

Please note: We have removed word and character limits from most grant applications. Please do try to strike a balance between being concise and including the detail needed to answer all parts of each question. Bullet points and succinct responses are encouraged.

Before beginning an application, it is essential to read all of the information on every tab of the RFP very carefully to make sure you understand all of the opportunity's unique details, requirements, and restrictions.

If you have questions or need clarification about any part of the RFP after you've read it in its entirety, please reach out to the appropriate contact who is listed in the "Contact Information" section below.

Contact Information

- Questions about the Food Security Equity Impact Fund: Mya Price, Director of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund, at mprice@feedingamerica.org.
- Technical questions regarding the application submission process: Becca Kaplan, Member Grants Director, at rekaplan@feedingamerica.org.
- Please see [FAQs](#) for responses to common questions.

Program Overview

FY23 Food Security Equity Impact Fund – Spring 2023 Competitive Grant Opportunity

Are your food bank partners doing incredible systemic change work that needs financial support?

Do you have partnerships with food producers, growers, and distributors who are Persons of Color (POC) looking to strengthen infrastructure or capacity?

Are you looking to fund policy advocacy partners that are POC-led community organizers?

Do you have partnerships with POC-led organizations that aim to make bold changes to the local food system and reduce the need for charitable food?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this opportunity may be right for you and your community!

Background of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund

Feeding America declared the following Bold Aspiration for Our Nation:

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- Every community and each person within it has access to the food and resources that they say they desire and need to thrive.
- The food insecurity rate is reduced to 5% by 2030 and disparities by race and place are cut in half.

Feeding America is accelerating its work to address disparities and advance solutions for an America where no one is hungry. Populations facing food insecurity at disproportionate rates have been impacted by forces of oppression such as systemic racism, economic exploitation, land dispossession and forced migration. These factors, in combination with a global food production model that undermines the viability of locally sourced, community-controlled food systems have priced out marginalized people of color. Data shows Black, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islanders experience food insecurity at rates 2-3 times higher than that of white individuals, and food insecurity among Asian subgroups varies substantially leaving some subgroups at heightened risk.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic, slow economic recovery, and growing inflation intensified the challenges with reaching many who are in need of help and has brought to light the health disparities and additional structural barriers communities of color are facing. At Feeding America, we realize that, as a network, while we have worked to address the immediate food needs of the communities we serve and to strengthen the charitable food system at large, there are continued opportunities to address the root causes of food insecurity. Through this Fund, Feeding America aims to invest in and build partnerships with organizations advancing root cause solutions to improve food security, as well as strengthen the health and wellbeing of all communities.

The [Food Security Equity Impact Fund](#) drives investments to communities of color and supports actions for equitable access to healthy food and opportunity for all. These resources will help to advance racial justice, address disparities and increase programs that can carve a path to greater financial security for families and individuals. Together we are transforming the charitable food experience, advancing equity in communities of color, driving meaningful policy change to benefit all people and building capacity in communities.

We seek to fund projects that share or complement our values and honor [Feeding America's commitment to advance equity](#). We seek proposals that partner with organizations led by and serving communities of color that have the least access to resources. Proposed projects may support work that is already in progress or offer new, transformative solutions.

Through the Fund, Feeding America aims to work with grantees to gain and share insights with one another, other organizations and the non-profit field related to:

- Innovative partnerships between food banks, community-based organizations and/or local POC food producers

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- The unique role community-based organizations and food banks can play in partnership in eliminating the need for charitable food
- How oppressed and disinvested communities are solving for food insecurity and food injustice
- How Feeding America can support the development and implementation of systemic change at the local community level
- How Feeding America can develop relationships with POC-led community-based organizations to resource the food justice movement and directly impacted communities and organizations.

The Fund has been seeded with a \$20 million donation made by MacKenzie Scott to Feeding America in December 2020. This use of funds aligns with Ms. Scott's intent and philanthropic approach to focus on communities facing high food insecurity, high measures of racial inequity, high local poverty rates, and low access to philanthropic capital. In Spring 2022, we held the first competitive grant opportunity as part of this Fund – awarding over \$9.7M to 25 Feeding America network members, working with over 60 community-based organization partners. In this next round of funding, we anticipate awarding approximately 10 additional network members - totaling up to \$5,000,000.

