
New Hampshire

*Department of Agriculture,
Markets, and Food*



Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

Equipment-Only Grants Application Manual

1. Grant Summary

1.1 Overview

The purpose of New Hampshire's Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) is to build resilience in the middle-of-the-supply-chain in the Granite State and strengthen our local and regional food systems through the creation of new revenue streams in the areas of aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of local agricultural products.

The Equipment-Only Grants intend to benefit NH farms and food businesses with the goal of expanding capacity for processing, aggregation, and distribution of agricultural products to create more and better markets for producers; filling gaps in cold storage, transportation, and distribution for farms, food processors, and food hubs; increase access to cooperative commercial kitchens and/or other value-added product producing facilities; and increase processing for new products; increase branding and food safety through packing and labelling.

Equipment-Only Projects must be completed by May 24, 2027.

1.2 Funding availability

RFSI Equipment-Only Grants will award up to \$1,000,000 through a competitive review process. The maximum individual grant award will be \$100,000 and the minimum will be \$10,000. There will be one round of funding for Infrastructure Grants.

1.3 How to apply

All applications must be electronically submitted to Joshua.k.marshall@agr.nh.gov by **4:00 pm on February 7, 2025** using the application template provided [here](#). *(Please note: if you are having trouble opening this link, try saving it to your desktop, then right click and 'open with' a pdf viewer. You can also find all relevant links on the grant programs landing page.)*

Applicants must also attach documentation to substantiate the costs of each piece of equipment, which can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes.

Evidence of Critical Infrastructure is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed Equipment-Only project. Applicants must submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a

project are in place. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission. Applicants are encouraged to use the template provided [here](#).

Additionally, four (4) printed copies of the application must be received in our office no later than 4:00 pm on February 10, 2024.

Mail to:

RFSI

NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food

PO Box 2042

Concord, NH 03302-2042

Or deliver to:

NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food

1 Granite Place, Suite 211

Concord, NH 03301

For inquiries regarding the RFSI Equipment-Only Grants, please contact Josh Marshall at Joshua.k.marshall@agr.nh.gov or by calling 603-271-3551.

2. Grant Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, applicants and projects must meet the following minimum requirements:

2.1 Eligible Grant Projects

RFSI is intended to serve middle-of-the-supply-chain needs to add value and provide more, new, and better markets for locally or regionally produced food. This program is to support food system crops and products meant for human consumption (excluding meat and poultry products, which are funded through other USDA programs). Equipment Only Grants will fund projects that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted agricultural products.

Equipment-only projects are fixed-price grants, meaning funding is only available for equipment purchases (and not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs), and the amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment up to \$100,000.

2.2 Eligible Entities

Entities eligible for RFSI Grants are:

- Agricultural producers or processors, or groups of agricultural producers and processors.
- Nonprofit organizations operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products.
- For-profit entities operating middle of the supply chain activities such as processing, aggregation, or distribution of targeted agricultural products, whose activities are primarily focused for the benefit of local and regional producers, and that meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards. *

- Local government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products.
- Tribal governments operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products.
- Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product.

* For-profit entities must meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards matched to industries described in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). For more information on these size standards, please visit SBA’s Size Standards website. For a quick check on whether your business qualifies, please use the Size Standards Tool. All applicant businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and applicants’ facilities must be physically located in New Hampshire. Applicants doing business along the state’s border or have locations in multiple states should only apply in one state to avoid duplication of federal funds. The USDA defines the middle of the food supply chain as activities that take place after the production of the agricultural product but before the product is sold to consumers. These activities include the processing, aggregation, and distribution of agricultural products between leaving the field and entering the marketplace. Therefore, grant funds cannot be used for cultivation, harvest, or retail marketing of eligible food products.

3. Application Review Process

3.1 Review Process

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a diverse selection committee which may include DAMF staff. Recipients will be chosen on the merits of the project as put forth in the application. Selection will be determined as funding allows, based on how well the application meets the following:

Applications will be scored using a prepared score sheet that assigns points to various categories as follows, with a maximum score of 100 points:

<u>Score sheet</u>	<u>Max points</u>
1. Project Purpose	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the applicant define the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address? • Will the project provide a direct benefit to more than one NH food producer by creating a new revenue stream for multiple producers or increasing the capacity of existing revenue streams for multiple producers? • Does the applicant have letters of support from other NH food producers/businesses? 	
2. Objectives	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project address one or more of the priorities identified through DAMF outreach: 	

- Gaps in cold storage, transportation and distribution for aggregators like farms, food processors, and food hubs.
- Cooperative commercial kitchens and/or other value-added product producing facilities.
- Light processing, culinary grain processing, and/or organic dairy processing.
- Packaging and labeling equipment.
- Food waste composting.

