



Request for Proposals (RFP) FY24 Network Investment Grants: Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation Grants

Overview

The pandemic hit New Jersey hard in 2020. You, our network partners, saw immediate and dramatic increases in hunger, many also feeling the pain of loss and fatigue over time. 3 years later, you still see rising serving numbers and long lines at food distributions.

We have seen in that time the impact we can have by combining programs and resources to address the root causes of hunger, such as poverty. To improve our neighbors' long-term food security, we consider our vision of equity throughout the state, our focus on health through layered programs, and ways to bring dignity to our neighbors through ideas such as "Client Choice" distribution models. (Client Choice describes providing neighbors at your pantry with more options to select the food that best fits their family's taste, diet, and culture.) And your operations have changed, maybe permanently, as you serve double or triple the number of families you served before 2020.

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ), and partners Mercer Street Friends (MSF) and Norwescap, recognize you play a vital role in our ability to execute our mission. Throughout the year, we ask you to help us understand your needs. Through your insights, you help us prioritize and focus our resources. Our partners vary widely, from size and geography to the different populations, communities, and cultures you serve. We acknowledge these differences and the need to support our partners in unique ways so that you may continue to nourish your neighbors in ways that work best for them.

Our Network Investment Grant plan makes a commitment to you, our partners, to meet you where you are ... to address urgent needs as they arise, while also supporting growth and expansion.

Rationale

We have made a multi-million dollar, multi-year commitment to invest in you.

In Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023), we set aside \$750,000 in grant money to meet immediate operational needs, such as refrigeration, freezer blankets, tables, tents, support for pickups from retail stores such as gas cards, etc. By the end of the grant application process in October 2022, we received 230 applications with funding requests of \$3 million. After careful review by a panel, we distributed \$1.2 million to 205 partners in 16 counties.

Our next round of Network Investment Grants -- Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation -- will focus on starting, growing, or expanding the scale and scope of services. By putting the latest ideas into action and

building infrastructure to serve more neighbors, we strengthen our collective efforts to improve food security and address root causes of hunger.

Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation Grants will provide more than \$2.5 million to our partners for programs that address hunger, health, and nutrition, and support bold, fresh ideas and growth.

Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation

Grant Opportunity Overview

The Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation Grant will support transformational ideas and / or establish new methods of food distribution, community development, and services that strengthen your vision to empower neighbors and expand food security in your community. These may include bold new ideas to change your food distribution, such as transition to Client Choice; creating space to operate a food pantry which can serve your increased number of neighbors with dignity for the next 20 years, while making your volunteer operation run more efficiently; or developing programs that support nutrition, health, or economic stability.

Grant Application Guide & Required Documents

You must be in compliance with your food bank (CFBNJ, MSF or Norwescap), and abide by New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Feeding America regulations, safety and health standards.

All partners must submit the following updated documents as part of the Grant Application process.

- *If you do not have one of the required documents* or have questions about them, please contact your Network Engagement team member at your food bank.

EIN: An “Employer Identification Number” (EIN) is a unique number that the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) assigns to a business / public charity / church so that it can easily identify the business or organization. Organizations that are part of a larger, central organization must submit the EIN of the larger, central organization. It will be used for verification with the IRS website. These organizations may also have their own EIN to use on their W-9 Form (see below), but it cannot be used for IRS verification.

W-9 Form: An IRS tax form used to confirm specific identification information, such as the applicant organization’s EIN, organization name, and address, and is certified with a signature by the responsible person in the organization. CFBNJ requires the W-9 to distribute money awarded to each grantee.

IRS Determination Letter: The 501(c)(3) determination letter is a legal document issued by the IRS. It proves an organization has federal tax-exempt status. After the organization applies for tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code, the IRS responds to the organization with a “determination letter of approval.”

- **Organizations that are part of a larger, often regional or national organization**, such as faith-based partners, must submit the IRS Determination Letter of their larger, central organization.

Tie-In Letter from Larger Organization:

- **(Only for network partners that are part of a larger, central organization):** These network partners must submit a **tie-in letter from the larger organization** that states the local organization is a member of the larger, central organization.
 - The tie-in letter *must include* the **name** of the local organization and *also may include* their **address** and **EIN**.
 - In place of the tie-in letter, a directory from the larger, central organization is accepted, if it includes the local organization's name.
 - This document is not required from a network partner which is a stand-alone, independent 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

The application form will require answers to questions along the lines of the following examples:

- Basic information about your food program(s) and your organization
- The idea, need, or challenge you are addressing
- How this grant will fulfill this need
- Project goals
- Project budget with supporting information
 - *Example:* If you seek grant money to buy a refrigerator, include a link to the company's website where you would like to buy the refrigerator.
 - *Example:* If you seek grant money to install new wiring, include a project estimate from an electrician you plan to hire.

