

Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment – 2024 – Q&A Document

Updated: 1/29/2025

An informational webinar on this grant opportunity was held on November 13th at 2:00 PM EST.

View recording:

<https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/ldr.php?RCID=089da3275eedc43b929f82dd311a93c5>

The Statewide Financial System can be reached through their help desk:

Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov | 518-457-7717

Q1: I need clarification for the contract term dates that are noted in this grant opportunity.

A1: Applications are being accepted between October 1st, 2024 and January 31st, 2025, or until all funding is exhausted (which is more likely to come first). We will be answering questions publicly until January 29th, 2025, or until the program has concluded.

The anticipated award date listed (March 2nd, 2025) is an estimate for reviewing and awarding all grant applications under this program.

As per the RFA, contract term dates are for up to three years. Contract term START dates may be any time between 2/1/2025 - 1/31/27, with an end date up to three years out from the start date chosen. Therefore, the earliest contract dates available to apply for is a term running from 2/1/25 - 1/31/28.

Q2: Will decisions be made up until the due date, with awards distributed on a rolling basis or will all awards be distributed in April 2025?

A2: All projects will be evaluated by DEC for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out). We just learned that we will not be able to review on an ongoing basis through SFS. The latest the applications will be reviewed is after the applications close on January 31, 2025. If the funds have been exhausted before the January 31st deadline, we will close the grant application period early and start the reviews of projects for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out).

Q3: How do I find the Request for Applications (RFA) on the SFS Webpage?

A3: The RFA can be found by clicking on the "View Grant Opportunity" tab located on the grant opportunity's webpage (the first tab of three on the left-hand side of the webpage). To access the grant opportunity's webpage, the following steps can be used:

- Visit the [SFS Vendor Portal](#)
- Click the 'Search by Grant Opportunities' icon
- Next to 'Search by Grant Opportunity' - Enter: Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024
Alternatively, search by Event ID: EFRO24

- Click 'Search'
- Click Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024

To access the tab that listed in the instructions above, you have to use the link to the Vendor Public Portal **and be signed out of your SFS account** (if you just exit out of the tab but don't sign out, it still won't work):

https://esupplier.sfs.ny.gov/psc/fscm/SUPPLIER/ERP/c/NUJ_FRAMEWORK.PT_LANDINGPAGE.GBL

Q4: I see the grant is listed for 501c3 NFP corporations...but are not-for-profit religious institutions eligible if they are Food Bank partners, NYS Department of Health certified, and hosting emergency food relief operations?

A4: Any 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that provides emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants.

More specifics on the requirements for eligible applicants under this grant program can be found in Section 2 of the Request for Applications (RFA).

Q5: We are the county's designated emergency food supplier. We receive much of our food via the Food Bank. We are however a food pantry serving food directly to residents. We are not a Food Bank. I just wish to make sure we are eligible.

A5: All 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations that provide emergency food relief in NYS are eligible. We only excluded the 10 large New York State food banks from this opportunity because we have provided funding to them in a separate contract. A food pantry is eligible to apply for equipment under the grant.

Q6: We recently received a notification for a new grant from DEC (Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant Program) that would benefit our partner organizations across the state. However we learned that this opportunity is not available for NYS food banks. If it's possible, we would be grateful for some additional context on why these important partners are excluded from this opportunity.

A6: New York State food banks are excluded from this grant opportunity because DEC provides funding to them through a separate contract with Feeding New York State.

Q7: We are qualified as a vendor in SFS but cannot see the link to apply.

A7: To access the link to apply for the Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant Program, the following steps can be used:

- Visit the [SFS Vendor Portal](#) *
- Click the 'Search by Grant Opportunities' icon
- Next to 'Search by Grant Opportunity' enter Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024. Alternatively, search by Event ID: EFRO2024
- Click 'Search'

- Click Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024
- Once on the grant opportunity's webpage, click the tab located on the left-hand side titled 'Log into SFS and Apply for Grant'

Once you are logged into SFS (directions from Homepage):

- From your Homepage, click the "Grants Management" icon
- On the Grants Management page, click the "Bid Response Search" icon
- On the Bid Event Search page, next to 'Search by Grant Opportunity' enter Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024. Alternatively, search by Event ID: EFRO2024
- When the grant opportunity comes up, click on the Event ID hyperlink to bring you to the application page.
- On this page, which is titled "Event Details", click the tab titled "Bid on Event". That will bring you to the page where you can find the application/respond to the bid event.