Program Overview

Feeding America invites network members to collaboratively submit proposals with community-based organizations serving communities of color disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, to address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity. **Preference will be given to community-based organizations that are POC-led.** Both current ongoing efforts, as well as new and planning-stage projects, are eligible for funding.

Proposals can be up to \$250,000 for planning or up to \$500,000 for implementation. **Planning grant proposals must allocate 50% or more of the grant funds (actual dollars) to POC-led and/or serving community-based organizations. Implementation grant proposals must allocate 85% or more of the grant funds (actual dollars) to POC-led and/or serving community-based organizations.**

Examples of potential projects include:

- Investing in BIPOC farmers (growers, producers, and distributors)
- Workforce development and employment training as part of a healthy local food system
- Reducing dependency on the charitable food system through education (preservation of foods, food preparation, policy advocacy, food rescue, composting)
- Investing in place-based, concentrated food security resources ('hubs' for food education, training, cooking)
- Expansive food access plans (community-wide strategies, stretching beyond food distribution)
- Forging cross-sector partnerships (i.e. health care, housing)
- Building the capacity of POCs to be active civic leaders with a food justice lens

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- Community-based research on food security and food justice issues, etc.

Strong proposals will illustrate the potential to move forward **root cause** solutions to address food insecurity by investing in community-based organizations that involve the most marginalized communities in developing and advocating for change, developing solutions to improve food security and creating a more just food system (see [“FAQs”](#) for grantee project examples addressing root causes). *Not e: This grant opportunity is not intended to support food distribution efforts alone – Equitable Food Access grants would be a better fit for those efforts.*

Applicants can request funding for a **planning grant** (typically, approximately one year) or an **implementation grant** (typically, multi-year/multi-phased). The grant period will begin on July 1, 2023 and funds will be disbursed in June 2023. Funds must be spent by the end of the grant period identified in the application.

Feeding America aims to support enduring collaborations and partnerships, and anticipates that awardees will be eligible to apply for future funding. See [“FAQs”](#) for more detail on FY22 planning and implementation grant projects and our approach for ongoing funding.

Eligibility Criteria

Racial equity is a core goal of the Fund, and as such this funding opportunity aims to invest in community-based organizations serving majority POC communities. Priority will be given to proposals from community-based organizations that are led by leaders of color and serve majority POC communities. Community-based organizations that have a demonstrated commitment to advancing racial equity and root cause solutions will also be prioritized.

While the application should reflect a collaborative process between organizations, Feeding America network organizations will serve as the primary applicants. The proposal will include specific questions for both the Feeding America network organization and partnering community-based organization(s).

Organizations with the following characteristics are eligible to apply:

- Are a Feeding America Member Food Bank, Partner Distribution Organization (PDO), or Partner State Association (PSA) in good standing and not on grant restriction, in collaboration with;
 - Community-based organizations, serving a majority POC population
 - Preference will be given to partnerships with community-based organizations led by (as in an executive director, CEO, President, or in cases of shared leadership structured organizations, the majority of the leadership team) people who identify as POC *and* work with a majority population who identify as such.
- Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs) that have a current signed contract with a Feeding

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America member food bank are also eligible to apply. PDOs must request written approval from their member food bank to submit an application. A signed letter from the Feeding America member food bank providing approval must be submitted with the PDO's application via the "Related Documents" tab.

- Partner State Associations (PSAs) with a current signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Feeding America may apply. PSAs must submit a written board resolution stating that 100% of the Feeding America members in the PSA approve of the PSA acting as their designated agent to apply for this grant opportunity. The board resolution should be signed by the Executive Director and the Board Chair of the PSA. A signed copy of the board resolution must be submitted with the PSA's application via the "Related Documents" tab.

