



2024 Seed Awards

Request for Proposals (RFP) from Michigan Farm and Aggregator/Distributor Businesses Seeking Capital

Michigan Good Food Fund is a partnership of lenders and technical assistance providers that support food and farm entrepreneurs across the state, offering flexible financing and tailored business assistance. We meet entrepreneurs where they are, connect them with what they need, and build long-term relationships to help their businesses thrive.

Michigan Good Food Fund is governed by a Stakeholder Board of entrepreneurs, lenders, and technical assistance providers. Together, this Board identified a set of priorities to guide investments, including this RFP. Together, we aim to support food and farm businesses whose success will grow economic development, healthy food access, racial equity, and/or resilient climate practices in Michigan and we prioritize owners who identify as BIPOC and/or female.

BUSINESSES REQUESTED

Michigan Good Food Fund is seeking Michigan-based farm and aggregator/distributor businesses that can benefit from seed (grant) funding to grow their business and/or help prepare for financing. With this RFP, Michigan Good Food Fund invites Michigan-based business owners to apply for a seed grant to take their business to the next level. Michigan Good Food Fund anticipates providing 10-15 seed grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Details of the application process are outlined below.

What type of businesses fall under the category of farm?

Food businesses that fall under the farm category are those directly involved in the production of food, either through growing crops, raising livestock, or other forms of agricultural production. Here are some examples of food businesses in this category:

1. **Crop Farms:** Businesses that grow fruits, vegetables, grains, and other agricultural products for sale. Examples include organic vegetable farms, grain farms, and orchards.
2. **Livestock Farms:** These farms raise animals for meat, dairy, or other animal-based products. Examples include cattle ranches, poultry farms, pig farms, and dairy farms.
3. **Aquaculture Operations:** Businesses that raise fish, shellfish, or other aquatic organisms in controlled environments. This includes fish farms and shellfish aquaculture.

4. **Specialty Farms:** Farms that focus on niche products such as herbs, spices, mushrooms, or other specialty crops.
5. **Greenhouse Operations:** Farms that use controlled environments to grow plants year-round. These may include vegetables, flowers, or herb production.
6. **Permaculture or Regenerative Farms:** Farms focused on sustainable and ecological farming practices that work in harmony with natural systems. They often integrate crops, animals, and ecosystem management into their operations.
7. **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms:** These farms sell subscriptions to consumers who receive regular shares of the farm's produce throughout the growing season.
8. **Urban Farms:** Small-scale, often sustainable farms located in urban settings, which might include rooftop farms, vertical farms, or community gardens focused on local food production.

What type of businesses fall under the category of aggregator/distributor?

Food businesses that fall under the Aggregator/Distributor category include those that primarily focus on collecting, consolidating, storing, and distributing food products from multiple producers to buyers. Here are examples of the types of businesses in this category:

1. **Food Hubs:** These businesses aggregate products from local farmers and producers, then distribute them to wholesale, retail, and institutional buyers. They often focus on supporting small and mid-sized producers.
2. **Wholesale Distributors:** Companies that purchase large food products from producers or manufacturers and distribute them to retailers, restaurants, or institutions (e.g., grocery stores, schools, hospitals).
3. **Farmer Cooperatives:** These are producer-owned businesses that aggregate the products of their members and distribute them to larger markets or directly to consumers. Examples include dairy cooperatives or produce cooperatives.
4. **Produce Brokers:** They act as intermediaries between food producers and buyers, facilitating sales and sometimes logistics without taking physical possession of the goods.
5. **Logistics and Transportation Companies:** Businesses that specialize in the transport and cold chain management of food products, ensuring that products are moved efficiently from farms to markets.
6. **Distribution Centers:** Facilities that serve as points of consolidation for food products before they are shipped to retail stores, restaurants, or other end users.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for funding, businesses should apply by November 15, 2024, 5:00 p.m. EST by clicking on the link below. Businesses will be asked to describe the following in their response:

1. Please provide a brief description of your business: name and location of business, community(ies) served, and product(s) and/or service(s) provided.
2. The specific amount you request is essential. Please indicate the amount you seek, up to a maximum of \$20,000. This will help us understand your financial needs and how we can best support your business.
3. Provide the business owner's name (s); if the owner(s) identify as BIPOC and/or women, please explain.
4. Briefly (1-2 paragraphs) describe the status of your business, for example – customer base, revenue, storefront, start-up or established operations, etc.
5. Please describe how you will use the requested funds. Be as specific as possible regarding how these funds will help you grow your business, prepare for additional financing, and/or meet your business goals, and positively impact the Michigan food system and your community.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

To apply, please [click here](#). Applications must be received by November 15, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EST.

A committee of Michigan Good Food Fund Stakeholder Board members will review the proposals and decide which will receive funding based on the proposed use of funds and mission alignment. Applicants can expect to hear whether their proposal has been selected for funding by December 31, 2024. Please direct any questions or requests for information about the 2024 Seed Awards to info@migoodfoodfund.org.