*To access the tab that listed in the first set of instructions, you have to use the link to the Vendor Public Portal (linked above) and be signed out of your SFS account:

https://esupplier.sfs.ny.gov/psc/fscm/SUPPLIER/ERP/c/NUI_FRAMEWORK.PT_LANDINGPAGE.GBL

Q8: Which grants are available?

A8: There are two grant opportunities available that just went live yesterday. The first is the Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant Program and the second is the Municipal Funding for Food Scraps Recycling Initiatives Grant Program.

Information on the two grant programs can be found on the attached factsheets or on DEC's Funding Opportunities for Organics Management webpage here:

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recycling-composting/organic-materials-management/funding-opportunities-for-organics-management>.

Q9: Can you please advise what specific equipment is available to us in the last grant offer

A9: Eligible project types are outlined below. *Only the equipment types listed in this section will be considered for funding under this opportunity.* Eligibility will be determined based on the list of project costs as well as the applicants' answers to the program specific questions.

Eligible project types:

- Trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment (e.g., trailers, insulated food storage containers, scales, etc.) used in the transport of food;
- Cooling equipment (e.g., freezers, refrigerators, walk-in freezer or cold room, etc.) and related installation costs (e.g., electric work, delivery, etc.);
- Emergency generators and related installation costs (e.g., electric work, delivery, etc.) dedicated to preserving food for donation (note: awarded funds in this category must not exceed \$25,000); or
- Combination of the above project types.

Q10: How do we apply?

A10: Applications must be submitted through the [NYS SFS Grants Management System](#). The NYS SFS Grants Management system offers a Vendor User Manual, training videos and webinars for applicants requiring assistance. Please visit <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/transition-SFS>.

All Applicants must be Registered with SFS Grants Management to apply. Please visit <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/transition-SFS> to register.

In addition to registration, not-for-profits must also be [Prequalified](#) at the time and date that the application is due. If you are not Prequalified at that time and date, your application will not be considered. Please do not delay in starting the prequalification process.

If you are new to the SFS Vendor portal and would like to establish an account for the purposes of doing business with the State of New York, contact the SFS Help Desk at 518-457-7717, 855-233-8363 or HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov for more information.

Q11: [When logged into SFS] I clicked on Bid Event Search, searched by DEC, and then clicked on the hyperlink to the grant opportunity. I do not see any tabs or links that say “view grant opportunity” [to access the RFA].

A11: If the following instructions are used, you will be able to access the grant announcement where this tab is available and will allow you to view the RFA:

- Visit the [SFS Vendor Portal](#) (be sure to use this link and be signed out of your SFS account)
- Click the ‘Search by Grant Opportunities’ icon
- Next to ‘Search by Grant Opportunity’ - Enter: Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024
Alternatively, search by Event ID: EFRO24
- Click ‘Search’
- Click Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grants – 2024
- Click on the tab titled ‘View Grant Opportunity’ on the left-hand side of the webpage

Q12: I can’t find the ‘View Grant Opportunities’ icon on my SFS Homepage.

A12: To access the ‘View Grant Opportunities’ icon to search for this grant opportunity, you have to be on the Vendor Portal and completely signed out of your SFS account, if you are logged in. The Vendor Portal is accessible with this link:
https://esupplier.sfs.ny.gov/psc/fscm/SUPPLIER/ERP/c/NUI_FRAMEWORK.PT_LANDINGPAGE.GBL

Q13: In the event a food pantry would like to expand their current allocated space, will the grant allocate funding for a build out of the current space to accommodate an industrial size refrigerator, freezer, shelving and carts?