Grantees who received funds via the FY22 Food Security Equity Impact Fund are not eligible for this round of competitive funding and do not need to apply for renewal via this opportunity. Instead, prior grantees will have the opportunity to request sustaining funds on a bi-annual basis through a separate grant opportunity. See [FAQs](#) for details.

Selection Criteria Overview

The following selection criteria will considered:

- **Vision:** Alignment with [Feeding America's vision to end hunger in America](#) and the vision of the [Food Security Equity Impact Fund](#)
- **Population:** Majority POC communities
- **Organization(s):** Organization(s) that serve majority POC communities; Preference for community-based organizations that are POC-led
 - Community-based organizations that: Have been historically and systemically underinvested in; continue to be systematically under-resourced while serving communities of color with the highest need; and have been excluded from decision-making power and power in problem identification and solving.
 - Network organizations that: Have demonstrated capacity and interest in authentically engaging and centering those who are directly impacted; Are engaged in root cause work; Are open to purposeful collaboration
- **Geography:** Across grantees, represent a diversity of place and type (e.g., region; rural/urban/suburban)
- **Values:** Grounded in strategic approaches including leading with equity and justice: redistributing power, fostering repair and healing, relationship-centered, prioritizing what makes change happen
- **Funding:** Level of funding needed is aligned with what Feeding America can provide without mandating that the member or community-based organization secure additional funding; 50% or more (planning) or 85% or more (implementation) of the grant funds (actual dollars) allocated to POC-led and/or serving community-based organizations
- **Resources:** Maximizes limited resources (e.g., staff, funding, time, partnerships) while fostering healthy risk-taking, shared leadership, creativity, and innovation

The following data resources may be helpful to identify focus community/ies:

- [Tableau Dashboard - Feeding America: Identifying Racism in the Drivers of Food Insecurity](#)
- [Map the Meal Gap 2021 & The Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity](#)
- [American Community Survey](#)

Grant Opportunity Timeline

- Tuesday, February 21, 2023 – RFP release
- **Thursday, March 16, 2023, 1:00 – 2:00 pm CT - RFP Overview Webinar** (register [here](#))
 - Note: All registrants will receive a link to the webinar recording, even if they are unable to attend.
- Monday, March 6, 2023 - Wednesday, April 12, 2023 - Optional office hours with Mya Price (schedule via [Calendly](#))
- **Tuesday, April 18, 2023 by 11:59 PT - Applications due via Feeding America [Grants Management System \(GMS\)](#)**
- By June 2, 2023 – Applicants notified of final decisions
- Late June 2023 – Grantees receive payment
- July 1, 2023 - Grant Period begins
- Mid-Late July – Introductory call with grantees
- TBD - Reporting dates and format (see “Reporting Overview” section below)

Reporting Overview

Feeding America hopes to learn from its grantees in ways that inform our own strategies for advancing systemic change and providing our members and their partners with meaningful support to do so. We seek to co-design a learning and reporting protocol with each grantee that is mutually beneficial and emphasizes reflection, insight sharing, accountability and growth. Once the grant term begins, Feeding America will work with grantees to develop a protocol for progress check-in(s) and an end of grant term reporting and reflection in a format that accommodates your needs (such as virtual meeting(s) or written form).

Examples of learning-focused questions we may want to discuss are:

1. How is the work going? What have been signs of progress toward your goals?
2. To date, how is progress going throughout your community(ies) as it relates to this grant opportunity?
3. What challenges have you experienced, or are you currently experiencing?
4. What’s been surprising on your journey so far?
5. How might you measure ‘success’ when it comes to your work as part of this opportunity?
6. What outcome(s) would you like to continue tracking as part of your progress as it relates to this opportunity?
7. Have your goals or vision for success changed since the start of the work? If so, how and why?
8. How can Feeding America be more helpful as a partner? What would you like us to know and/or

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do that would better support you, and/or the field at large?

For example, FY22 grantees provided responses to the learning questions above via a [survey](#) form.

