) purchases not to exceed \$7 • Administrative costs must be directly outlined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative costs not to exceed 15% |

i. **Ineligible Costs:** Grant funds may not be used for the following:

| Category | Example Ineligible Costs |
|--------------------|--|
| Salary/Wages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and wages unrelated to the project • Stipends • Costs associated with the preparation of an application |
| Fringe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fringe costs for staff salaries unrelated to the project |
| Contractual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual costs are ineligible |
| Travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs unrelated to the project |
| Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP/EBT hardware and fees associated with the operation of the equipment • Equipment purchases over \$5,000 |
| Operating Expenses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of food – organizations must utilize revenue from customers or outside grant funds to purchase food |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect costs • Costs incurred outside of the awarded grant term |

II. PRE-APPLICATION OVERVIEW

a. **Question & Answer Period:** All questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing (fax or e-mail) within the duration listed on the cover sheet. Applicants must note that all clarifications are to be resolved prior to the submission of an application.

All questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing (fax or e-mail will be accepted to: Steven Affat (steven.affat@agriculture.ny.gov))

All questions must be submitted by **November 20th at 4:00pm**

A list of questions about the program that are received from potential applicants, and answers to those questions, as well as any changes, additions, or deletions to the RFA, will be posted in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the Department’s website, www.agriculture.ny.gov on or before the date listed on the cover sheet. Such official addenda are the only authorized method used to communicate substantive information, including the clarification or modification of the timeline, terms, or other requirements of this RFA.

All applicants are responsible for keeping informed of any revisions to this invitation. All addenda shall be incorporated into the RFA which will be part of the awarded contract.

- b. Statewide Financial System Registration:** Applicants must be registered and pre-qualified in the Statewide Financial System Grants Management System, and the organizations’ document vault must be up to date. Applicants who are not registered or whose document vault have expired will be disqualified. See below for instructions on registering, qualifying, and maintaining pre-qualification. Registration and prequalification may take several weeks to complete, it is recommended to start the process as soon as possible.

Public schools are exempt from pre-qualification.

For entities that have never accessed SFS:

- If the entity is new to the SFS Vendor portal, does not have a login, and would like to establish an account for the purposes of doing business with the State of New York, contact the SFS Help Desk at 518-457-7717, 855-233-8363 or HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov for more information.

For entities with access to the SFS Vendor Portal:

- If your entity is already established within the SFS Vendor portal, a Primary Contact (PC) has been authorized by your entity to provision user login credentials, unlock accounts, or reset passwords. Please reach out to your PC directly.

SFS offers a Vendor Manual, training videos and webinars for applicants requiring assistance. Please visit <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/transition-SFS>.

- c. New York State Charities Bureau Registration:** All not-for-profits organizations contracting with NYS or serving as a fiscal agent must be registered with the New York State Charities Bureau unless a proper exemption is obtained. All applicants must therefore provide either:

- The organization's charitable registration number and written documentation from the Office of the Attorney General that the charitable organization is currently up-to-date with its Charities Registration; or
- A statement from the applicant that the organization is exempt pursuant to one of the categories indicated on the Office of the Attorney General's Request for Registration

Exemption (Schedule E). The statement must identify the specific category under which the charitable organization is exempt.

To obtain written documentation of an organization's charities registration status, or if you have questions regarding the statutory requirements for registration, contact the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271-0332, or call (212) 416-8402, email charities.bureau@oag.state.ny.us or visit their website at <https://www.charitiesnys.com/home.html>

Eligible 501c(3) not-for-profit corporations acting as the applicant must have a New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau Registration number or an Exemption Certificate issued by the York State Attorney General Charities Bureau explaining why the organization is exempt from registering with the Charities Bureau.

- d. Workers' Compensation & Disability Insurance:** New York State Workers' Compensation Law sections 57 and 220 require that the Department of Agriculture and Markets not enter into a contract unless proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board has been secured.