A13: Unfortunately, expenses related to a build out of a food pantry's current space would not be considered an eligible expense under this grant opportunity.

Q14: I read there is a \$100,000 limit, but is there a cost limit per piece of equipment?

A14: There is not a cost limit per piece of equipment.

Q15: Can you please let me know what the eligible forms of match are?

A15: Eligible match sources for this grant program include:

- cash;
 - funding from other grant sources (cannot include other State or federal grants);
 - funding from project partners; and
 - in-kind sources that are directly related to the project (e.g., labor, volunteer hours, etc.).
- Note: In-kind sources of match must be work that is directly related to the project.

Q16: We are inquiring whether a cook-and-hold oven would be eligible for project expenditure.

A16: Unfortunately, ovens are not an eligible expense under this current grant opportunity.

Q17: I would like to confirm that there is a place to "respond" but it also prompts you to attach a PDF. I want to confirm which format is preferred.

A17: There are some questions that require you to upload attachments. However, the grant itself should be submitted all on SFS through the platform.

A helpful resource for searching and responding to grant opportunities can be found under SFS Coach Training on your Vendor homepage. If you enter 'Searching/Responding To Grant Opportunities (Bids)' into the training material search box you will find a link to a Webex training recording that walks you through how to respond to bids.

Additional technical assistance in regards to the Grants Management Bid Event can be provided by NYS SFS Grants Management. Their email is helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or they can be reached at 877-737-4185 (toll-free) or 518-457-7737.

Q18: Would volunteer labor hours spent preparing the space for installation of requested equipment or spent using the equipment after installation to distribute emergency food relief be accepted toward our 25% Match requirement?

A18: In-kind sources that are directly related to the project, including volunteer labor hours, are eligible sources of match under this grant opportunity.

Q19: It looks like the budget should be submitted via an attachment in SFS - is there a specific template that we should use?

A19: The budget should be submitted through SFS as they have a feature within the grant application for the information to be entered into. We are unable to see what the application process looks like from your perspective with our roles in SFS, but I have found a resource in SFS Coach Training that hopefully is helpful. Below are instructions on how to find the link to the training material:

- On your Vendor Homepage, click the tile titled “SFS Coach Training”
- Once in SFS Coach Training, enter ‘Searching/Responding To Grant Opportunities (Bids)’ into the training material search box and hit Enter
- Click on the ‘Searching/Responding To Grant Opportunities (Bids)’ training material that is a video.

Information on how to enter the budget is can be found around the 26:30 mark of the video.

Q20: How do we know if we need to fill out a Smart Growth Assessment? If needed, where would we procure one?

A20: The Smart Growth Assessment Form needs to be completed for public infrastructure projects that receive state funding.

UPDATED: If you need a Smart Growth Assessment Form or any of the other required forms for this grant opportunity, you should be able to access them within the application.

Q21: I am working on the pre-qualification aspect of the grant program. Can you help me?

A21: For questions regarding the pre-qualification process and issues you are having, please contact the SFS helpdesk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or 518- 457-7717.

Here are helpful resources on the SFS Coach Training page on this process as well.

Q22: Is it better to submit my application now, or wait until after the webinar you are offering on November 13th ?

A22: Applications will be reviewed for eligibility on a first-in, first-out basis. If your application is complete and you are ready to submit, it would be better to submit now than to wait. All of the information discussed in the informational webinar is included in the RFA. You can feel free to ask us any questions via email at organicsgrants@dec.ny.gov before you submit your application before the webinar.

Q23: For Question 7 [of the grant application], are you looking for any specific attachment to be included?

A23: Question 7 states “Please list all sources of eligible match”. We are not looking for any specific attachment to be included here. Please make sure you describe your source(s) of match in enough detail that we can make sure they are eligible sources.

Q24: I am reaching out as I am sharing this grant opportunity with our network of nonprofit organizations and am wondering are applicants awarded as they apply, or do all applicants need to wait until the application time frame ends after January 2025 to find out if they will be awarded?