Grantee Engagement Opportunities

Part of the intent of the Fund is to create spaces for connection and opportunities to deepen relationships, build insights, and support networking and learning among grantees. Throughout the grant journey, Feeding America hosts *optional* bi-monthly community check-in meetings and lunch-and-learns in partnership with grantees, is available for in-person visits with food bank network members and/or community-based organization partners, and will also host in-person learning sessions.

Communications & Publicity Expectations

We hope that grantees are able to benefit from publicity through the Fund. The Feeding America communications and marketing team will reach out to grantees as opportunities for storytelling or national media become available. For example, to ensure we are elevating the voices of communities, we have been utilizing Feeding America's Gathering Voices platform.

As a grant recipient, you are strongly encouraged to share this grant award throughout the grant period using social media and online platforms to help promote the partnership (i.e. Twitter & Facebook posts, website promotion, electronic communication with donors, volunteers, other constituents). Grantees will be asked to provide any available social media handles and website links at the time of award for support in promoting their work. Feeding America will provide grantees with a press release template for optional use with local media.

Use of Funds

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Grantees should use grant funds to directly support investments and activities that address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity, as outlined in the grant application. As previously stated, 50% or more of planning grant funds and 85% or more of implementation grant funds (actual dollars) must be allocated to POC-led and/or serving community-based organizations (paid directly from Feeding America* or via member pass-through).

***Please note:** Feeding America will only make direct payment to organizations designated as tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). For direct payments to be processed through to community-based organization partner(s), please confirm your partner's 501(c)(3) status (consider verifying via Candid/Guidestar) and then upload a copy of your partner's most recent IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter to your application.

If a community-based organization partner does not have a 501(c)(3) designation, the Feeding America network organization must be willing and able to receive the payment from Feeding America and pass the funding through to their community-based organization partner. Payment preferences should be included in your application budget.

Acknowledgements

There are no acknowledgements required for this opportunity.

Application Instructions

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If you have questions or need clarification about any part of the RFP after you've read it in its entirety, please reach out to the appropriate contact who is listed in the "Contact Information" section of the *Opportunity Details* tab of this RFP.

Instructions for Applying:

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All applications must be submitted via the GMS. Any application received by email/mail or submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

For your convenience in working with community-based organizations, we have included a Word version of the application questions and an Excel version of the budget template. These documents, along with a PDF of the RFP, can also be found on the [Active Grants](#) page on HungerNet or on Google Drive [here](#).

While community-based organizations will not be able to access the GMS or HungerNet, all contacts listed in the application will receive a PDF copy of the submitted application via email. These emails will be sent individually after the close of the RFP, and will not be sent automatically upon submission.

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Questions

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Application Form

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General Information

Please indicate whether you are applying for a Planning Grant or an Implementation Grant:

- Planning Grant – up to \$250,000
- Implementation Grant – up to \$500,000

What is the primary geographic focus of your grant proposal (select one)?

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

**Other description (if
applicable):**

Proposed Grant Period End Date

Note: All grantees have a July 1, 2023 grant period start date.

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Please identify the Feeding America network organization staff member(s) responsible for grant execution. Include name, title, email, and phone number. These contacts will receive all grant-related communications and engagement invitations.

Please upload your completed [Application Question Template](#) (download a copy of the Word document linked here).

Program/Project Budget

Reminder: Planning proposals must allocate 50% or more and implementation proposals must allocate 85% or more of the grant funds (actual dollars) to POC-led and/or serving community-based organizations.

How much are you requesting in total funding under this proposal?

Planning Grant – up to \$250,000; Implementation Grant – up to \$500,000

How much funding (\$) will be passed through to community-based organizations?

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* Using [this budget template](#) (download a copy of the Excel document linked here), please upload a simple budget breakdown that includes any disbursement to partners, and use of funds by category if applicable:

- a. Staff (Salaries/Benefits)
- b. Consultants and Professional Fees
- c. Meetings/Travel
- d. Property, Plant, and Equipment
- e. Supplies and Technology
- f. Other

As part of completing the budget template, please indicate how you would like funding disbursed, if awarded. Feeding America will only make direct payment to organizations designated as tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). For direct payments to be processed through to community-based organization partner(s), please confirm your partner's 501(c)(3) status (consider verifying via Candid/Guidestar) and then upload a copy of your partner's most recent IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter below. If a community-based partner organization does not have a 501(c)(3) designation, the Feeding America network organization must be willing and able to receive the payment from Feeding America and pass any funding allocated through to these partner(s).

