

*Below are questions and answers from the 2025 Food Equity Fund Grant info sessions, this document will be updated after each session. Questions are anonymized and slightly edited for clarity. If you have any questions about the Food Equity Fund Grant, please send an email to* [*foodequityfund@seattle.gov*](mailto:foodequityfund@seattle.gov) *or call us at (206) 727-FOOD (3663).*

Last updated: 3/6/2025

**We are a community college, are we eligible if we have a separate foundation with a 501c3 status?**

Unfortunately, no, community colleges are considered major institutions and are not eligible. Other major institutions such as school districts, universities, or hospitals are also ineligible.

**Can we include an estimated 2025 organizational budget?**

Yes, you may include an estimate for your 2025 budget for Question #9 in the [Application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx) cover sheet.

**If we’d like to repair an existing garden bed that we already have property owner permission to have, do we need to include a new property owner permission?**

This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, please reach out to us at [foodequityfund@seattle.gov](mailto:foodequityfund@seattle.gov) for an assigned project manager. In general though, if the repair doesn’t make changes to the existing structure that you already have property owner permission for, a new letter is not needed. We just need to have the existing letter on file. However, if your repair changes the footprint of the structure, expands or alters the structure in any way, then a new property owner permission letter will be required. Again, please reach out to us to discuss in additional detail.

**Can we include a physical improvement, like repairing a leak in the food pantry, in the proposal?**

Physical improvements are eligible however please ensure that the physical improvement you are requesting is directly linked to the food issue you are addressing. For example, if the leak in the pantry prevents you from operating at full capacity to serve your community, describe that in your [narrative.](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx) You can use narrative questions #4 and/or #5 to address this in detail.

**What is the intent behind project durations are eligible for up to 24 months?**

We recognized that some projects take longer than a year, so this gives the flexible for organizations to complete their project within 24 months.

**If we want to incorporate art in the proposal, is that eligible?**

Yes, but please ensure the art is connected to building community and food storytelling. An example may include an organization hires an artist to work with youth leaders in a program to highlight their favorite culturally relevant foods. The organization is building community by organizing youth to decide what types of food they want to feature *and* it’s also telling the food stories of the youth engaged.

**If I wanted to collaborate with an external arts program like Urban Artworks, is that eligible?**

Yes, but similar to the previous question, please show in the narrative how the art is building community and focused on food storytelling.

**The scoring rubric mentions racial justice. In this federal climate, do we have to be careful about how we talk about that.**

No.

**The application requires that we answer all narrative questions in 6 pages or less. Does the 6-page limit include the questions themselves?**

No, just the answers to all 7 narrative questions cannot be more than 6 pages. The 6-page limit does not include the actual narrative questions. Please leave the questions in the order of the [application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx) and use 12 point Calibri font.

**If we are a current grantee, can we apply for a different project?**

Organizations cannot hold two simultaneous contracts within the program. If you have an active contract, it must be completed by Oct. 1, 2025. If your contract ends after Oct. 1, 2025, you are ineligible to apply in this year’s cycle. If you have any questions about this, please contact <foodequityfund@seattle.gov>.

**If funded, when can projects begin?**

The earliest a project can begin is Sept. 1, 2025, and must end no later than Sept. 30, 2027.

**If our food program is located in the City of Seattle, do we need to specify how many of our participants live in the city?**

Project activities must occur within Seattle. You don’t need to report how many are residents of the City of Seattle. However, part of your [application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx), is to clearly define with specific details on either neighborhoods and/or demographics the community you are a part of or serving. Please review the [scoring rubric](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-ScoringRubric.docx) for further detail.

**Are raised beds considered a physical improvement?**

Yes, raised beds are considered a physical improvement. If you don’t own the property you are proposing to build garden beds, you will need to include a property owner permission letter with your application materials. Feel free to reach out to [foodequityfund@seattle.gov](mailto:foodequityfund@seattle.gov) for a template.

**Will there be additional spots made available for Fresh Bucks for the Food Equity Fund program?**

No, the [Fresh Bucks](https://www.seattlefreshbucks.org/) program is managed by a different department, the Office of Sustainability and Environment. The Food Equity Fund has no influence on or set aside Fresh Bucks vouchers. However, please note that the Food Equity Fund can’t fund gift cards or food vouchers, please see page 5 of the [Guidelines](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Guidelines.docx) for a list of ineligible expenses.

**If a partner organization is a current recipient of the Food Equity Fund for another program, can we apply for a different project that we collaborate with them on?**

It depends, I encourage you to reach out to a project manager by emailing us at [foodequityfund@seattle.gov](mailto:foodequityfund@seattle.gov) to discuss in further detail. Generally speaking, we are not able to double fund activities.

**Can you use another grant to help fund a portion of the Food Equity Fund project?**

Yes, we don’t expect the FEF to fully fund your project. If you’ve already secured funding for a key part of your project, you may want to include that information in the budget narrative of the [grant request template.](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF_Budget_Template.xlsx)

Budgets are scored based on the following criteria: is the budget detailed and feasible? Are the budget descriptions specific and explain the allocation in detail? Is the budget request strongly aligns with the stated workplan and narrative? If sharing other sources of income helps answer these questions, feel free to include it in the budget narrative but it’s not required.

**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. Outcomes are based on the submitted application. In addition, payment 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.

