

Postharvest Infrastructure Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Our business is located in a non-rural county, but we mainly serve rural counties.

Are we eligible to apply?

- A. According to the Maryland Rural Health Transformation Plan, the State of Maryland will target Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) resources to rural residents and healthcare providers in the 18 counties recognized as rural by Maryland law. This includes Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties), Eastern Shore (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties), Southern Maryland (Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties) and Northern Maryland (Carroll, Frederick, and Harford Counties).
- B. A non-rural county business would need to demonstrate that 100% all the benefit (i.e. sales) goes to one of the 18 counties. This seems like an unworkable condition for the grant award, as a business would likely not limit itself to this condition and tracking the benefits would be near impossible.
- C. Here is a map of the [18 State designated Rural Counties](#).

Are cutflowers eligible for the grant?

- A. No. This initiative seeks to enhance the accessibility of nutritious, locally sourced products for rural Marylanders. This includes fresh produce, dairy, eggs, grains for human consumption, meat, poultry, eggs, herbs and Maryland seafood.

Entity type / Applicant structure

We reached out to Maryland Food Bank about this opportunity and they referred us back to you regarding eligibility of food banks/food security organizations to apply for this funding. Can you please clarify?

- A. Due to the strict federal administrative requirements to administer a competitive grant program, the Maryland Food Bank will not partner with MDA

for this round of funding, though both organizations plan to revisit the partnership later. Rural food banks are welcome to apply.

How does the program define “small farm”?

- A. Agricultural producers are encouraged to apply, including small farms. Small or Mid-Size Producers are those with a Gross Cash Farm Income (GCFI) of less than \$350,000; mid-size farms have a GCFI of \$350,000 to \$999,999. The producer is an independently owned, U.S.-based, for-profit enterprise that does not dominate the national market.

Can one organization apply for the grant, while having a different organization as the project beneficiary or operator?

- A. No.

Is 501c3 the only eligible non-profit designation for the application, or are other non-profit designations 501c5 or others, allowed?

- A. The MDA has requested guidance from the MDH/CMS and is currently awaiting a response regarding this request.

Allowable vs Unallowable costs

Is pouring a cement pad an allowable cost?

- A. Yes. Concrete pads are considered a minor renovation and we do have a cap on renovations from CMS. If the total dollar amount exceeds the cap, then we'll reduce the funding accordingly.

If a cold storage installation requires an electrical upgrade to support new equipment – such as a panel upgrade or dedicated circuit – are those electrical costs eligible as part of the project budget?

- A. Yes.

Would plumbing costs be included for wash stations, sinks, etc?

- A. Yes.

Are well installation costs covered under allowable plumbing expenses?

- A. If the well is part of a food safety modernization upgrade, then yes. Applicants must be able to demonstrate they are working toward achieving USDA GAP certification.

Is the purchase of used cold storage equipment eligible?

- A. Yes.

For cold storage can we pay the company or a contractor to assemble it?

- A. Yes. You would need to provide a quote on letterhead from the contractor.

Is any labor done by the farmer, i.e. site work or electrical work at an allowable cost?

- A. Yes. If the labor is done by the farmer owner of the business requesting funds, you would need to explain the cost per hour in the Budget Narrative.

Does a freeze dryer count as an acceptable purchase?

- A. Possible. The application would be more competitive if you already had a "On-Farm Processing" license from MDH.

Are customer-facing reach-in freezers or glass-door merchandising refrigerators eligible under the cold storage infrastructure category?

- A. Yes. Funding is not limited to walk-in units only. You will need to demonstrate that your customer base is from the rural area.

Can a single application include both cold storage infrastructure (walk-in cooler/freezer) and a distribution component (refrigerated truck or insert) in the same project?

- A. Yes.

We have a need to upgrade electric (3 phase vs single phase) to be able to build more cold storage on our farm. Would this be an allowable cost to support more walk in storage?

- A. Yes.

For meat producing operations: will livestock handling facilities and trailers for live animal transport to processing facilities be covered?

A. No.

Outcomes

For the Outcome table: "Total pounds of healthy food (produce, meat, poultry, seafood) processed/distributed to rural Marylanders" – are you looking for the total pounds in a day, month, or year?

A. Annual

Do we need to be able to show impact within 12 months?

A. Yes. You will also need to report on the equipment once a year for 5 years.

Application Portal

Will there be a site visit as part of the approval process?

A. A site visit may occur as part of the post award process.

Will you accept a summary of more than 300 words as an additional submission?

A. No.

Will additional information be accepted as an upload document if it exceeds the allotted word amount?

A. No.

How is the application scored?

A. There is a grant evaluation rubric on page 14 of the Request for Proposals.

Funding

What is the maximum amount of funding?

A. There's no maximum amount at this time.

Award timeline details

Do you know when the next round of funding for this program will come out?

- A. We anticipate November 2026.

When will grant awardees be notified?

- A. No later than October 31, 2026.

Miscellaneous

If an organization already applied for a Transforming Rural Health Through Food Systems grant via Rural Maryland Council are we eligible to apply for this funding too?

- A. Yes. We ask that you highlight any duplicate funding requests. We expect a high volume of applications for this grant. If duplicates are not clearly identified, it may negatively impact the review process for your application.

Is there a deadline to e-mail with questions prior to the due date for the grant?

- A. Jun 12, 2026 at 5:00 pm.

SDAT said that it can take up to a month to receive a Certificate in Good Standing. Can I upload a screenshot of my business being in "Good Standing?"

- A. Yes.

I'm a sole proprietor and SDAT is for LLC or Corporation's, what should I do?

- A. To verify compliance for a sole proprietorship to receive public funding, you must demonstrate that the business status is "Active" in SDAT and has no tax delinquencies. Please upload a screenshot of the business being "Active" in SDAT into the application. If you are awarded the grant but have outstanding tax delinquencies, the Comptroller of Maryland will withhold your grant funds until those delinquencies are resolved.