

FOOD EQUITY FUND

2024 GRANT GUIDELINES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2024 Grant Guidelines.....	1
About The Food Equity Fund	3
What We Fund.....	3
Eligible Applicants	4
Eligible Activities Examples	4
Ineligible Applicants.....	5
What We Will Not Fund	5
Physical Improvements	6
How To Apply	7
2024 General Grant Schedule.....	7
Virtual Interviews	8
Virtual Information Sessions.....	8
Staff Support	9
Proposal & Workplan Examples	10
Evaluation Criteria	12
Eligibility Checklist:	12
Criteria for Strong Applications:.....	12
What To Expect If Awarded?	14
Frequently Asked Questions.....	15

ABOUT THE FOOD EQUITY FUND

The Food Equity Fund is a program of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON). The purpose of the Fund is to invest in community-led work that contributes to an equitable and sustainable local food system. By 'food system' we mean any activities related to food, this can include growing, sourcing, preparing, learning, distributing food and/or managing food waste.

Created in 2021, the Food Equity Fund supports work led by those who experience the most food and health inequities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Funding is provided by revenue from Seattle's Sweetened Beverage Tax. In 2024, approximately \$2.3 million is available in funding through two grant cycles: The **Food Equity Fund Grant** and the **Starter Fund** (formerly known as the Capacity Building Grant) which will launch on April 1, 2024.

WHAT WE FUND

Across the United States and in Seattle, there are deep and persistent inequities in the food system due to structural racism. The Food Equity Fund aims to increase investments in food work led by: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and/or elders.

Eligible proposals must:

- Have project activities occur within Seattle.
- Be accessible and benefit people who live, learn, work and/or worship in Seattle.
- Focus on contributing to an equitable and sustainable local food system.
- Be completed within 24 months of contracting.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Organizations that have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- Community groups that have a *fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- Tribes and tribal organizations.



***A FISCAL SPONSOR** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that agrees to act as the trustee of your project's funds and assumes financial responsibilities related to recordkeeping and the disbursement of funds. If you are not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, you are required to secure a fiscal sponsor for your contract with the City of Seattle. For groups that must hire a fiscal sponsor, a fee of 5% to 10% of the total grant award is often charged. This fee may be included in your proposal budget.

Note: Only one application per organization is allowed, except if the organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for multiple groups.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES EXAMPLES

The following activities are *ideas* of eligible activities:

- *capital project or physical improvement such as a new greenhouse, farm irrigation, and/or commercial kitchen
- coalition-building to advance food justice & food sovereignty
- community organizing
- food programs for elders
- food distribution site
- food justice leadership development
- food pantry & meal services
- gardening or farming
- food-related job training
- activities that advance economic opportunities in the food system
- storytelling & cultural preservation and/or education
- food programs for youth
- and many more!



***CONTINGENCY:** All capital/physical improvement project budgets must include a 15% cash contingency for all construction related activities and costs, including sales tax.

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

We **don't** accept applications from:

- 501(c)(4) political groups
- for-profit entities, including small businesses
- individual persons
- major institutions such as school districts, universities, or hospitals

WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND

The following activities are **not** eligible for funding:

- expenses made before the organization is selected and under contract
- gift cards or food vouchers
- lodging or hotel expenses
- organization's overhead costs unrelated to the Food Equity Fund project
- projects not easily accessible by the public
- purchase of land or buildings
- purchase of a vehicle
- scholarships
- capital project or physical improvements on a private residency

The Department of Neighborhoods reserves the right to make the final determination of eligible expenses or project activities. **Please contact us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov directly with any questions about eligible activities prior to submitting a final application.**

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Are you planning on building new garden beds in your community garden? Are you making renovations to your senior center's kitchen? Want to build a new greenhouse or shed for your organization's urban garden?

Property owner permission is required with your application if a physical improvement is made to property not owned by your group or organization.