Upload/Modify Budget Table:

Upload IRS Determination Letter(s) Here:

Only Required for Direct Payment Requests

Related Documents

If you are applying as a PDO or PSA, please be sure to upload a copy of your signed letter of support from your member food bank(s).

Grant Agreement

IMPORTANT - Grant Agreement Instructions

Please download, review, and save the [FY23 Food Security Equity Impact Fund Grant Agreement](#) for your reference.

You do NOT need to upload a signed grant agreement as part of your application. Using the checkbox process below will streamline application submission and facilitate timelier disbursement of grant funds.

Grant Acceptance/Decline

IMPORTANT NOTE: by checking "YES," you are acknowledging that you have read, understand, and agree to the terms outlined in the grant agreement form and that key stakeholders at your organization - **including the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer (or equivalents)** - have read, understand, and agree to the funds usage and requirements of the funding award as outlined on the *Opportunity Details* tab and in the grant agreement. **Selecting "YES" is equivalent to submitting a grant agreement signed by your organization's Executive Director or equivalent.**

Grant Feedback

(Optional) Please follow [this link](#) to provide any feedback you may have for Feeding America related to Member Grants. Feedback is anonymous, but you have the option to provide contact information if you would like someone from the Member Grants team to follow up.

Equitable Access

As part of our commitment to equitable access, Feeding America is interested in learning where grant funds are being invested. **IMPORTANT NOTE: These questions are for *learning purposes ONLY* - your responses will *NOT* be considered as part of your grant application nor will they impact grant funding decisions.**

This set of questions is standard across ALL Feeding America grants, so we appreciate your answers despite the duplicative nature of the questions for some grant proposals.

[Please click here if you would like to access county-level data related to communities of color and rural communities.](#)

Please note that Feeding America defines rural counties as those with a Rural - Urban Continuum Code (RUCC) of 4 through 9.

Please do not spend much time on these questions - your good faith estimate is appreciated. We do not need specific calculations. We recognize that actual service delivery numbers often differ from projections and that your responses below represent your best estimate at the time of application.

Based on your best estimate, will use this grant funding primarily to support communities of color and/or rural communities? NOTE: please select “No” if the staff, activities, and/or assets supported by this grant will not primarily rural and/or communities of color. If you are not sure how to answer this question, please reach out to the assigned grants manager for this grant opportunity (see Contacts section).

A few examples of what this work could look like:

- This grant will be used to provide food primarily to communities of color or rural communities.
- This grant will start, sustain, or expand work to eliminate barriers and increase access to food and/or services primarily for communities of color or rural communities.
- This grant will be used to do outreach, conduct assessments, or build relationships with neighbors primarily in communities of color and/or rural communities.
- This grant will be used to support or build partnerships with local organizations primarily in communities of color and/or rural communities.
- This grant will be used to hire staff whose job function is to primarily support communities of color and/or rural communities.
- Other opportunities where the primary intention of the grant is to alleviate racial and/or geographic disparities in food insecurity and access to charitable food assistance.

A few examples that would not be considered as primarily supporting communities of color and/or rural communities:

- This grant will be used to purchase equipment, vehicles, or supplies that will be used toward general food bank operations and not specifically be used toward efforts that focus on supporting communities of color and/or rural communities.
- This grant will be used toward general operating expenses that are not specifically focused on supporting communities of color and/or rural communities.

Yes

No

Target Communities

Which communities do you plan to specifically target with this grant funding? Please select one.

- Communities of Color
- Rural Communities
- Both Communities of Color and Rural Communities
- N/A - grant funding will not support activities specifically targeted to Communities of Color or Rural Communities