

FOOD EQUITY FUND

2024 STARTER FUND GRANT GUIDELINES

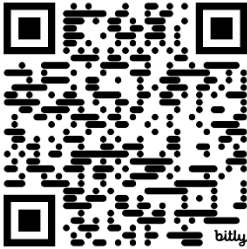


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ABOUT THE FOOD EQUITY FUND

The Food Equity Fund is a program of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON). The purpose of the Fund is to invest in community-led work that contributes to an equitable and sustainable local food system. By 'food system' we mean any activities related to food, this can include growing, sourcing, preparing, learning, distributing food and/or managing food waste.

Created in 2021, the Food Equity Fund supports work led by those who experience the most food and health inequities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

STARTER FUND

The Starter Fund prioritizes community organizations and groups with an annual budget of less than \$500,000. The intention is to provide a nimble grant to smaller, grassroots organizations advancing an equitable and sustainable local food system who historically have limited access to institutional funding. The submission process consists of a simple written application and a required virtual interview.

WHAT WE FUND

Across the United States and in Seattle, there are deep and persistent inequities in the food system due to structural racism. The Food Equity Fund aims to increase investments in food work led by: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and/or elders.

Eligible proposals must:

- Have project activities occur within Seattle.
- Be accessible and benefit people who live, learn, work and/or worship in Seattle.
- Focus on contributing to an equitable and sustainable local food system.
- Be completed within 24 months of contracting.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Organizations that have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- Community groups that have a *fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- Tribes and tribal organizations.



***A FISCAL SPONSOR** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that agrees to act as the trustee of your project's funds and assumes financial responsibilities related to recordkeeping and the disbursement of funds. If you are not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, you are required to secure a fiscal sponsor for your contract with the City of Seattle. For groups that must hire a fiscal sponsor, a fee of 5% to 10% of the total grant award is often charged. This fee may be included in your proposal budget.

Note: Only one application per organization is allowed, except if the organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for multiple groups.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES EXAMPLES

The following activities are *ideas* of eligible activities:

- *capital project or physical improvement such as a new greenhouse, farm irrigation, and/or commercial kitchen
- coalition-building to advance food justice & food sovereignty
- community organizing
- food programs for elders
- food distribution site
- food justice leadership development
- food pantry & meal services
- gardening or farming
- food-related job training
- activities that advance economic opportunities in the food system
- storytelling & cultural preservation and/or education
- food programs for youth
- and many more!



***CONTINGENCY:** All capital/physical improvement project budgets must include a 15% cash contingency for all construction related activities and costs, including sales tax.

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

We **don't** accept applications from:

- 501(c)(4) political groups
- For-profit entities including small businesses, restaurants, entrepreneurs
- individual persons
- major institutions such as school districts, universities, or hospitals

WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND

The following activities are **not** eligible for funding:

- expenses made before the organization is selected and under contract
- for-profit activities including fundraisers, ticketed and/or retail events
- food markets that require purchase of food
- gift cards or food vouchers
- lodging or hotel expenses
- organization's overhead costs unrelated to the Food Equity Fund project
- projects not easily accessible by the public
- purchase of land or buildings
- purchase of a vehicle
- scholarships
- capital project or physical improvements on a private residency

The Department of Neighborhoods reserves the right to make the final determination of eligible expenses or project activities. **Please contact us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov directly with any questions about eligible activities prior to submitting a final application.**

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Are you planning on building new garden beds in your community garden? Are you making renovations to your senior center's kitchen? Want to build a new greenhouse or shed for your organization's urban garden?

Property owner permission is required with your application if a physical improvement is made to property not owned by your group or organization.

A **physical improvement** includes building semi-permanent or permanent structures or making renovations to a building.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- We require all physical improvement projects to include a 15% contingency in the budget to cover unanticipated expenses.
- If you'd like a property owner permission template, please reach out to a Food Equity Fund project manager.
- If your project occurs on City property, please contact us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov to connect with the appropriate City staff liaison.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS:

- installing new garden beds
- greenhouse
- shed
- commercial kitchen renovation and/or repairs
- irrigation system
- And more!

HOW TO APPLY

Here's everything you need to submit a complete Food Equity Fund application:

- [Application cover sheet](#)
- [Attachment: Narrative Questions](#)
- [Attachment: Workplan and Leadership Biographies](#)
- [Starter Fund Project Budget \(excel\)](#)
- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter OR identified fiscal sponsorship
- If applicable:
 - Property owner letter

Application and attachment(s) must be submitted via email to FoodEquityFund@seattle.gov

2024 STARTER FUND GRANT SCHEDULE

Award Amount: \$5,000 - \$25,000 | **Proposal Length:** Up to 24 months

● April 1	Application open
● April 18: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. May 28: 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. July 15: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.	Virtual Information Sessions (Interpretation available upon request.)