A **physical improvement** includes building semi-permanent or permanent structures or making renovations to a building.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- We require all physical improvement projects to include a 15% contingency in the budget to cover unanticipated expenses.
- If you'd like a property owner permission template, please reach out to a Food Equity Fund project manager.
- If your project occurs on City property, please contact us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov to connect with the appropriate City staff liaison.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS:

- installing new garden beds
- greenhouse
- shed
- commercial kitchen renovation and/or repairs
- irrigation system
- And more!

HOW TO APPLY

Here's everything you need to submit a complete Food Equity Fund application:

- [Application](#)
- [Attachment: Narrative Questions](#)
- [Attachment: Workplan and Leadership Biographies](#)
- [Attachment: Grant Request Budget \(Excel\)](#)
- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter OR identified fiscal sponsorship
- If applicable:
 - Property owner letter

Application and attachment(s) must be submitted via email to FoodEquityFund@seattle.gov by **11:59 pm PDT on Tuesday, March 19, 2024**. In fairness to others, late applications will not be accepted.

2024 GRANT SCHEDULE

Award Amount: \$25,000 - \$100,000 | **Proposal Length:** Up to 24 months

● Jan. 16	Application open
● Jan. 30: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. ● Feb. 12: 12 p.m. - 1p.m. ● Feb. 29: 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Virtual Information Sessions (Interpretation available upon request.)
● March 19 before 11:59 p.m.	Application deadline
● May 1 to 10	If applicable, scheduling virtual interviews
● May 13 to 17	If applicable, virtual interviews
● Late June	Applicants notified of funding decisions via email
● Late June to Oct. 1	Contract signed and fully executed

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS



The community review process may include a short 15–20-minute virtual interview component. If applicable, applicants will be contacted by May 1, 2024 to schedule a virtual interview.

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSIONS

Join a virtual information session to learn more about the application process, qualities of a strong proposal and to ask any questions.



Please register for an information session [here](#).

Tuesday Jan. 30,
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Link: [Food Equity Fund Info Session #1](#)

Join by phone: (206) 207-1700

Access Code 2491 432 3663 Password 2024

Monday Feb. 12,
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

Link: [Food Equity Fund Info Session #2](#)

Join by phone: (206) 207-1700

Access code: 2489 593 9972 Password 2024

Thursday, Feb 29,
5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Link: [Food Equity Fund Info Session #3](#)

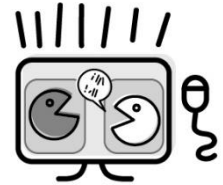
Join by phone: (206) 207-1700

Access code: 2484 962 5571 Password: 2024

STAFF SUPPORT

Technical Assistance: Do you have questions about the application or want to discuss your idea? A Food Equity Fund Project Manager can support you! For reference, project managers will not be part of the selection process.

- Email foodequityfund@seattle.gov or call **206-727-FOOD (3663)** to schedule a one-on-one meeting with a project manager. Project managers are available to meet outside of regular business hours with advance scheduling.
- **Wednesday, March 6, 2024 – 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.**
[Food Equity Fund Virtual Open Office Hour](#)
Join by phone: (206) 207-1700
Access code: 2498 906 0175 **Password:** 2024



Examples of One-on-One Support

- Help figure out eligibility activities or expenses.
- Support with property ownership questions.
- Assist you in your search for a fiscal sponsor organization.
- Explain the evaluation criteria.
- Provide feedback on a draft application (email materials by March 5th)
 - **After March 5th**, project managers are unable to provide feedback but will be available to answer any questions and check for eligibility or completeness.

