

Micro-Grants for Food Security Program Alaska 2024

FY2022 Application Process Guide



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

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TIMELINE

February 14, 2024: Release Micro Grant for Food Security Request for Applications (RFA)
March 15, 2024: Micro Grant applications due by 5pm
March 18, 2024 – June 14 th , 2024: Applications reviewed and scored by review committee
June 17 – 19 th , 2024: Division meets to select applications for funding based on review committee scoring
June 24, 2024 – July 12, 2024: Selected applications sent to USDA for review and final approval
July 15, 2024: Announcement made to applicants selected for full applications
July 15, 2024 – August 30, 2024: Division grants team works with approved applicants to contract

CONTACT

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All applications are to be submitted electronically via the Division’s application system, [SmartSimple](#). Please ensure you have appropriate updated electronic devices (such as a tablet, iPad, laptop, or computer. Cellphones do not always provide the appropriate Microsoft office products like Word, PDF, etc.) to submit the applications and oversight of the project you are applying for. (I.E. Final Report submittal, Picture upload, Reimbursement Requests.)

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 year, 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-year term. The maximum amount for each Micro-Grant awarded is \$5,000 per individual and \$10,000 per qualifying organization. A ten (10) percent cost match will be required for each organization approved grant. The maximum award amount for individuals will vary depending on the project type selected.

Currently the Division has approximately \$2.6 Million available to award to eligible applicants for 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, greenhouse/hoop house, small- scale fencing and livestock operations, and other activities which expand access to food such as subsistence.

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.

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.

PROJECTS

Applicants will be able to select one of the following project types:

1. **Small- Scale Gardening:** Purchasing gardening tools or equipment, soil, soil amendments, seeds, plants, animals, canning equipment, refrigeration, and other necessary items to grow and store food.

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.

2. **Greenhouse:** Engaging in an activity that extends the growing season.

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to purchase lumber and all needed supplies and/or items to construct a greenhouse. (I.E. nails, screws, hammers, concrete, plastic sheeting, metal stakes, fasteners, wheelbarrows, and tie downs, etc.)
- B. Use funds to purchase a greenhouse kit to put up to extend the growing season.

3. **Small Scale Herding and Livestock Operations:** Building, buying, erecting, or repairing fencing for livestock.

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to purchase animals as well as buy, erect, or repair fencing.
- B. Use funds to build production animal housing/ shelter such as chicken coops or purchase a prefabricated coop. Apiaries for bee keeping are also included.

4. **Subsistence:** Engaging in other activities relating to increasing food security, as determined by the secretary. In Alaska this includes fishing, hunting, and harvesting wild plants.

An eligible applicant may:

- A. Use funds to purchase fishing-dip net, fishing poles, tackle, bait, oil, rods/reels, line, canning processors, vacuum sealers and packaging, smokers, jars/lids, canning supplies, bows and arrows, knives, backpacks, coolers, waders, camouflage

outerwear, dehydrator and freezer to name a few. Shipping is calculated into the request based on the census area of Alaska.

- B. NOTE: EXCLUDES ammo, shells, guns/firearms, and anything concerning, pertaining to, associated with, or related to guns/firearms (scopes, reloading equipment, powder, gun accessories, etc.). The grant WILL NOT cover guns/firearms, or anything relating to, concerning, pertaining to, or associated with guns. The purchase of food, including salt, is also ineligible.**

All purchases made with Micro Grant funds are required to follow the Federal Cost Principles of [Subpart E- Cost Principles of 2 CFR 200](#) and the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#). **Purchases made with Micro Grant funds that are determined to be unallowable per 2 CFR 200 and the AMS General Terms and Conditions may result in the grant award being reduced by the unallowable cost.**

AWARD AMOUNTS:

Individuals may receive a fixed amount award dependent on the project type selected:

- Small Scale Gardening: \$1500
- Greenhouse: \$3500
- Livestock/ Poultry Fencing: \$3500
- Subsistence: \$1500

All fixed award amounts will receive a pre- determined amount of funding for shipping allowance for eligible purchases made for grant project based on their location:

- Anchorage area: \$750
- Outside of Anchorage area or major port: \$1250
- Off road system: \$1500

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. Are located in the highest food insecure areas, determined by the census area the project is located in.

Further, prioritizing criteria to be considered includes:

1. Ability to describe benefit to food security
2. Appropriateness of the project for the direct and indirect beneficiaries
3. Appropriateness of the project for the area.

4. Ability to complete the project in a one-year timeframe.
5. Ability to measure results and complete the reporting requirements as determined by the MGFSP statute.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in increasing food security. Such as pounds of food that will be produced as a result of the project.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Distribution of awarded funds will occur after grant contracts are awarded.

For Individuals: Funds will be paid to the Grantee in up to two payments, one advance and one final payment upon review and approval of the final report, reimbursement request with appropriate backup documentation accompanied, and picture provided of the project. The Division of Agriculture may request additional pictures.

For Organizations: An advance payment must be requested from the Project Coordinator upon final signature of the grant agreement. Final payment will be processed upon review and approval of the final report, reimbursement request with appropriate backup documentation accompanied, and picture provided of the project. The Division of Agriculture may request additional pictures.

RFA APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The application is an online format via the divisions granting system, SmartSimple, and will be completed and submitted online:

Applicants must complete all fields, including but not limited to their Name, Business or Organization, Mailing Address, Project address, Phone Number, and Email Address. Applicants must provide a full description of their proposed grant project with a limit of 100 words with the requested amount of funds being applied for. Applicants must be in good standing with the State of Alaska.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the Alaska Division of Agriculture [SmartSimple Application Portal](#).

The Division of Agriculture will not accept applications that are printed and mailed in or emailed.

The application for the 2024 Micro Grants for Food Security opens on Wednesday, February 14th and will close on Friday, March 15th at 5pm.

RFA REVIEW PROCESS

Each Micro- Grant application received is reviewed by a member of the Alaska Division of Agriculture's review committee who uses set scoring criteria to evaluate how well the project details address the Micro Grant requirements and funding priorities. Applicants are ranked based on the information provided in the application and cannot provide updated information after the application is submitted. The scoring criteria is outlined below. Micro- Grant applications that are selected by the Division of Agriculture for funding must then be submitted to USDA for final approval.

SCORING CRITERIA

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. the ability of the proposed activity to increase the production and/or storage capacity in the local community.
 - B. the level of food insecurity in the applicant's region
 - C. other relevant information as to capacity and purpose of the applicant(s)

All completed RFA applications will be scored; and the applications who have the highest scores (and fall within funding limits) will be considered for an award, contingent upon USDA approval.

The Division of Agriculture will make best efforts to notify those applicants that have been awarded via email from the SmartSimple granting system around the Summer/Fall timeframe. This is a tentative timeframe should the application, review, and approval process all fall within the set tentative timeframe.