Please visit the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website: www.wcb.ny.gov, for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

- e. Civil Rights Training:** Funded organizations will be required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et. seq.), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et. seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended; all provisions required by the implementing regulations of the USDA (7 CFR Part 15); Department of Justice Enforcement Guidelines (28 CFR Parts 42 and 50.3); and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) directives and guidelines to the effect that, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under any program or activity funded by Federal financial assistance from USDA.

Agency contracted staff, and any frontline staff of subcontractors, will be required to attend annual training provided by OTDA and the administrative agency. All contractors will be required to compile data, maintain records, and submit reports as required, to permit effective enforcement of nondiscrimination laws and permit authorized USDA personnel during hours of program operation to review such records, books, and accounts as needed to ascertain compliance with the nondiscrimination laws. If there are any violations of this assurance, USDA, FNS, shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

For more information on Civil Rights Training, please contact the Program Manager listed on the cover sheet.

- f. Application Deadline:** Applications are due on by the date and time listed on

the cover sheet. Late applications will not be accepted.

- g. Debriefing:** Pursuant to section 163(9)(c) of the State Finance Law, an unsuccessful bidder has the right to a debriefing to review the reasons its application was not selected for award. Upon request, the Department will provide a debriefing to any unsuccessful applicant as to the reasons that the application submitted was not selected for an award. Upon notice of unsuccessful application, written feedback will be provided upon request. To request a review of an unsuccessful application via formal Debrief Session, contact the program manager listed on the cover sheet. A review should be requested by an unsuccessful applicant within 15 calendar days of the date of the notice that its application was not selected for an award.

III. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

- a. Application Format:** All applicants (except Public Schools) must be registered and pre-qualified in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) to apply. Please Note: Waiting until the last several days to complete your application online is not recommended, as you may have technical questions. Beginning the process of applying as soon as possible will produce the best results. Late applications will not be accepted. Applications will not be accepted via fax, hardcopy, or hand delivery. Please see the **Pre-Application Overview, Statewide Financial System Registration section II. b.** above for information on obtaining access to SFS.
- b. Award Process:** Awards will be made to eligible, qualifying projects, in order of receipt of complete applications, until funding is exhausted. A complete application includes applicant registration and pre-qualification in SFS. If there is insufficient funding available to fund all eligible and complete applications received on the same day and time, those applications will be placed in a lottery and chosen for funding at random.
- c. Freedom of Information:** All applications submitted and all related contracts and reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law.

IV. APPLICATION DETAILS

- a. Application Process:** All interested applicants must **e-mail** their completed project application in a Word Document or PDF format to the Program Manager listed on the cover page with the Subject: *2025 SNAP-Ed Food Box Grant Program Application*.

Applications must include three (3) parts: Project Narrative, Project Budget (template provided), and Project Scope of Work (template provided).

Applications must be received by **December 6, 2024, at 4:00pm.**

- b. Project Narrative:** Please describe the project by addressing the following:
- **Target Population**, please describe the method your agency will use to target SNAP recipients and SNAP-eligible populations.
 - **Location of the proposed project site** and the community it will serve.
 - What is the proposed **project term**? Eligible expenses must fall within the grant term on the cover sheet.
 - **Background of your organization** and history of working with the community

being served.

- **Explain the need for this project**, including SNAP eligibility data/priority site data, demographics, past organizing efforts, intended outcomes, etc.
- **Organizational capacity** to operate and sustain the work.
- Who are your **key team members** and what do they bring to the project? If awarded funding, who will be the main point of contact for the project?
- **Direct Education Plans**
 - How does your organization plan to administer direct education on nutrition?
 - Please include the USDA-approved nutrition materials you plan to use.
 - Who will be responsible for reporting nutrition education data?
- **Coordination and non-duplication of services.** How will your organization ensure coordination of services and prevent the duplication of services?

c. Project Budget: The Project Budget should include essential funding to implement the project, within the defined parameters of the RFA. A template is provided as part of the RFA package.