PROPOSAL & WORKPLAN EXAMPLES

1) A Native-led organization seeks funds to grow and provide free culturally relevant produce to elders in their community. The proposal involves growing native plants and vegetables, intergenerational harvest parties and food distribution days for Seattle’s urban Native American elders.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Identify up to 50 elders to participate in monthly grocery bag distribution.	Work with existing families, and one-on-one outreach at Community Center A.	Oct.- Dec. 2024

2) A trusted coalition of BIPOC farmers working in Seattle seek funds to conduct a visioning process with their community. The project includes climate resiliency planning, soil health testing, and growing capacity for culturally relevant planting. The coalition aims to create a resource guide for local farmers to use in response to rapid climate change.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Convene up to 15 Seattle farmers to commit to monthly visioning sessions.	One-on-one outreach with existing partners including Farm A, Farm B, Farm C.	Oct. 2024 – Oct. 2025

3) A trusted community organization wants to develop a food & farming workforce training program for low-income youth. The organization works alongside youth leaders to create a 16-week training series. Youth are involved at multiple stages, from planning to implementation.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Develop food and farming curriculum for summer training program.	Engage up to 5 youth leaders in developing workshop goals, field trip ideas, and desired skill building.	Oct. 2024-Feb. 2025

4) A mutual aid group seeks funds to build a new greenhouse, and to re-design and expand their existing food storage and distribution area to make it more accessible. The proposal involves engagement with the property owner, community members, and volunteers to co-design and build the new distribution area.

Example milestone:

Milestone: What will you accomplish?	How will you accomplish it?	Timeline (start – finish)
Design new food storage and distribution area.	Work with property owner and incorporate ongoing feedback from community members who use the food storage space.	Sept. 2024 – March 2025

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for basic eligibility requirements by the Food Equity Fund staff. Eligible proposals will be reviewed by the community review panel based on the criteria below.

The community review panel is made up of local community leaders with expertise in racial equity, food justice and health inequities. The review panel may recommend an award amount that is different than the amount requested by the applicant.

Funding recommendations made by the panel will have final approval from the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Eligibility Checklist:

- Project activities occur within Seattle.
- Project is accessible and benefit people who live, learn, work and/or worship in Seattle.
- Focus on contributing to an equitable and sustainable local food system.
- Be completed within 24 months of contracting.

Criteria for strong applications:

1. PEOPLE

- History, mission, and vision are aligned with the project proposal.
- Example of accomplishments that complement the work necessary to implement the project.
- Racial justice is clearly a living value within their organization. They provide concrete examples about how they advance racial justice internally (examples may include: board of directors, leadership development, staff retention, community centered fundraising, and more).
- The community they are a part of is specific and clearly defined.
- Priority communities are key decision makers and/or deeply involved at all phases of the project.
- If partners are included, they speak to either ongoing partners or new partnerships that demonstrate mutual benefit (i.e. including partners in their budget, providing clear examples of reciprocity, etc.)

2. PROJECT

- Description is clear, specific, and actionable.
- The project is consistent with the Food Equity Fund's purpose to invest in community-led work that contributes to an equitable and sustainable local food system.
- The project aligns with the workplan and grant request budget.
- Food issues are specific and demonstrate a strong understanding of food inequities, needs, challenges, and/or priorities in their community.
- Solutions are culturally relevant and/or speak to community assets and traditions.

3. IMPACT

- The success is clearly tied to meaningful community benefits for those who experience the most food and health disparities.
- Provides clear examples on how BIPOC, people with low incomes, youth and/or elder leaders in the food system are developed at multiple stages of the work.

4. ATTACHMENTS: WORKPLAN, GRANT REQUEST BUDGET, LEADERSHIP BIO

- Key milestones are specific, realistic, and actionable. Milestones are related and will build on each other.
- The timeline is realistic.
- Budget is feasible and aligns with the workplan.
- Team members and key leaders working on the project reflect the lived experiences of the communities they work with.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF AWARDED?

