

Micro-Grants for Food Security Program Alaska 2021

Fiscal year 2021 Scoping Pre-Application Process Guide



Alaska’s Micro-Grants for Food Security funds will be awarded through a competitive review process. Grants will be awarded to projects which are ranked highest in meeting the purpose of increasing the quantity and quality of locally grown food in Alaska’s most food-insecure communities.

Table of Contents

TIMELINE	2
CONTACT	2
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	3
ELIGIBILITY	4
PRIORITY CONSIDERATION	6
COST SHARING AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS	6
ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS	7
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS	7
SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS	8
SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS	9
SCORING CRITERIA FOR SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION	9

TIMELINE

January 21, 2021: Release Micro-Grant for Food Security Scoping Pre-application and instructions
February 15, 2021: Scoping Pre-applications due
February 17-22, 2021: Applications reviewed by committee
February 23-24, 2021: Committee meets to select applications for full applications
March 1, 2021: Announcement made to applicants selected for full applications
March 2, 2021: Informational Webinar 10:00am-11:00am for full applicants
March 3, 2021: Informational Webinar 6:00pm-7:00pm for full applicants **Webinar access information will be provided on the State of Alaska, Division of Agriculture website: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants.htm
March 24, 2021: Full project proposals due
March 26-31, 2021: Full applications reviewed by committee
April 1-2, 2021: Committee meets to select final awardees
April 5, 2021: Awards forwarded to AMS for final approval
Tbd: Announcement of final awards
Tbd: Grant Award Contracts finalized.

CONTACT

Catherine Cheadle

Grants Administrator II

(907) 761-3851

catherine.cheadle@alaska.gov

1801 S Margaret Dr, Suite 12

Palmer, AK 99645

Fax: (907) 745-7112

Grant Award Scoping Applications and Full Applications are to be submitted to dnr.ag.grants@alaska.gov or by mail at Division of Agriculture, Attn: Grants Coordinator, 1801 S. Margaret Drive, Palmer, Alaska 99645

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In cooperation with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture (hereafter referred to as “the Division”) will distribute grant funds over the next 3 years, to improve access and secure adequate food availability for Alaska.

The priority of these micro-grants is to improve available and affordable food to Alaskans, with a priority to those furthest from reliable food sources and those areas that have challenges accessing food products. These grants will be available for a one-, two-, or three-year term with limitations on each year’s payout. The maximum amount for each micro-grant awarded is \$15,000 per individual (\$5,000 per year limit) and \$30,000 per qualifying organization (\$10,000 per year limit). A ten (10) percent cost match will be required for each grant. However, there will be a match waiver request process for projects of individual applicants. Each match waiver will be considered but may not be granted.

Currently the Division has approximately \$1,800,000 available to award to eligible applicants and project activities. The Division will award multiple grant projects, subject to available funding. Qualifying activities may include, but are not limited to, small-scale gardening, small-scale herding and livestock operations, and other activities which expand access to food (including subsistence) and knowledge of food security. Grant funds can be combined with multiple individuals or qualifying organizations if a coordinated proposal is submitted. Projects that demonstrate innovative partnerships are encouraged.

Applications that build on a previously funded Specialty Crop Block Grant project may be submitted; in such cases, the application should clearly indicate how the project complements previous work. However, Food Security Grants may not be combined with current Specialty Crop Block Grants for the same project.

Applications for micro-grant funds must show how the project impacts and alleviates food insecurity in Alaska. Micro-grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The competition will follow the Division’s policies and procedures.

For this grant program, a two-step selection process will be used:

First Step

1. Scoping Pre-application that identifies the applicant(s), impacted individuals or community, project, budget.
2. Fillable PDF form available through State of Alaska Division of Agriculture website.
3. Review and selection of projects eligible to submit full applications.

Second Step

1. The full application is more detailed application that requires more information as well as formal documentation for agreements for combined projects.
2. Review and selection of final awards.
3. Submission to the USDA for approval for selected projects.
4. Grant Award and Administration

Both scoping pre-applications and full applications for micro-grants will be reviewed by an independent panel of experts and qualified individuals. The Division will use guidelines and procedures to prevent a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest as required.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must be physically located in Alaska and must apply directly to the Division of Agriculture.

Eligible entities are defined as:

1. Individuals
2. Indian tribes or tribal organizations
3. Nonprofit organizations that are engaged in increasing food security, including:
 - A. Religious organizations
 - B. Food banks
 - C. Food pantries
4. Federally funded educational facilities, including:
 - A. Head Start programs or an Early Head Start program
 - B. Public elementary schools or public secondary schools
 - C. Public institutions of higher education
 - D. Tribal Colleges or Universities
 - E. Job training programs
5. Local or Tribal governments that may not levy local taxes under State or Federal law.

Eligible applicants must engage in activities that will increase the quantity and quality of locally grown food (including subsistence) for food insecure individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities. Activities may include:

1. Small-Scale Gardening

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to purchase gardening tools or equipment, soil, soil amendments, seeds, plants, canning equipment, refrigeration, or other items necessary to grow and store food.
- B. Use funds for the purchase or assembly of composting units and towers designed to grow leafy greens. Includes activities associated with extending the growing season, as well as starting or expanding hydroponic and aeroponic farming.
- C. Use funds to expand an area under cultivation or engage in other activities necessary to be eligible to apply for funding under the USDA's Natural Resources and Conservation Service's [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) for a high tunnel.

2. Small-Scale Herding and Livestock Operations

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to purchase animals as well as buy, erect, or repair fencing for livestock, poultry, or reindeer.
- B. Fund activities or supplies associated with setting up or equipping a slaughter and processing facility, including purchasing mobile slaughterhouses.