You may apply for grants in 1 (but not both) of the following categories:

- **Innovation and Large-Scale Projects: \$25,001 - \$100,000**
- **Small-Scale Infrastructure Projects: Up to \$25,000**

We will accept 1 application per organization. If your organization operates more than 1 food program (for example, both a food pantry and a soup kitchen, or food pantries at 2 separate locations), please consolidate your grant requests into a single application.

If you received Operational Grant funds in 2023, you may apply again for one of the 2 grants in the categories provided. You may NOT apply for the same or related items as in the Operational Grant.

CFBNJ will administer grants to network partners in Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties.

Spending Period

- Grant spending period: January 1 – December 31, 2024
 - Capacity Building, Infrastructure, and Innovation Grants may apply to purchases made between January 1 and December 31, 2024.
 - We strongly recommend planning to finish spending your grant money much sooner than December, in case of unexpected delays.
- See below for important grant application and reporting dates.

Grant Categories

Large-Scale Capacity Building Projects and Innovative Concepts: \$25,001 – \$100,000

- General facility upgrade or large-scale project. These projects expand existing space and/or build new capacities to serve more neighbors. Some examples include:
 - Create or Expand Space
 - *Example:* For Client Service model
 - Expand / Upgrade electrical
 - *Example:* For internet services
 - Large equipment and/or Expand Storage Space
 - *Example:* Walk-in cold storage
 - Programs that promote health and wellness
 - *Example:* Build a kitchen to support healthy cooking classes and training
 - *Example:* Build a community garden
 - *Example:* Expand programs that help neighbors access SNAP benefits
 - Vehicles for existing or new programs
 - *Example:* New Cargo or Passenger vehicles to bring food to seniors
- For this category, **up to 10% of the requested award may be designated for administrative costs** to implement the intended project.
 - *Example:* For a grant request of \$50,000, \$45,000 could be designated for implementation, and \$4,500 (or 10% of the implementation cost) for administrative costs associated with the work involved to complete the project.

Small to Mid-Scale Infrastructure Projects: Up to \$25,000

- These projects bring needed upgrades and / or refurbish existing infrastructure. Examples include:
 - Handicapped-accessible ramp
 - Generator
 - Systems upgrade (heating and cooling system, security)
 - New roof
 - Refresh facility

Not eligible for funding in this grant application (in any category)

- Food
- Payments, Stipends, or Incentives for volunteers or staff
- Supplies (cleaning supplies, office supplies)
- Reusable bags
- Technology: Computers, laptops, tablets, printers, scanners, phones, software, etc. (unless specified as a need which is part of a larger project).

Reporting

We will require both a Mid-Year Report and a Final Report (see “important dates” below). Reports help us to understand how you spend the money we provide and what impact the money has on your agency and community.

Mid-Year Report (sample questions):

- Have you spent the money?
- If not, what challenges are you experiencing in spending the money?
- Do you need help with spending the money, or to request an amendment to your agreement?

Final Report (sample questions):

- Did you spend all of the money?
- What can you do now that you could not do before?
 - *Example 1:* “Before the grant we served canned food only. We bought a refrigerator with the grant, and now we serve fresh fruit and vegetables.”
 - *Example 2:* Before the grant we served 100 people per month. With the grant money, we created a new Client Choice pantry that helped our neighbors feel more in control of their food choices and doubled our capacity – we now serve 200 people per month, with less food waste!
- What impact has the grant made on your community?
 - *Example:* We built a small kitchen to offer health and nutrition classes to our students.

Please take **pictures** of the changes you make with the grant money, and report **stories** of the grant’s impact – from the point of view of your neighbors, your volunteers, your staff, or community members.

Hold onto your **receipts!** We may ask you to list the items or services you bought with grant money, the cost, and the payment dates.

Important Dates (Tentative, Subject to Change)

- **Grant Kick-Off** (webinar open to all partners): Week of July 10, 2023
- **Application Opens:** July 13, 2023
- **Application Closes:** September 15, 2023
- **Grant Review Period** (Food Bank review board): September 15 – October 8, 2023
- **Grant Notification:** October 9 – 13, 2023
- **Grant Orientation** (for grant awardees): Week of October 16
- **Grant Awards Paid to Partners:** October 16 – November 17, 2023
- **Mid-Year Check-In:** May 2024 (date TBD)
- **Grant Spending Period:** January 1 – December 31, 2024
- **Final Report Survey Due:** January 31, 2025

Contact Information

- General information about grants: www.cfbnj.org/networkinvestment
- Questions should be directed to networkgrants@cfbnj.org.