Please review the cover sheet and Program Overview > Eligible Projects to guide the development of your budget and consider how the project will be sustained beyond this funding opportunity.

Budget categories may include: Salary/Wages, Fringe, Travel, Equipment, Operating Expenses, and Other. If you have question about the budget categories, please reach out to the Program Manager listed on the cover sheet.

d. Project Scope of Work: The Project Scope of Work will include an intended plan for your project, written through the lens of Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures. A template is provided as part of the RFA package.

The Goal of the SNAP-Ed Food Box Grant Program is to support nutrition education, through programs that increase the availability and accessibility of local produce in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligible communities.

A wide variety of Objectives, Tasks, and Performance Measures may be proposed to meet this Goal. Applications must include at least one Objective, one Task, and one Performance Measure. Each Task must be accompanied by one or more Performance Measure. Performance Measures should be clearly defined results against which the project can be evaluated. These can be quantitative or qualitative.

An example is shown below:

| Objectives | Tasks | Performance Measures |
|--|---|---|
| Establish a Farm Stand in XYZ Community. | Recruit SNAP-eligible community members | # Members recruited |
| | Host direct education sessions on nutrition | # of sessions held # of SNAP-eligible participants |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| | Source local produce | Items purchased |
| | Report program impact | # of pounds of food distributed Survey customers for healthy lifestyle changes |

- e. **Attachments:** While not required, an application can be strengthened by including attachments such as a resume, lease, MOU, letter or support, or media coverage. Please include supplemental attachments in the application package.

V. AWARD DETAILS

The following applies to awarded contracts.

- a. **New York State Letter of Agreement :** New York State has developed a standard “Letter of Agreement ” containing standard clauses required in State Contracts. The Letter Agreement will be executed for all projects awarded under this program, and awardees are responsible for complying with the terms and conditions contained therein. The Letter Agreement can be found at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/04/letter-agreement.pdf> Attachments to the Letter Agreement will include: (A-1) “Program Specific Terms and Conditions”; (B-1) “Expenditure Budget”; and (C) “Work Plan”; .
- b. **Project Contracts:** A contract defining all terms and conditions and responsibilities of the awardee will be developed by the Department after funds have been awarded. The contract will incorporate the work plan and budget included in the awardee’s project application, among its provisions. Upon execution of the contract by the awardee and the Department, it will be submitted for approval to the Attorney General of the State of New York and the Comptroller of the State of New York.
- c. **Project Payments:** Once the contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed by reimbursement only. Awardees may request, at the discretion of the Department, an initial payment of up to twenty- five percent (25%) of the total grant award. The Department shall retain ten percent (10%) of the budget amount to be disbursed to the contractor until such time as the final report is accepted.

A New York State Claim for Payment Form must be submitted to the Department for the contractor to be reimbursed for funds expended. Proper backup documentation must be included with any Claims for Payment.

The Department must be able to substantiate claims and in order to do so, there must be sufficient backup documentation provided with any claims for payment. If salaries are being paid, the percentage worked on the program and employee time allocation sheets must be provided along with payroll backup, purchases of the fruits and vegetables, equipment, NERI, all must have back up to support payment.

Payment to the contractor shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper

check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, at the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with ordinary state procedures and practices. The Contractor shall comply with the State Comptroller of New York's procedures to authorize electronic payments. Contractor acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any Claim for Payment Form submitted under this agreement if it does not comply with the State Comptroller of New York's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

The Department and State Comptroller's Office reserve the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six years after the completion of the project.