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

The review process will include a virtual interview component. Interviews will be scheduled after a Food Equity Fund Project Manager reviews the written portion of the application. Language and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation are available upon request, please allow 5 business days for planning. Virtual interviews will take place **every Tuesday between 2:00-3:30pm**, we will work with you to



schedule the next available appointment slot. The panel will include at least two Food Equity Fund staff.

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSIONS

Join a virtual information session to learn more about the application process, qualities of a strong proposal and to ask any questions.



Please register for an information session [here](#).

Thursday April 18,
11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Link: [Starter Fund Info Session #1](#)
Join by phone: (206) 207-1700
Access Code 2484 780 4916 Password 2024

Tuesday May 28,
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Link: [Starter Fund Info Session #2](#)
Join by phone: (206) 207-1700
Access code: 2483 658 9640 Password 2024

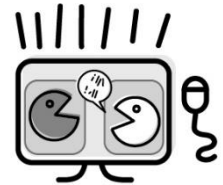
Monday July 15,
10 a.m.- 11 a.m.

Link: [Starter Fund Info Session #3](#)
Join by phone: (206) 207-1700
Access code: 2495 912 2033 Password: 2024

STAFF SUPPORT

Technical Assistance: Do you have questions about the application or want to discuss your idea? A Food Equity Fund Project Manager* can support you!

- Email foodequityfund@seattle.gov or call **206-727-FOOD (3663)** to schedule a one-on-one meeting with a project manager. Project managers are available to meet outside of regular business hours with advance scheduling.



Examples of One-on-One Support

- Help figure out eligibility activities or expenses.
- Support with property ownership questions.
- Assist you in your search for a fiscal sponsor organization.
- Explain the evaluation criteria.
- Provide feedback on a draft application

**The project manager providing technical assistance to an applicant will not be the same project manager making grant recommendations.*

PROPOSAL & WORKPLAN EXAMPLES

1) A Native-led organization seeks funds to grow and provide free culturally relevant produce to elders in their community. The proposal involves growing native plants and vegetables, intergenerational harvest parties and food distribution days for Seattle’s urban Native American elders.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Identify up to 50 elders to participate in monthly grocery bag distribution.	Work with existing families, and one-on-one outreach at Community Center A.	Oct.- Dec. 2024

2) A trusted coalition of BIPOC farmers working in Seattle seek funds to conduct a visioning process with their community. The project includes climate resiliency planning, soil health testing, and growing capacity for culturally relevant planting. The coalition aims to create a resource guide for local farmers to use in response to rapid climate change.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Convene up to 15 Seattle farmers to commit to monthly visioning sessions.	One-on-one outreach with existing partners including Farm A, Farm B, Farm C.	Oct. 2024 – Oct. 2025

3) A trusted community organization wants to develop a food & farming workforce training program for low-income youth. The organization works alongside youth leaders to create a 16-week training series. Youth are involved at multiple stages, from planning to implementation.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)

Develop food and farming curriculum for summer training program.	Engage up to 5 youth leaders in developing workshop goals, field trip ideas, and desired skill building.	Oct. 2024-Feb. 2025
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4) A mutual aid group seeks funds to build a new greenhouse, and to re-design and expand their existing food storage and distribution area to make it more accessible. The proposal involves engagement with the property owner, community members, and volunteers to co-design and build the new distribution area.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Design new food storage and distribution area.	Work with property owner and incorporate ongoing feedback from community members who use the food storage space.	Sept. 2024 – March 2025

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for basic eligibility requirements and reviewed by the Food Equity Fund staff.

Eligibility Checklist:

- Project activities occur within Seattle.
- Project is accessible and benefit people who live, learn, work and/or worship in Seattle.
- The applicant's annual budget is less than \$500,000
- Focus on contributing to an equitable and sustainable local food system.
- Be completed within 24 months of contracting.

Criteria for strong applications:

1. PEOPLE

- Is the group's history, mission, and vision aligned with proposal?
- Does the example accomplishment clearly align with the proposed work?
- Is the community they are a part of clearly defined?
- Are priority communities key decision makers and/or involved at most phases of the proposed work?
- Is the description clear, specific and actionable? Does it align with the stated workplan and budget? Is it consistent with the Food Equity Fund purpose?

2. ATTACHMENTS

- Is the budget complete and feasible?
- Are the milestones specific, realistic, and actionable?
- Is the timeline realistic?
- Do the majority or all team members working on the proposed work reflect the lived experiences of the priority communities they work with?

3. PROJECT

- The project aligns with the workplan and grant request budget.
- Food issues are specific and demonstrate a strong understanding of food inequities, needs, challenges, and/or priorities in their community.
- Solutions are culturally relevant and/or speak to community assets and traditions.

