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The Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative (PFJI)

PDPH Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention | Reinvestment Fund

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please note that this FAQ document will be updated frequently with additional content and relevant resources. Last updated November 2026.

I. Eligibility, Funding Priorities, and General Program Questions

- Can one organization submit more than one idea?
  Yes, an organization can submit more than one idea/application. But make sure that all ideas are feasible and not dependent on each other. Multiple submissions do not increase your chances of being funded.

- Can this grant be awarded to small projects?
  Yes, this grant may be awarded to a number of different projects/groups at a variety of grant amounts. There is no minimum grant award. No grant will be larger than $50,000.

- Can this grant be awarded to non-food projects if related to health justice?
  This grant is for food-focused projects that incorporate a health justice framework. The project must involve healthy food (see definition in the RFP).

- Will there only be one grantee? How many grantees will there be?
  There will be more than one grantee. At least $240,500 is available for grants. Each grant will be a maximum of $50,000. The number of grantees will depend on individual budgets and award amount.

- Are there criteria for how the funds can be spent or what they can be spent on?
  Funds must be spent on a project that will advance food justice and access to affordable healthy food in Philadelphia. Funds cannot be used for lobbying.

- Can funds be used for employee benefits such as health insurance?
  Yes - fringe benefits are an eligible use of funds and are included in the budget section of the application.

- Does it have to fund a new program or established project?
  The grant can fund a new project or continuation/expansion of existing work. Organizations can apply for operating costs to continue or expand their work, however, organizations should submit an application that describes a specific, unique grant project with a timeline and clear outcomes – not just general operating funds for your organization.

- How can the grant be used to close an organization's capacity gap?
  If awarded, grant funds can be used for contractual services that provide the grantee organization with additional support towards project implementation. Applicants are encouraged to use funding for capacity building that will help to ensure project sustainability.

- What are some examples of successful or unique grantee projects?
  To read about past grantees and their PFJI-funded projects, please visit the 'Resources' section of our website at https://www.reinvestment.com/grants/phl-food-justice-initiative/

- Can the project idea focus on systems change?
  Yes, we welcome ideas focused on systems change.

- Can partnerships or programs apply together?
  Yes, organizations or programs or people can join forces and apply together, and it is encouraged that people work collectively with partners. One organization would need to be the primary applicant and submit the application online on behalf of the partnership. That organization would need to be a legal entity (a nonprofit or business) and, if selected, would need to be able to hold a grant agreement (legal contract) with Reinvestment Fund.

- Are there any preferred zip codes or neighborhoods the application should focus on?
  While there is no preference for specific zip codes or neighborhoods, the project must be in the City of Philadelphia, and should be able to demonstrate how the activities will improve food justice for areas with historical health or other injustices. For the 2026 cycle, however, priority points will be awarded to project serving Philadelphia communities that are facing higher rates of food insecurity and poverty. Please see the Philadelphia Food Access Dashboard for more details.

- Can you give some examples of impact? What are the expectations of a one-year project- better access to healthy foods, live healthier, etc.?
  Projects will be measured against the outcomes and impact they define in their application. The overall goal of the initiative includes more healthy food, but also includes increased ability by communities to have healthy food and control their food, land, and labor. Success could look like trying something new and failing, while still learning in the meantime, or providing deeper support to a small group of people.

- Can the applicants have other funding sources for their work?
  Yes, applicants can have other funding sources. Applicants should describe other funding sources in hand or needed in their application.

- Who has received this grant before?
  From 2019-2025 we have made grants to 41 recipients. Learn more about prior grantees on our website: https://www.reinvestment.com/grants/phl-food-justice-initiative/

- How many applications were previously submitted compared to how many were funded?
  Approximately 100 applications were received in the previous round (2024 RFP) of funding and 14 were ultimately funded.

- Do you already have partners/projects in mind that you want to fund? No, this is an open call for ideas.

- Is breastfeeding considered part of food justice?
  While breastfeeding is an important component of the food system, this particular initiative will focus on the foods included in the healthy food definition.

- Can projects use funds for storytelling efforts on food markets, community gardens and their connection to food justice?
  Yes, funds can be used for marketing, materials, and promotion of food justice efforts in Philadelphia.

- Can projects be for planning or do they need to be for implementation? Projects can be for planning, implementation, or a combination of both.

- Are larger organizations preferred? Do you have a general size organization you are hoping to fund?
  No, we welcome applications from organizations of any size. But applicants should consider the make up of your staff and if it is reflective of the community that you serve.

- Are there any eligibility restrictions on organizational operating budgets?
  No, we welcome applications from organizations with any size operating budgets. However, under the 2026 cycle, priority points will be awarded for organizations that demonstrate a significant operational gap, such as having a smaller annual operating budget.

- Do organizations have to be Black-led to be eligible?
  No, any organization that meets the eligibility criteria in the RFP is welcome to apply. When applications are evaluated for selection, priority points will be awarded to projects led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color and/or people with lived experience with health injustice, including immigrants and people living with disabilities.