- d. **Reporting Requirements:** The Department requires the following reporting during the contract term to ensure proper contract compliance.
- **Reimbursement Reports:** The Department will monitor contract performance. A Reimbursement Request Report summarizing work completed on the project shall accompany each Claim for Payment submitted for reimbursement of project expenses. A Reimbursement Request Report template will be provided by the Department to generate the reports.
 - **Quarterly Progress Reports:** Awarded applicants will be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports to the Department to provide timely information on the success of the project. A Quarterly Progress Report template will be provided by the Department to generate the reports. Claim for Payment Forms submitted will not be processed for projects that are not up to date with the filing of their quarterly reports.
 - **Final Report:** A Final Report will be required within sixty (60) days following completion of the project. A Final Report template will be provided by the Department to generate the report. The Final Report shall include a detailed description of the work completed; an assessment of the potential for future viability of the project; and a description of problems encountered, if any, which affected completion of the project. In addition to the Final Report, the Department reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects to determine long-term impacts.
 - **Direct Education Reporting:** For the duration of the agreement, grantees are responsible for self-reporting nutrition education data in the Program Evaluation and Reporting System ([PEARS](#)). This includes reporting community demographic data for any direct education activities. PEARS helps nutrition education professionals and Department staff manage program data and demonstrate impact. Data reported in PEARS will be included in the Department's SNAP-Ed Annual Report and submitted to USDA FNS.

Upon execution of a contract, the Program Manager will provide instructions on how to access PEARS to complete the required reporting.

Grantees can anticipate one annual site verification visit from Department staff or a SNAP-Ed partner.

Any educational/informational/outreach materials that specifically reference the SNAP-Ed Program must be submitted to the Department.

The Department reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project.

- e. **Liability:** The Department shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by any party for work performed in the preparation of and production of an application or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

VI. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants should also take into consideration the following when submitting an application.

- a. **NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation:** Projects which include ground-disturbing activities, construction of new buildings, or modification of buildings over 50 years old will be subject to further review by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Department reserves the right to request such additional information as is necessary to allow OPRHP to make a determination regarding the potential impacts of the project on historical sites or artifacts and possible alternatives which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.
- b. **NYS Environmental Quality Review:** Some projects may be subject to review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Department reserves the right to request additional information as needed to comply with SEQRA requirements.
- c. **Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises:** Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A and Parts 140-145 of Title 5 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations the Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department) is required to promote opportunities for the maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises ("MWBES") and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of the Department contracts.
- d. **New York Certified Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses:** Article 17-B of the New York State Executive Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses ("SDVOB"), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State's economy. The Department recognizes the need to promote the employment of service-disabled veterans and to ensure that certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities for maximum feasible participation in the performance of Department contracts. In recognition of the service and sacrifices made by service-disabled veterans and in recognition of their economic activity in doing business in New York State, Contractors are expected to consider SDVOBs in the fulfillment of the requirements of the Agreement. Such participation may be as subcontractors or suppliers, as protégés, or in other partnering or supporting roles.
- e. **Equal Employment Opportunity:** By submission of a bid or application in response to this solicitation, the respondent agrees with all the terms and conditions of [Appendix A – Standard Clauses for All New York State Contracts including Clause 12 - Equal Employment Opportunities for Minorities and Women. The respondent is required to ensure that it and any subcontractors awarded a subcontract for the construction, demolition, replacement, major repair, renovation, planning or design of real property and improvements thereon (the "Work"), except where the Work is for the beneficial use

of the respondent, undertake or continue programs to ensure that minority group members and women are afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status. For these purposes, equal opportunity shall apply in the areas of recruitment, employment, job assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, and rates of pay or other forms of compensation. This requirement does not apply to: (i) work, goods, or services unrelated to the Contract; or (ii) employment outside New York State.

Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.

The Department reserves the right to:

- reject any or all proposals received with respect to this RFA;
- waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and concurrence of the applicant;
- utilize any or all ideas submitted in the applications received unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- request from an applicant additional information as deemed necessary to more fully evaluate its application;
- amend the program's specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice posted on the Department's website;
- select only certain portions of applications for state funding;
- make all final decisions with respect to the amount of State funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant; and
- negotiate the terms of the budget.

All applications submitted in response to this RFA will become the property of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.