A24: The latest the applications will be reviewed is after the application period closes on January 31, 2025. If the funds have been exhausted before the January 31st deadline, we will close the grant application period early and start reviewing the projects for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out). The anticipated award date that is listed for the grant opportunity, March 2nd 2025, is our estimate for when we will have all the grant applications reviewed and awarded by at the latest.

Q25: I need help in getting a SFS login. Apparently you need one to apply for this grant.

A25: To get a SFS login, your organization will need to be registered in SFS. Information on how to register your organization can be found at this link:

<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization-sfs>

In addition to registration, not-for-profits must also be [Prequalified](#) at the time and date that the application is due. If you are not Prequalified at that time and date, your application will not be considered.

If you have any questions about the registration process or need assistance, you can contact grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov.

Q26: I am trying to see if our organization has an account with the DEC, but it won't allow me to login. Can you please call me and let me know if we are registered?

A26: To inquire if your organization is registered with the Statewide Financial System (SFS), please contact their helpdesk via email (Helpdesk@sfs.nys.gov) or by phone (518-457-7717 or 855-233-8363 toll-free).

Q27: In looking at the financial match requirements for the Funding for Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment opportunity, I noticed that match funds cannot come from New York State or federal funding sources. However, can NYC City Council funds be used as match contributions?

A27: Municipal funds such as city funding are an eligible form of match.

Q28: Are local government entities eligible to apply, or is the grant exclusively for 501(c)(3) organizations?

A28: For the purposes of this grant program, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations that provide emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants. Therefore, a government entity would not be eligible to apply.

Q29: Can you please confirm whether an inventory system for a food program would be an allowable expense under this grant? If it is allowable, can you please confirm whether there is a limit on the cost for this type of expense?

A29: Unfortunately, an inventory system for a food program would not be an eligible expense under this grant program.

Q30: [In regards to the definition of a community based organization outlines on Page 4 of the RFA] For the purposes of this grant, do qualify as a “community-based organization”

- a) **If we coordinate food donations between farmers and food access organizations in multiple counties**
- b) **We do not have members**

A30: Your organization would qualify as a community-based organization, for the purposes of this grant, with the answers you provided in reference to the definition outlined in the RFA.

Q31: While staff time is not an eligible cost, can staff time directly related to the project be used as an in-kind match?

A31: In-kind sources that are directly related to the project, including staff time, are eligible sources of match under this grant program.

Q32: Would it be possible for the county Department of Social Services to apply as main applicant and regrant to our organization, and other partner organizations?

A32: For the purposes of this grant program, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations that provide emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants. Therefore, a government entity would not be eligible to apply as the main applicant.

Q33: We are a NYC based food relief organization with 100+ pantry partners in the region. Does the RFA permit redistribution of equipment from awardees to affiliate partners?

A33: There are two ways that the RFA allows for partnerships between organizations in the application/grant process (included below and found in Section 2 of the RFA):

1) A fiscal sponsor is a New York State nonprofit organization that applies to DEC on behalf of individuals or unincorporated organizations or groups. The fiscal sponsor accepts responsibility to serve as a fiscal conduit for a DEC-funded project, receiving and disbursing funds related to the grant, and administering the requirements throughout the DEC grant process, including final reporting of grant activity. The unincorporated artist or group completes the project activity.

Note: This can also be done on behalf of other eligible applicants (any 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that provides emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks)

2) If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead applicant can submit the application for grant funding. The lead applicant must assume the responsibility for the project application, performance of work consistent with this RFA, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the application.

Q34: Would this include the purchase of a Cargo Van used for transport of donated food items from local grocery stores to our pantry facility? Or must the vehicle be used directly in a public-facing capacity?

A34: The purchase of a cargo van used for transport of donated food items from local grocery stores to your pantry facility would be an eligible expenditure under this grant program.

