

Food First Capacity Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

1. What type of organizations are eligible for funding?

Eligible applicants include current MFB Network Partners, Pantry on the Go Partners, Higher Education partners and partners of our Redistribution Organizations (RDOs) in good standing. Partners that have not received a Capacity Grant in the last year will have priority. Please see the [Program Overview](#) for more detail on eligibility.

2. May I apply for this funding opportunity even if I have already received a grant from MFB?

Partners who have already received a Capacity Grant in FY25 may not apply again.

3. What is meant by Capacity building?

Capacity building supports the programmatic capacity and capabilities for eligible MFB partners through investments in infrastructure – systems, operations, and items that strengthen the organization and improve neighbor experience. Examples include equipment, vehicles, refrigeration, storage, and technology; items to improve visibility, safety, and efficiency of same-day distributions; marketing, fundraising, and web development; skill-building for board members and staff; diversity and equity initiatives; and leadership development. The successful outcome of these initiatives could include an increase in pounds distributed, the number of neighbors served, the nutritional quality of food distributed, expanded capacity to run new or additional programs, and/or an improvement in organizational infrastructure, vision, strategic direction, sustainability.

4. Can we use these funds to:

- Improve our website? *Yes. If improving your website helps you increase your capacity and improve food access.*
- Help purchase a box truck to transport food from Food Bank to our site? *Yes, because the box truck would expand your capacity. [Note: This is only for partners who have been approved for pickup and transport of food within their distribution model.]*
- Help purchase a box truck to transport food to neighbors who are disabled or restricted by age? *Yes, because the box truck would expand your capacity and allow you to deliver more food to more neighbors.*
- Sponsor a workshop on sign language that can be supported with grant funds? *Yes, since this would increase/expand food access to a group of your neighbors.*
- Pay a person a stipend to interpret Spanish to English speaking volunteers? *Yes, since this would increase/expand food access to a group of your neighbors.*

- Cover cardboard boxes, bags, or other “single use” items for packing foods to give away to our neighbors? *No. MFB grants are intended to provide on-going, longer-term capacity to programs. However, reusable bags, carts/buggies and similar items that could help your neighbors access more food may be requested and could be approved.*
 - Print large signs, obtain feather flags, and traffic cones to advertise a distribution and/or direct flow of traffic? *Yes, if these items will allow you to expand the amount of food or number of neighbors served in a safe manner.*
5. Do you have examples of activities the Food First Capacity Grant initiative will NOT fund?
In general, MFB will not provide financial support for food, ongoing operational expenses, or items previously purchased.

Grant Request

1. Where do I find the grant application?
You can access the grant application on our new grant platform, [SM Apply](#). You will also use this platform to reference your application and submit your grant report if you are awarded a grant. You can also find updated grant information on our [Partner Portal](#).
2. How do I register for SM Apply?
 - *If you applied for, or received an FY23 or FY24 MFB Grant, you can log in to SM Apply using the same credentials that you have previously used.*
 - *If you are new to SM Apply, once you are on the SM Apply main page, there will be a green button on the top right of the screen that says “Register.” You will then enter your name, email, and choose a password.*
3. What is the timeframe for this grant?
The key dates for this grant are:
 - *Application period: October 2 – ongoing*
 - *Award notification: 90 days after submission*
 - *Project start date: Upon receipt of grant award*
4. What is the grant period?
One year from the date of award.
5. How will MFB measure grant performance?
Funded grantees will report on required metrics identified in the Application Evaluation Factors. See the [Program Overview](#) for more information.

6. In addition to the completed application, what other elements are required with my proposal?

Eligible applicants must submit a W-9 Form.

7. Is there a way to save the online grant application and pick up where you left off later?

Yes, the SM Apply system does allow you to save your application and return to it later.

8. Who can I contact for additional questions about my grant request?

If you have questions regarding the grant process or want to talk about a specific project that you have in mind, if you are an MFB partner, contact your Regional Program

Director (RPD):

- **Yekatit Bezooayehu**, Southern Region, ybezooayehu@mdfoodbank.org
Counties: Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, and St. Mary's
- **Ruthie Pritchard**, Western Region, Western@mdfoodbank.org
Counties: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington
- **Christel Smallman**, Northern Region, csmallman@mdfoodbank.org
Counties: Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Baltimore
- **Kaylah Turner**, Baltimore City West, bcity@mdfoodbank.org
- **Sarah Kennedy**, Baltimore City East, bcity@mdfoodbank.org
- **Dan Magan**, Eastern Region, dmagan@mdfoodbank.org
Counties: Queen Anne's, Kent, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester

If you are not an MFB partner, reach out directly to your contact at one of these organizations, who we call Redistribution Organizations, or RDOs:

- Anne Arundel County Food Bank
- End Hunger Calvert County
- Harford Community Action Agency
- Southern Maryland Food Bank
- Western Maryland Food Bank
- Westminster Rescue Mission

9. Who can I contact for support with the SM Apply platform?

Contact our MFB Grant Support team at: MFBGrantSupport@mdfoodbank.org.

Budget/Funding:

1. Are there any restrictions on funding staff time on the grant?

There are no restrictions on staff time, but the staff time should be appropriate for the completion of proposed grant activities.

2. What funding amount should we request?

Eligible applicants may submit a proposal with a duration of up to one-year, minimum request amount of \$500, and a maximum request amount of \$7,000.

3. Can MFB recommend vendors for equipment purchases?

Yes. MFB recommends the following:

- *Second Chance in Baltimore City*
- *Submit a donation request to retailers like Home Depot or Lowes*
- *Delmarva Power/BGE often work with communities to donate refrigerators and freezers.*
- *Samco (equipment service and repair company). You will find information about them on [MFB's Partners Portal](#).*
- *M.S. Johnston (commercial and walk-in refrigeration company) in Hagerstown*

4. Are there bidding process requirements for grant-funded equipment and/or services?

No, we do not require that you secure more than one bid.

Post Award Reporting

1. What are my reporting obligations to MFB?

Grantees of MFB are responsible for reporting to MFB through a brief report one month after the end of the grant period.

2. How do I submit my report to MFB?

Final reports will be submitted through SM Apply.

Capacity Grant Information Session Webinar

Where can I view a Capacity Grant Webinar Information session? [Here](#).