



Minnesota Food Shelf Program (MFSP) Annual Grant 2026-27

Grantee Guidance Document

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Overview

The Minnesota Food Shelf Program (MFSP), as described in the MFSP state statute [142.F.14](#), available to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations participating in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Tribal Nations. Funds are distributed annually in the fall. MFSP is a non-competitive grant, and potential grantees must apply annually online. The Food Group distributes funds on behalf of the Dept. of Children, Youth & Families, Office of Economic Opportunity (DCYF-OEO).

MFSP Funding 2026 - 2027

The total distribution for the MFSP grant is **\$9.3 million** in 2026-2027, which includes up to:

- \$4.5 million in annual funding and;
- \$4.8 million in one-time funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to provide additional funds to food shelves and Tribal Nations in response to the continued increase in demand.

Online applications must be submitted by September 30, 2026. Funds will be distributed by November 1, 2026 or when they are available. Grant funds **MUST** be fully spent by June 30, 2027.

- The majority of funds will be distributed in proportion to the number of individuals served.
- Grant amounts will range from a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$175,000.
- Service statistics from all distribution sites of your agency or Tribal Nation will be combined to calculate your MFSP funding amount.
- One grant disbursement will be made per agency or Tribal Nation.
- New grantees without a full year of program statistics will be eligible for minimum funding only.

Eligibility

Agencies with 501(c)(3) status and Tribal Nations are eligible for the MFSP Grant if they:

- Are in good standing with the IRS (EIN), State of MN, TEFAP, and their regional food bank (as applicable).
- Have provided complete and accurate monthly program statistics for every month of operation during the period of July 1, 2025 to present.
- Currently participate in TEFAP by ordering and distributing TEFAP food regularly (not a requirement for Tribal Nations).
- Have fiscal oversight and governance practices in place, including at minimum:
 - **Tribal Council or Board of Directors:** A governing body that provides oversight of the Tribal Nation or Agency's finances and operations.
 - **Budget:** A Tribal food program or organizational budget that outlines anticipated revenue and expenses.

- **Financial Reports (Financial Statements):** Regular financial reports or statements that show financial activity.
- **Purchasing Policy and Procedures:** Policies or procedures in place for approving, documenting, and reviewing financial expenditures.
- **Separate Tracking of MFSP Funds:** A process to track MFSP grant funds and expenditures separately from other revenue and expenses, as well ensuring that expenses are:
 - Allowed by the grant
 - Related to the food shelf or food program
 - Reasonable in cost
 - Paid during the grant period

It is expected that your Tribal food program or organization has these in place currently or is working on establishing them. If you have questions or need support, please reach out to Stephanie Robinson at The Food Group (srobinson@thefoodgroupmn.org)

The Food Group and FFEN will offer the following trainings, technical assistance, and resources In 2025 - 2026 to support food shelves:

- Fundraising (January 2025)
- Unpacking Bias: Fostering Inclusive and Equitable Food Access (January 2025)
- Fundamentals of Nonprofit Board Governance (February 2025)
- Fundamentals of Nonprofit Finance (March 2025)
- Grant writing (March 2025)
- Managing Cash Flow (April 2025)
- Fundamentals of Nonprofit Budgeting (April 2025)
- Management (April 2025)
- Role of Board Members (May 2025)
- 12 Rules of Nonprofit Finance (May 2025)
- Leadership (May 2025)
- Statewide Food Shelf Network Conversation: Grant Reporting & Budgeting (May 2026)

Additional trainings, technical assistance, and resources will continue to be offered throughout the current grant period; look for email alerts or go to [The Food Group's website](#) for details. Topics will include:

- Strengthening Board Governance
- Building a Purchasing Policy
- Building Your Budget
- Grant & Budget Tracking
- Nonprofit Finance 101

Who is not eligible to apply?

- Any applicant not registered as an approved TEFAP provider (not a requirement for Tribal Nations)
- Any TEFAP provider not in good standing with the TEFAP program and/or their regional food bank. Examples include, but are not limited to food programs:
 - With unreported or delinquent statistic reporting
 - On ordering pause/hold with the regional food bank
 - On probation for program compliance issues
- Any applicant debarred from operating in MN
- Any applicant with a 501(c)(3) not in good standing
- Any applicant with outstanding MFSP Progress Reports or Final Reports from the previous year
- On-site meal programs
- Backpack programs

Allowable Expenses

Funds must be used for activities and expenses related to the food distribution program only.

Allowable uses of the grant funds include, but are not limited to:

- Purchase of food, including culturally relevant foods, and hygiene supplies, including diapers
- Expenses related to the distribution of food:
 - Personnel and salaries
 - Equipment (shelving, forklifts, refrigeration, computers and technology, etc.)
 - Space and rental, including internet and utilities, etc.
 - Transportation expenses (mileage, delivery fees, maintenance, fuel)
 - Outreach (printing, translation services)

Allowable expense considerations:

- Quantities of purchased food must be reasonable and justifiable for the number of people the program serves. Food must be equitably distributed to individuals receiving food.
- Personnel costs must have payroll documentation and be associated with the food distribution program
- Expenses must be used in the food distribution program. If the expense is used for purposes other than the food distribution program, only the portion of the expense used by the food distribution program will be allowable.