Q35: We operate out of a 100+ year old brownstone in Brooklyn and are in need of a sidewalk lift to transport food between the basement and the ground floor. We have more than doubled our pantry program in the last year, and have added a client choice model, which means that we are receiving and distributing many more pallets of food than we used to, and carrying items up and down our narrow, steep basement stairs is not safe or sustainable.

Is this type of equipment something that might be covered by this grant? It is certainly a food transport issue for us, and facilitating the transport of shelf stable foods into and out of our basement would mean that we have more capacity to receive and distribute fresh fruits and vegetables on our main floor.

A35: A sidewalk lift, for the purposes you described, would be an eligible item under this grant program. This item would be classified as related equipment used in the transport of food which is listed under eligible project types for this grant opportunity.

Q36: Is there anyway we can scan any paperwork and send it via email to apply?

A36: Unfortunately, all applications must be submitted through the NYS SFS Grants Management System and we cannot accept any paper applications.

There are resources provided by SFS Grants Management System to help support you in creating an account for the purposes of doing business with the State of New York. To start, I would suggest contacting the SFS Help Desk at 518-457-7717, 855-233-8363 or HelpDesk@sfs.ny.gov

Here are other resources provided by SFS that may be helpful:

- <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization-sfs>
- <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified>
- <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/transition-sfs>

Q37: Would you be able to provide more clarity on what kinds of projects are required to submit a Smart Growth Assessment form? I see in the Q&A document it says that the

form needs to be completed for public infrastructure projects that receive state funding. Would purchasing a refrigerated van to be used by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to transport food be considered a public infrastructure project?

A37: Purchasing a refrigerated van to transport food would not be considered a public infrastructure project.

Q38: The grant requires a 25% match. If a car dealership agrees to donate 25% of the cost of a vehicle, would that be considered funding from a project partner or would it be considered a cash donation?

A38: For the purposes of this grant, the match source would be considered an in-kind contribution.

When submitting your application, please be sure to provide supporting documentation for this match source (i.e. a receipt that showcases the applied discount or a written statement from the dealership) that showcases the discount will meet the 25% match requirement.

Q39: I am trying to apply to get a SFS Vendor ID # to be able to access the vendor portal to apply for a grant. Can you please point me in the right direction?

A39: If you are brand new to applying for NYS Grants, the following steps should be used (more details and instructions can be found [here](#), but this is a quick summary of what you'll need to do):

- Download and complete the [Grants Management Registration Form for Statewide Financial System Vendors](#)
 - The form must be authorized by the head of the organization and notarized
 - If your organization doesn't have a NYS SFS Vendor ID, complete and attach the Substitute W-9 Form
- Return all forms by email to grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov

Another important thing to note about this grant program is that in addition to being registered, not-for-profits must also be [pre-qualified](#) at the time and date the application is due.

Q40: Question 3(b) allows us to apply for cooling equipment and “related installation costs”. We would like to purchase and install a walk-in freezer that will be housed outside our main facility. In order to prepare the area to receive the freezer we may need to do some minor regrading work so that there will be a stable and straight base for the equipment. Is the ground prep a related installation cost?

A40: The regrading of the area would be considered a related installation cost as long as the regrading work was limited to the area of the freezer and not a broader area not related to the eligible project you are submitting under this grant opportunity.

Q41: I can't seem to find the application that I started yesterday and thought that I saved. Can you offer any insight?

A41: On the Events Details page of the grant opportunity, there is a section titled “Event Description”. In this section you should be able to access your saved bid by clicking on the “1 In-Process” hyperlink located next to a line titled “My Bids” on the right-hand side.

Q42: [In the Event Questions section of the application] What does the “ideal response required” icon mean?

A42: The “Ideal response required” icon indicates that bidders will only be able to type in or select the exact response provided by agencies. For this grant program, I don’t believe there should be any questions set up this way.

Q43: Can you offer any insight into “weighting” and how the application is evaluated?

A43: All projects will be evaluated by DEC for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out). There is no weighting involved in the evaluation of the applications for this grant program.