3. Project Beneficiaries

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- Does the project benefit one or more of the following:
 - Underserved farmers and ranchers;
 - New and beginning farmers or ranchers;
 - Veteran producers;
 - Small business in underserved community;
 - Small and medium-sized enterprises that add options for consumer and producers;
 - Cooperatives, farmer-, and worker-owned enterprises;
 - Opportunity for family-supporting job quality and treatment/safety of workers;
 - Job creation;
 - Community impact.

4. Expected Performance Measures

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- Did the applicant provide one of the predetermined indicators listed under the identified Outcome 2 or Outcome 3?
- Did the applicant provide the quantifiable results for the indicator selected?

5. Budget Narrative

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- Is the budget reasonable and consistent with the project’s purpose, outcome, and indicator?
- Has the applicant provided all necessary documentation to substantiate the costs of each piece of equipment (which can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes)?
- If necessary, has the applicant provided Evidence of Critical Infrastructure?

Awards will be made within the constraint of available funds; consequently, awards may not be made to all qualifying proposals. In addition, DAMF reserves the right to make partial awards and/or award grants to lower-ranked proposal(s) if there are insufficient funds remaining to award the amount requested in a higher-ranked proposal. Top ranking applications may be required to come before the review committee to give a presentation on their proposal to assist in making their final decision on funding recommendations.

The Commissioner of DAMF will review the committee recommendations and be responsible for final approval before approved applications are submitted to USDA. All awards must complete and submit grant agreements to DAMF for the Governor and Executive Council for approval before beginning.

3.2 Rights of the Agency in Accepting and Evaluating Proposals

DAMF reserves the right to:

- Make independent investigation in evaluating proposals;
- Request additional information to clarify elements of a proposal;
- Waive minor or immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements, if determined to be in the best interest of the State;
- Omit any planned evaluation step if, in the agency's view, the step is not needed; and
- At its sole discretion, reject any and all proposals at any time

5. Disbursement of Funds

Award recipients will be required to sign an official State of New Hampshire agreement with DAMF indicating their commitment and responsibilities toward completing their RFSI project in a manner consistent with State of New Hampshire policies and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Recipient businesses must be registered as a vendor with the NH Secretary of State before final approval can take place. DAMF is authorized to view all project details and documentation to certify the project as complete. Disbursement will issue after awardee submission of invoices and supporting documentation for all equipment purchases as approved by DAMF.

6. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit semi-annual reports for the duration of the project and a final report upon completion of the project. DAMF or its designee(s) reserves the right to perform site monitoring visits to any and all awardees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame and that fiscal procedures are being followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information as well as site visits.

7. Other Requirements

7.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

All activities funded under this RFA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related applicable agency regulations and instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), other laws and regulations as outlined therein, and any applicable state, local, or tribal laws. A review for NEPA compliance is required prior to the award of grant funds. If selected for an award, applicants must provide all requested information to support compliance with NEPA, NHPA, ESA, and all other federal environmental laws and regulations.

7.2 UEI-SAM.gov

All recipients of RFSI funds must have a Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI) in SAM.Gov. There is NO cost to register in SAM.gov.

8. Terms and Conditions

8.1 Amendment or cancellation of RFP

This RFP does not constitute an offer. DAMF reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time.

8.2 Public disclosure

By submitting a proposal, the proposer acknowledges that DAMF is subject to the Right-to-Know Law, RSA Chapter 91-A. Accordingly, information submitted as part of a proposal may be subject to public disclosure unless otherwise exempt. Information relating to grant applications or proposals shall remain confidential until the grant agreement is approved by the Governor and Executive Council, or, if the grant contract does not require approval from the Governor and Executive Council, until the effective date of the grant agreement. RSA 91-A; RSA 21- G:37, VII.

Business financial information, confidential information, such as personally identifiable information, proprietary information such as trade secrets, financial models and forecasts, and proprietary formulas, are categories of information that may be exempt from public disclosure. RSA 91-A:5, IV. If any part of its proposal contains information that a proposer asserts is exempt from public disclosure, the proposer must specifically identify all relevant text as confidential.

8.3 Grant terms and award

Any grant awarded as a result of this RFP process is contingent upon approval of the agreement by Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire upon continued appropriation of funding. Subsequent amendments to the grant agreement are subject to approval by DAMF and the Governor and Executive Council.