3. Expanding Access to Food and Knowledge of Food Security

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to create or expand avenues for the sale of food commodities, specialty crops, and meats that are grown by the eligible entity for sale in the local community, or increase the availability of fresh, locally grown, and nutritious food. This includes paying for shipping of purchased items related to growing or raising food for local consumption or purchase.
- B. Use funds to travel to participate in agricultural education provided by a state cooperative extension service, land-grant college or university, tribal college, or university, or an Alaska Native-serving institution, or federal or state agency.

PRIORITY CONSIDERATION

Micro-grant awards to eligible applicants will be given priority if they:

1. have not previously received a subaward under this program.
2. Further, prioritizing criteria to be considered will be:
 - A. eligibility of the proposal per the farm bill legislation,
 - B. the ability of the proposed activity to increase the production and/or storage capacity in the local community,
 - C. the level of food insecurity in the applicant's region, and;
 - D. other relevant information as to capacity and purpose of the applicant(s).
3. Aggregated proposals with multiple individuals or qualifying organizations with a coordinated proposal addressing the priorities listed above.

COST SHARING AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Eligible applicants are required to provide funds equal to **10 percent** of the amount received under the micro-grant award. In-kind contributions, while encouraged, do not count toward the fulfillment of the matching funds requirement. Program income, as defined in [Federal regulations](#), or any other Federal funds cannot be used as a match or cost share. Individual applicants may apply for a waiver of the 10% match requirement.

Waiver of the match fund requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis for **individual** applicants based on the following criteria:

1. Individuals with limited transportation options, access to food hubs, limited local ability to grow food, limited safe storage capacity to protect their food supply.
2. Individuals participating in projects that have impact to help communities with limited ability to access established food hubs, limited current resources to grow foods locally or store foods locally.
3. Individuals that are participating in projects to establish new food hubs that improve access to communities that currently do not have local ability to grow or purchase foods in their communities.
4. The project's alignment with the program's purpose, activities, and desired impacts.
5. External reviewer feedback resulting from the competitive process.

All matching contributions must be committed, or individual waiver requested, when the full proposal is submitted to the Division.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in increasing food security.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Distribution of awarded funds will occur after grant contracts are awarded and processed through the State Financial offices. This process will be determined by project; and will be direct payment to vendor or reimbursement of costs, unless otherwise authorized by the Director.

SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The application is a fillable PDF document that can be completed and submitted online, or printed and mailed to the division:

The Scoping Pre-Application Form can be downloaded here:

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Grants/Pre-Application Scoping Form – fillable.pdf](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Grants/Pre-Application%20Scoping%20Form%20-%20fillable.pdf)

Applicants must complete all fields, including but not limited to, their Name, Business or Organization, Mailing Address, Phone Number, and Email Address (if applicable). Applicants must provide a brief description of their proposed grant project with a limit of 250 words as well as a proposed budget. Applicants must be in good standing with the State of Alaska.

If you are applying as an individual and will be requesting a waiver of matching funds, this should be noted in your pre-application.

It is strongly encouraged that applicants read through the entire scoping pre-application instructions. The document and instructions are provided to aid applicants in designing projects that address the objectives and priorities of the Micro-Grants for Food Security. **Projects will be reviewed and ranked based on the information provided in the scoping pre-application.**

Scoping Pre-application Forms must be submitted or postmarked (and received within 3 days) no later than **Monday, February 15th, 2021** to the Division of Agriculture at dnr.ag.grants@alaska.gov or by mail at Division of Agriculture, 1801 S. Margaret Drive, Palmer, Alaska 99645. For questions, please contact Catherine Cheadle at catherine.cheadle@alaska.gov; 907-761-3851.

When the Scoping Pre-Application form has been received, an email or card will be sent to the identified project contact email or address on the scoping pre-application form by the Division of Agriculture grant team.

How the Scoping applications will be processed and reviewed:

SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

The Division's Micro-Grant review committee will use the scoring criteria, as described below, to evaluate how well the scoping pre-application addresses the micro-grant criteria, and applications will be ranked based on the information provided in the application. Applicants are encouraged to review these scoring criteria and address them in the scoping pre-application.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR SCOPING PRE-APPLICATION

Micro Grant Objectives: 50 points

1. The proposed project demonstrates that it will:
 - A. increase access to the quantity and quality of locally grown food for food insecure individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities through small-scale gardening, herding, livestock operations, and/or ability to safely store food.
 - B. occur in or assist areas of Alaska that have significant levels of food insecurity and import a significant quantity of food and/or in an area of the state where access to safe storage of food, central provisions and food hubs are limited.

Alaska Food Security Need/Project Impact: 25 points

1. The proposed project responds to the need to increase food security in the applicant's community or region and demonstrates the ability to impact that need.
2. The project provides a method to measure success.

Examples: the number of individuals or families that benefit from the project, amount of increased food in the community, amount of new storage, amount of new acreage in production, or number of individuals completing a safety food handling course.

Priority Consideration: 25 points

1. have not previously received a subaward under this program.
2. Further, prioritizing criteria to be considered will be:
 - A. eligibility of the proposal per the farm bill legislation
 - B. the ability of the proposed activity to increase the production and/or storage capacity in the local community.
 - C. the level of food insecurity in the applicant's region
 - D. other relevant information as to capacity and purpose of the applicant(s)
3. Aggregated proposals with multiple individuals or qualifying organizations with a coordinated proposal addressing the priorities listed above are encouraged.

All completed scoping pre-applications will be scored; and the applications who have the highest scores (and fall within funding limits) will be invited to submit a full application for the micro-grant program.

The Division of Agriculture will notify those applicants eligible to submit a full application on or before February 24, 2021.