Q44: What do you mean by “partner organization” in question 1? For example, if we are asking for funding for a freezer and we work with another non-profit who assists us with food recovery, and the food that they help us recover will go into the freezer, are they a “partner organization?”

A44: Yes, they would be a partner organization if you are going to be working with them directly for the project you are submitting.

Q45: Might overdue reporting for other NYS grants have any impact on consideration of this funding?

A45: No. Unless specified in the RFA, overdue reporting for other NYS grants will not have an impact on your consideration for funding. Please see section 10 in the RFA for more information on our reporting requirements.

Q46: I am in the budget properties header – what does “overage percentage” refer to?

A46: The overage percentage refers to the amount a service contract can go over the claims for that category (but keeping within the total awarded contract amount) without having to make any modifications to the contract.

Q47: Does the 25% match have to apply to each line item? For example, if the cost of a piece of equipment is \$20,000 and the match will come from the value of volunteer hours, can I put \$0 in the match for this line and highlight the match elsewhere? As an alternative, does every line item need to identify a 25% match.

A47: The match requirement is calculated for the total eligible project cost. The match (25%) is for the whole budget and not the individual category lines. You should be able to input “zero percent” for match in one line and more than 25% on a different line, such as “Other”. It is calculated together for the overall project when determining if sufficient match is provided. If this

doesn't work for you or it is not appearing right, please reach out to the SFS helpdesk (helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov).

Q48: When calculating the value of volunteer hours, what time frame should we use. We will start on the assumed date the equipment will be installed on the volunteers can commence using the equipment. Since the equipment will be in use for many years, how many years out can we calculate for the volunteer component?

A48: You may only claim in-kind match for items directly related to this project during your contract term. Your contract term length may be up to three years long.

When you submit for reimbursement, if awarded a contract, you will have to provide records/information on the volunteer hours being used as match on this grant.

Q49: How does the size of the request impact the chances of receiving funding? We would like to purchase of walk-in-freezer for our retail rescue program. In an ideal world, we would also like to purchase a generator for this freezer so that in the event of a power outage we do not lose all the food. How might asking for both impact or chances? Would they potentially award us one without the other.

A49: All projects will be reviewed for eligibility on a first-in, first-out basis. If funding is still available at the time your application is reviewed and your project is deemed eligible, the size of your request will not impact your chances of receiving funding. Therefore, submitting a project with both of those items would not impact your chances.

The Department has the ability to partially fund requests based on eligibility and funds remaining in the program.

Q50: We are looking to buy storage shelving with wheels to store food and hygiene items for our food pantry. Would these items qualify?

A50: Unfortunately, storage shelving would not be considered an eligible item under this current grant opportunity.

Q51: [Organization Name] is a non-profit organization, and I oversee the Nutrition Services Program. We provide home delivered and congregate meals to seniors through a contract with the County Office for the Aging. We provide meals to youth in the summer through the SFSP funding and at After-school programs through the CACFP funding. Additionally, we provide meals to those under 60 through self-pay programs.

A) Would we be eligible?

A51 (A): Your organization would be an eligible applicant under this grant opportunity.

B) Our proposed project will focus on the purchase and installation of an additional walk-in freezer, as we have outgrown our current amount of freezer storage as we continue grow and serve additional populations and partners. The goal of adding

an additional walk-in freezer is to serve more meals to those in need of basic nutrition through our current service lines – funders, grants, and self-pay options. The additional freezer space would enable us to accept and redistribute donated frozen foods when/if it is donated to the program. Would this be an eligible submission?

A51 (B): Your project submission would be eligible as long as the project was focused on increasing the availability of donated food for those in need. Therefore, your application and project should be focused on the aspects of your work that provide donations and/or food free of charge. If the freezer may be used for other aspects of your work that are not donation-based/free of charge significantly more than for your donated/free of charge services, that should be reflected in your application and the total eligible project cost of the project.