Examples of Unallowable Expenses:

- Staff wages or salaries unrelated to food distribution (Ex: staff labor for other programs such as clothing distribution or backpack program)
- Volunteer stipends
- Personnel costs without payroll documentation
- Vehicles or vehicle maintenance not used to support the distribution, transportation, and coordination of food
- Purchase of equipment not used in the food distribution program
- Full costs of utilities, internet, or equipment in a building used by multiple programs

The Food Group is here to support you in your fiscal processes and if you need help with eligible expenses, please reach out to Stephanie Robinson at srobinson@thefoodgroupmn.org

Grant funds **MUST** be fully spent by June 30, 2027.

Grant Reporting

The MFSP grant period **begins once you have received your MFSP Award Letter and ends June 30, 2027**. MFSP grant funds must be spent down by June 30, 2027.

MFSP Progress AND Final Reports are required for all grantees documenting how funds were spent.

MFSP Progress Report		
Purpose	Posted on The Food Group's Website	Due Date
- Document MFSP funds spent to date by category. - Ensure funds will be spent by the end of the grant period on allowable grant expenses. - Document financial processes and internal controls.	February 1, 2027	March 1, 2027
MFSP Final Report		
<i>A final report is required, even if all funds were spent by the MFSP Progress Report date.</i>		
Purpose	Posted on The Food Group's Website	Due Date
- Document how all MFSP funds were spent by category. - Ensure all funds have been spent by the end of the grant period. - Capture impact of funding.	Spring 2027	July 15, 2027

Grant Monitoring

All grantees are subject to program and fiscal (financial) monitoring by DCYF-OEO and/or The Food Group.

Monitoring visits will be scheduled during the current grant period.

- Fiscal Monitoring** is conducted to ensure grant funds are spent on allowable expenses within the grant period, and that proper financial documentation practices are in place.
 - Grantees will be asked to provide two forms of documentation for each expense:
 - proof of purchase**
 - proof of payment****For example: if a freezer is purchased for the food program, documentation must include a receipt of purchase and a bank statement showing the payment was made.*
 - Grantees are expected to maintain and provide a clear record of grant-related expenses, copies of associated receipts/invoices, and proof of payment documentation. Grantees must maintain and keep this fiscal documentation on-site for 7 years.
 - Spreadsheet templates will be provided by DCYF-OEO/TFG.
 - The Food Group and DCYF-OEO are required, at minimum, to conduct monitoring site visits, in-person or virtually, with all grantees that receive greater than \$50,000 in grant funds.
 - Grantees will be notified in advance and asked to schedule a monitoring visit as well as submit receipts and spending documentation.
- Program Monitoring** is conducted to ensure MFSP and TEFAP regulations are being followed, including intake procedures, safe food storage and distribution practices, and non-discrimination policies.
 - General information and TEFAP requirements are [available here](#).
 - The TEFAP Compliance Checklist is [available here](#).

How to Apply

Application: The application is available online and the link will be sent via email from The Food Group.

- Submit only ONE application per Agency or Tribal Nation. (See definitions below). The application will include information for all associated distribution sites (mobiles, pop-ups, multiple site locations, etc.).
- Multiple applications for sites connected to the same Agency or Tribal Nation will not be accepted.

Timeline: The application will be open for approximately one month from **September 1 to September 30, 2026** at 11:59 p.m. Central Daylight Time. Funds will be disbursed by November 1, 2026, or when funds are available.

Definitions

Agency:

- This is the tax-exempt entity; legal name; often a 501c3, Tribal Nation, or equivalent
- Is an Organization, Agency, Tribal Nation as defined in regulations for a “Eligible Recipient Agency” or ERA (“eligible recipient agency” [§ 251.3\(d\)](#))
- Meets tax-exempt status per [§ 251.5\(a\)\(3\)](#)

Distribution Site:

- A location where the agency or Tribal Nation distributes food
- Includes Brick and Mortar Sites (traditional “Food Shelf”), Outreach Programs, Mobile Program, Pop-Ups, etc.

Proof of Payment:

- Financial documentation that provides an itemized list of the goods or services purchased. This could be in the form of an invoice or receipt.

Proof of Purchase:

- Financial documentation that provides proof a good or service was paid for. This could be in the form of a cleared voided check stub (front and back) or an itemized bank or credit card statement showing the payment item clearly identified and payment made.

TEFAP ID:

- Your TEFAP ID is given to you by your regional food bank. Each of your TEFAP eligible programs will have their own unique TEFAP ID.
- IDs are used for purchasing orders from your food bank and should be on your invoices or in your online food bank account.
- You will need to know the TEFAP ID for each program you will apply for prior to completing the application.

Not sure of your TEFAP ID? TEFAP IDs typically follow this format based on food bank:

If you are still unable to locate your food shelf's TEFAP ID, please contact your regional food bank.

Second Harvest Heartland: C1234-01

The Food Group: TFG1234

Second Harvest Northland: 1234 or A12345

Channel One: 1234

North County: ABCDE1

Note: For applicants that order from more than one food bank, be sure to use the ID number from the agency you order TEFAP products from. Applicants located in Hennepin County order TEFAP from The Food Group. Applicants in the rest of the Twin Cities metro area order TEFAP from Second Harvest Heartland. Applicants in Clay County now order TEFAP from North County.

Contact

Please contact Stephanie Robinson, Statewide Food Access Liaison at The Food Group at srobinson@thefoodgroupmn.org if you have additional questions.