- How does the tobacco-free pledge apply to non-retail projects?
  The tobacco-free pledge is specific to retailers or projects applying that may sell tobacco

products. We ask that all projects commit to a tobacco-free environment and stop selling tobacco products if awarded.

II. Timeline, Budget, and Grantee Responsibilities

- What should grantees propose for an implementation timeline? What is the grant program implementation timeline? When will I get my funds?
  Projects must reasonably take place between January 1, 2027, and December 31, 2027. This funding is from City general funds and other funders through a contract with Reinvestment Fund. Those applicants that are selected for a grant will work with Reinvestment Fund to determine the final project timeline and grant disbursement schedule, with funds being one-time payments being disbursed beginning in February. Grantees must track grant expenditures and retain backup documentation and provide it with their final closeout report in January 2028.

- Is there the possibility for more than one year of funding or is this only for projects that can be completed in one year?
  Applications to this program should be for projects that can be completed in approximately one year. There is potential for additional funding to continue work in following years, dependent on annual City budget approval. Applicants can describe what they would do if they received more than 1 year of funding, but the main focus of the application milestones should be those that can be accomplished in the first year.

- Will projects be funded partially or at a lower level?
  It is possible that applicants that are selected will be offered a partial grant, or a grant at a lower amount than they applied for. Applicants will work with Reinvestment Fund after selection to determine the project's final budget and workplan.

- Can you clarify the disbursement process for the grant?
  If selected, grants are made as a one-time payment at the beginning of the grant period, after a grant agreement is signed. Grant disbursements will begin no earlier than February and will depend on the timeframe it takes to finalize the workplan and budget and execute a grant agreement.

- What kind of reporting will be required?
  At minimum, grantees will be expected to provide brief updates on the grant project and use of funds on a semi-annual basis (twice a year). This typically looks like one semi-annual report and a final closeout report. Grantees will also be expected to keep records of what grant funds are used for (including invoices, receipts, and other internal accounting records) which will be provided to Reinvestment Fund to have on file. At the end of the grant period, grantees will be expected to provide a final report that asks grantees to outline their successes, challenges, lessons learned, and feedback. After being awarded this grant, grantees will work with Reinvestment Fund to determine the final project workplan, budget, and reporting schedule and will clarify if there are any additional reporting requirements in conversation with awardee(s).

- How do I access the budget form?

  The budget form is one of the tabs in the SmartSimple online grant portal. You can also view the

- Should we submit the numbers for our overall project budget if it is bigger than the PFJI grant, or just the amount we are seeking from PFJI?

  In your grant application, submit a proposed budget for your PFJI grant, totaling no more than $50,000. If your grant application is for a project that will have other sources of funds for a bigger scope, you can describe that larger budget in the narrative questions below.

- Does my organization need a fiscal sponsor to apply?

  No, fiscal sponsors are not necessary but if having one supports your operations then you are welcome to apply with one. The authorized signatory should be that of the fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor will also need to provide EIN and legal entity documentation and complete OFAC review prior to executing a grant agreement.

- If we are applying with a fiscal sponsor, should we put the fiscal sponsor organization or applying organization information for the demographics section?

  Please include the applying organization information in the optional demographics section.

III. Application Process and Technological Support

- What is the deadline for applications?
  - Applications must be received by 11:59 pm ET on December 4, 2026 via Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal SmartSimple. Late submissions will not be accepted. Submissions will only be accepted electronically. Mailed or emailed application documents will not be accepted. Please submit ahead of the deadline to avoid any unforeseen technical issues.

- How can I apply?
  - Online through Reinvestment Fund's online grants portal found at https://reinvestmentfund.smartsimple.com/ until the deadline. You can complete the full application through the application portal on any internet accessible device.

  - If this is your first time using SmartSimple, you may want to watch our video introduction on how to create an account and begin an application in SmartSimple. You can access that video: https://vimeo.com/reinvestfund/smartsimpleregistrationinstruction/

  - If you have any trouble using the online grants portal please contact us and we will walk you through any questions you have about using the system. If it is not possible to submit an online application, contact us and we will provide a paper application.

- Can I write my application offline, and copy and paste into SmartSimple?
  - Yes, you can view all of the questions in the RFP information sheet and copy and paste into the SmartSimple portal. You can also save a draft in SmartSimple and return to it when you're ready to submit.

IV. Questions

- How can I get questions answered or receive support in completing my application?
  - **Email**: Please direct individual questions by email to phillyfoodjustice@reinvestment.com We will do our best to respond to all questions within a couple of days (Monday – Friday 9-5pm) and/or set up a time to discuss your question(s) by phone.

  - **Website**: More information and resources are available on the program's website: https://www.reinvestment.com/grants/phl-food-justice-initiative/

  - This FAQ page will be updated regularly and linked on the above website. We will also have instructional information available on the website to help interested applicants navigate the online application portal. Additional resources will be updated on our website as they become available