Please note that Question 5 does require you to describe in detail how your proposed project will increase the amount of food donated to those in need and an estimate of the quantity of increased food that will be donated during the contract period.

Q52: The seniors who participate in our programming at the older adult center are typically low-income. We have a kitchen where we prepare meals for the participants and also cater to other older adult centers. We prepare about 300-350 meals each day, not including breakfast. Our equipment is not in good condition which causes the food to spoil and leads to food waste. We would like to purchase new cooling equipment to reduce food waste at the older adult center. Would this project be eligible under this grant opportunity

A52: This would be an eligible project under this grant opportunity.

Q53: Why are volunteer hours monetized as an in-kind match when they are not paid staff?

A53: We recognize that organizations may not have any paid staff to be used as an in-kind match source. However, the work they are doing is still very important and monetizing volunteer hours enables these organizations to be able to apply and meet the match requirements (if they do not have any other eligible forms of match available to them).

Q54: Do we need to demonstrate proof of ownership for a site if we are purchasing equipment? Our food distribution sites are located at local churches. So we don't own property at any of our food distribution locations.

A54: You do not need to provide proof of ownership for the site if you are purchasing the equipment. In your application, I would suggest including information on the sites such as any important information on your partnership with the site owners (as it pertains to your project), but you don't have to provide any proof of who owns them.

Q55: To my understanding, the funding cap for emergency generators is \$25,000. Does this apply if we are submitting a combination project?

A55: The cap on the emergency generators does still apply if you are submitting a combination project.

Q56: Could a church that has an established food insecurity program apply for this opportunity?

A56: Any 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that provides emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants. As long as a church is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation they could apply and be an eligible applicant under this grant opportunity.

Q57: Could a village that has/supports a food program apply for funding? The Village needs a new commercial refrigerator and stove to continue to support this community program.

A57: For the purposes of this grant program, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations that provide emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants. Therefore, a village would not be eligible to apply as the main applicant.

Q58: I'm just wondering if the workplan is required for this application.

A58: A workplan is required for this grant application.

Q59: Can we incur expenses before receiving an award?

A59: Contract term start dates may be any time between 2/1/2025 - 1/31/27, with an end date up to three years out from the start date chosen. Contract terms can start before a contract is executed. Since this grant is a reimbursement grant, as long as purchases are made within the contract term after you have been awarded a contract, we can reimburse them. No purchases made before your contract start term will be eligible for reimbursement under the grant program.

Q60: Can we include more than one location within one application?

A60: You can include multiple locations under one grant opportunity. Applicants can submit up to one application to this grant opportunity which can include multiple items and/or locations.

Q61: Is there a budget template? Is there a Work Plan template available to populate offline before entering into SFS?

A61: There is not a workplan template to populate offline nor is there a budget template for this opportunity. The workplan, as with the budget, must be entered directly into SFS. However, you are more than welcome to draft your workplan outside of SFS and enter it all at once or at a later time before submitting your application.

Q62: In the guidelines, it mentions that points can be awarded if we make our case for alignment with REDC plans for our region (pg 10). Is there a place in the application for doing that, or should we integrate that into questions 4&5?

A62: For REDC Alignment, there is no spot to integrate this into your application, but if you would like to describe it within one of those questions feel free. However, our grant is eligibility-based, so there is no additional points or preference provided in our specific grant for REDC Alignment. Thanks for pointing this out as we will make sure to check if in the future we can remove this language from the RFA to avoid any confusion.

Q63: We are planning to upgrade our truck fleet for our food rescue and food delivery programs in 2025 and are proposing using funds to support the leasing of these upgraded vehicles with matching funds in-kind from driver salaries. I have included these amounts in the project budget – do I need to attach anywhere an estimate for the leasing expenses from the company we use?

A63: You do not need to attach an estimate as there is not a spot in the application to do so. As long as you provided a detailed description of the equipment that will be purchased/leased in Question 5 and include the amounts in the project budget, you are all set.

Q64: How can we reflect funding that is not eligible for matching but we intend to use towards equipment to be purchased with grant funds?