**Are we allowed to contract with restaurants or small businesses?**

Yes. However, restaurants and small business are not allowed to be the submitting applicant. At this time, we’re not able to contract with for-profit entities for the Food Equity Fund. Eligible applicants include: organizations that have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, community groups that have a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status or Tribes and tribal organizations.

**How many community leaders should we include in the leadership bios template? Is there an age requirement? Will we be able to get more leaders involved once the project starts?**

We don’t have a minimum requirement for how many community leaders need to be included or a minimum age. Anyone who is part of the decision- making process or implementing the project regardless of if they are included in the grant budget, should be included in the leadership bio section of your [application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx).

Yes, you can add more leaders later in the project implementation process.

**Our organization has multiple sites in Seattle, but our main office has moved outside of the City of Seattle, can we still apply?**

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.

**Does Food Equity Fund overhead costs?**

We can only fund overhead costs (ie. rent, insurance, etc) related to the proposed FEF project.

**Will there be a new FEF round of funding available in 2026?**

It is not a guarantee that we will have funding in 2026. This funding is legislated each year by the City’s budget process. However, we do not have a reason to believe that we would not have funding in 2026.

**If we write an application for a 1-year project that concludes in 2026, would we be eligible to apply for a 2026 funding round?**

It would depend on when you project concludes. Organizations cannot have two simultaneous contracts with us. Your prior contract must be complete before you contract for another project, if awarded.

**Will the review committee give either the full funding request, no funding, or perhaps award partial funding of our proposed project? If partial funding is awarded, is it possible to revise the project scope to align with the amount awarded?**

We typically receive four times the number of requests than what the FEF has budget to fund. The community review panel may make a partial funding recommendation. If you receive partial funding, you will have the opportunity to revise your project scope accordingly.

**Does our IRS determination letter, serve as proof of 501c3?**

Yes, if you have your original IRS determination letter, you can use that.

**If our program is not BIPOC-led but serves the BIPOC community, are we eligible for funding?**

Food Equity Fund invests in community food work led by BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and/or elders. Part of the [application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx), is answering how the community you serve are key decision makers and/or deeply involved at all phases of the proposed work.

**Is the application one document – with a cover page, narrative questions, workplan and leadership biographies? Can we put the application on our letterhead and submit it as four separate items?**

Our application is on the website and includes a cover page, narrative questions, workplan and leadership bios as one template. We highly recommend you use our provided template and submit the application as one document alongside the [budget request spreadsheet](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF_Budget_Template.xlsx). Please don’t include your own letterhead.

**We already operate a food pantry on a Seattle school district site supported by the FEF. Can we include the purchase of a fridge to store food, and if so, do we need to indicate support from the school district that they support this and what documentation do we provide?**

Yes, you can include the purchase of a refrigerator. If you are making physical improvement like building out a walk-in fridge, you would need permission from the school district. If you are purchasing just “plug-in” equipment/refrigerator, you would not need property owner permission but should check-in with the school to check that the increase in electricity will be permitted. If you’d like to go in detail, please reach out to a project manager at [foodequityfund@seattle.gov](mailto:foodequityfund@seattle.gov) or call (260)727-FOOD (3663).

**Do you have a definition for seniors or youth?**

We do not have specific definitions within each of these communities. We leave these up to you to define for your group. In the [application](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/FEF-Application.docx), applicants are expected to clearly define the community they are part of with specific details on neighborhoods and/or demographics.

**What is the difference between the Food Equity Fund and the** [**Starter Fund**](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/Food%20Equity%20Fund/2024%20FEE%20Starter%20Fund%20Guidelines.pdf) **(opens April 1 2025)?**

We run two grant programs: The current open cycle, Food Equity Fund (FEF) – awards are up to $100,000 and decisions are made with the help of a community review panel. For the Starter Fund, which opens April 1st 2025, applications are accepted on a rolling basis and grant sizes are up to $25,000. The Starter Fund is also only limited to organizations with less than $500k in their operating budget.

Organizations can only receive one of these grants. Smaller community based organizations have the option to either apply to the Food Equity Fund, or wait for the Starter Fund to open. If you decide to apply to the Food Equity Fund, we ask that you wait for a decision before applying to the Starter Fund.

**Would it be helpful to include letters of support from partner orgs in our application?**

No, this would not be helpful. We do not forward separate letters of support or extra non-requested documentation with your application, to our community reviewers so this would not be reviewed. We do encourage you to include information about your partners in the relevant sections of your application.

**Does the CEO count as a "member of the project team"?**

If the CEO has a decision-making role in the program, they should be included. If they are not key staff for the specific project you are applying for, they should not be included.

**We feel like our project is simple, so we don’t know if we have enough milestones for our workplan. Is our project still competitive?**

Projects do not need to be “complex”, but we do recommend that you include project planning, outreach, execution, and evaluation steps in your project. You may want to include steps around how you are working with priority communities you serve to inform or provide feedback as well as direct project activities. We encourage you to reach out to a project manager, as they may be able to guide you how you break out milestones for your workplan.

**I’m part of a church that provides meals to community. Can we apply for funding?**

Applicants must be non-profit 501c(3) organizations or apply with a fiscal sponsor who is 501(c)(3). FEF funded activities can not include religious meetings or proselytizing as part of the event or project.