Virtual Interview:

- Does the applicant provide a clear description of the leadership structure and share how key decisions will be made during their proposed work?
- Does the applicant clearly demonstrate an understanding of their community's needs? Are the solutions culturally relevant?
- Is the success clearly tied to meaningful community benefits for those who experience the most food and health disparities?

NOTE: Funding recommendations made by the virtual interview panel will have final approval from the Food Equity Fund Program Supervisor.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF AWARDED?

If funded, organizations and/or fiscal sponsors will be required to:

- Attend an orientation.
- Work closely with their assigned Food Equity Fund project manager to finalize project/program outcomes.
- Have a current City of Seattle business license.
- Secure and provide evidence of Commercial General Liability insurance.
- If applicable, provide documentation upon request of Washington State Patrol background checks for all project volunteers and staff working with youth under 18 years of age.
- Ensure all design and capital projects on City of Seattle property follow Federal law to provide readily accessible facilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Capital projects are expected to pay prevailing wages.

The Food Equity Fund makes payment based on mutually agreed upon outcomes. In addition, it includes a steady monthly rate that is negotiated during the contracting process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) staff review my application?

Yes, Food Equity Fund project managers are available to provide feedback on your application and answer any questions.

2. How do I know how much funding is remaining in the Starter Fund?

At any time, feel free to reach out to us via email at foodequityfund@seattle.gov to see how much funding is available. We will update the website with CLOSED as soon as we run out of funding.

3. I'm waiting to hear back on a decision from the Food Equity Fund Grant that recently closed on March 19, 2024, can I apply for the Starter Fund?

Organizations can only have awards in one cycle (either Food Equity Fund Grant or Starter Fund), we encourage you to wait to hear back from the Food Equity Fund grant (decisions will be finalized by late June) before applying so not to risk your original application.

4. We've received a Food Equity Fund grant before, am I eligible to apply again?

Organizations cannot hold two simultaneous contracts within the program. If you have an existing contract, it must be completed by Oct. 1, 2024. If your contract ends after Oct. 1, 2024, you are ineligible to apply. If you've been awarded a Food Equity Fund grant in previous years but don't have an existing contract, you are eligible to apply. If you have any questions about this, please contact foodequityfund@seattle.gov.

5. Which fiscal year do you consider for the \$500k eligibility requirement?

Either your organization or group's annual budget for 2023 or 2024 must be below \$500,000.

6. My office is not in Seattle, but the community we work with is based in Seattle. Can we apply to the Food Equity Fund?

Yes. If your office is located outside of Seattle, you can apply if your project activities take place within Seattle city limits AND benefits people who live, learn, work, and/or worship in Seattle.

7. What is your disbursement of funds?

Food Equity Fund utilizes an outcome-based reimbursement process. The City makes payment based on mutually agreed upon outcomes. In addition, it includes a steady monthly rate that is negotiated during the contracting process. If awarded, this process will be covered in greater detail during an awardee orientation.

8. How do we know if we need property owner permission for our application?

Property owner permission is required with your application if a physical improvement is made to property not owned by your group or organization. More information can be found on page 6 of the enclosed Guidelines. We recommend talking directly to the property owner as soon as possible. It's important to demonstrate that the property owner is aware of the intent to build on their property if awarded.

9. What is Commercial General Liability (CGL) Insurance?

It is liability coverage for the length of the grant contract. The **"City of Seattle"** must be added as an additional insured party to the policy. Please work with your Food Equity Fund project manager to determine the appropriate insurance coverage. You may include the cost of insurance in your grant budget.

10. What is a City of Seattle business license?

Anyone doing business in Seattle must have a Seattle business license tax certificate, also known as a business license or general business license. This is in addition to the Department of Revenue business license. You do not have to have a City of Seattle Business License to apply for this grant; however, if selected, your

organization or your fiscal sponsor will be required to obtain one. For more information: [Business Licenses - City Finance | seattle.gov](#)

11. I have another grant with a different program at the Department of Neighborhoods, am I eligible to apply for the Food Equity Fund?

Organizations and community groups are allowed to hold multiple DON grants if they are for separate and unique projects.

12. Where else can I get funding for food-related projects in Seattle?

Here are a few other funding opportunities that support food or environmental justice related projects:

- [Human Services Department](#) Funding Notices
- [Equitable Development Initiative](#) - Office of Planning & Community Development
- [Environmental Justice Fund](#) - Office of Sustainability and Environment
- [KCD Seattle Community Partnership Grant](#) - King County Conservation District
- [Waste-Free Communities Matching Grant](#) - Seattle Public Utilities
- [Food Assistance Grants](#) - Washington State Department of Agriculture

If you have any questions, please email us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov or give us a call at (206) 727-3663.