If funded, organizations and/or fiscal sponsors will be required to:

- Attend an orientation.
- Work closely with their assigned Food Equity Fund project manager to finalize project/program outcomes.
- Have a current City of Seattle business license.
- Secure and provide evidence of Commercial General Liability insurance.
- If applicable, provide documentation upon request of Washington State Patrol background checks for all project volunteers and staff working with youth under 18 years of age.
- Ensure all design and capital projects on City of Seattle property follow Federal law to provide readily accessible facilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Capital projects are expected to pay prevailing wages.

The Food Equity Fund makes payment based on mutually agreed upon outcomes. In addition, it includes a steady monthly rate that is negotiated during the contracting process.

Food Equity Fund Grant contracts must be signed by **Oct. 1, 2024**, unless otherwise noted and funds must be spent no later than **Sept. 30, 2026**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) staff review my application?

Yes, Food Equity Fund project managers are available to provide feedback on your application and answer any questions. We can only provide feedback on draft applications submitted **before** March 5, 2024. After March 5, 2024, project managers are unable to provide feedback but will be available to answer any questions and check for eligibility or completeness.

2. We've received a Food Equity Fund grant before, am I eligible to apply again?

Organizations cannot hold two simultaneous contracts within the program. If you have an existing contract, it must be completed by Oct. 1, 2024. If your contract ends after Oct. 1, 2024, you are ineligible to apply. If you've been awarded a Food Equity Fund grant in previous years but don't have an existing contract, you are eligible to apply. If you have any questions about this, please contact foodequityfund@seattle.gov.

3. My office is not in Seattle, but the community we work with is based in Seattle. Can we apply to the Food Equity Fund?

Yes. If your office is located outside of Seattle, you can apply if your project activities take place within Seattle city limits AND benefits people who live, learn, work, and/or worship in Seattle.

4. What is your disbursement of funds?

Food Equity Fund utilizes an outcome-based reimbursement process. The City makes payment based on mutually agreed upon outcomes. In addition, it includes a steady monthly rate that is negotiated during the contracting process. If awarded, this process will be covered in greater detail during an awardee orientation.

5. What is the timeline for the grant? If funded, when do projects begin, and for how many years?

Project time periods are flexible. Projects cannot begin earlier than **Sept.1** and must end by Sept. 30, 2026.

6. How do we know if we need property owner permission for our application?

Property owner permission is required with your application if a physical improvement is made to property not owned by your group or organization. More information can be found on page 6 of the enclosed Guidelines. We recommend talking directly to the property owner as soon as possible. It's important to demonstrate that the property owner is aware of the intent to build on their property if awarded.

7. What is Commercial General Liability (CGL) Insurance?

It is liability coverage for the length of the grant contract. The **"City of Seattle"** must be added as an additional insured party to the policy. Please work with your Food Equity Fund project manager to determine the appropriate insurance coverage. You may include the cost of insurance in your grant budget.

8. What is a City of Seattle business license?

Anyone doing business in Seattle must have a Seattle business license tax certificate, also known as a business license or general business license. This is in addition to the Department of Revenue business license. You do not have to have a City of Seattle Business License to apply for this grant; however, if selected, your organization or your fiscal sponsor will be required to obtain one. For more information: [Business Licenses - City Finance | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/business/licenses)

9. I have another grant with a different program at the Department of Neighborhoods, am I eligible to apply for the Food Equity Fund?

Organizations and community groups are allowed to hold multiple DON grants if they are for separate and unique projects.

10. Where else can I get funding for food-related projects in Seattle?

Here are a few other funding opportunities that support food or environmental justice related projects:

- [Human Services Department](#) Funding Notices
- [Equitable Development Initiative](#) - Office of Planning & Community Development
- [Environmental Justice Fund](#) - Office of Sustainability and Environment
- [KCD Seattle Community Partnership Grant](#) - King County Conservation District
- [Waste-Free Communities Matching Grant](#) - Seattle Public Utilities
- [Food Assistance Grants](#) - Washington State Department of Agriculture

If you have any questions, please email us at foodequityfund@seattle.gov or give us a call at (206) 727-3663.