A64: In this case, it would still function as match funds. You would just be providing more than the 25% match requirement for this opportunity, which is acceptable. To show this in your application, please be sure to describe your match sources in Question 7 where you can indicate that it you will have over 25% in match funds. Additionally, you will also include your match funds in the budget aspect of the application. I believe your match funds can exceed the 25% match requirement when entering your budget information in. However, if you are having any issues with that, please contact the SFS Helpdesk (helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov) as they can provide more assistance with the technical aspects of the application process.

Q65: The instructions ask for the answer to question 5 to be submitted via PDF but does not have an attachment option as the application does for other questions asking for a PDF attachment. Is question 5 meant to be answered within the 2000-character text box, or is it meant to be answered via PDF attached somewhere else within the application?

A65: Unfortunately, the question was not set up to allow an attachment as the instructions state and we unable to change it retroactively. We will be amending the RFA to communicate this. Please answer the question within the 2000-character limit text box as this question cannot accept an attachment.

Q66: We plan to apply for a vehicle to increase our food input/output—specifically, an electric cargo van. Can we include the cost of the charging station and the installation of the charger at our facility since they are one-time costs connected to the equipment, or should those costs be displayed as a portion of our match?

A66: Yes, you can include the cost of the charging station and the installation of the charger at your facility as part of your requested funding. We would consider it related equipment under the “trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment (e.g. trailers, insulated food storage containers, scales, etc.) used in the transport of food” project category for this grant opportunity.

Q67: We are working on completing the grant. Does the 2000 character limit include spaces? Or if it does, is it possible to exceed the 2000 character limit?

A67: The character limit does include spaces, and the question must be answered within the text box provided in the application. Therefore, if SFS does not allow more than the set character limit, it cannot be exceeded.

Q68: If we are getting a new refrigerated truck, and plan to have it wrapped with branded graphics as part of the project, will that wrapping/branding component of the project be eligible for support? We would be happy to put a DEC support acknowledgement/logo into the wrap design if that is appropriate.

A68: 1. The wrapping/branding component of the project would be eligible for support under this project. If you are awarded a contract for your project, we can discuss the DEC acknowledgement/logo more and how that would work.

Q69: [In regards to Question #5] Since we have estimates from a variety of contractors can I create my own summary of the equipment on a single word document? Do you need me to outline all the items that will need to be purchased for site prep or just the large pieces of equipment (i.e. freezer and generator). Also – Do I need to include estimated prices for each of these items in this document.

A69: You do not need to include any estimates, just a detailed description of the equipment you will be purchasing for your project.

Q70: I am the process of applying for funding to purchase and install a walk-in-freezer and related generator. My draft application currently includes 3 budget lines and the budget narrative outlines expenses related to the purchase, installation, and preparation of an outdoor walk-in freezer and its associated generator. Line 1 is based on a quote for an outdoor walk-in freezer, which includes the floor and the installation of vendor-provided outdoor air-cooled refrigeration equipment. Line 2 pertains to the purchase, installation, and operation of a generator needed to support the freezer. Line 3 reflects estimates for site preparation, including costs for a cement pad, safety bollards, an awning, electric service, and architectural plans and drawings. Is this sufficient or do I need to itemize every aspect of what is involved in set up, construction and site prep?

A70: The information you provided would be sufficient.

Q71: I am trying to finish the grant application for Grant ID EFRO24 (Food Relief Equipment), and I am having a problem on the Work Plan Properties page. Even though I have entered two tasks with performance measures, I still receive the following error message:

***Please enter the following required field(s)**

Row Number: 3 – Performance Measure Response Type

Row Number: 5 -- Performance Measure Response Type

Can you please advise what I need to do to correct this?

A71: Without having access to see this part of the application, it seems like you need to specify the performance measure response type using the instructions below:

1. On the top of the Work Plan (where you entered in your objectives, tasks, and performance measures) click the "More Details" tab
2. In the "Perf Measure Response Type" column, you should see a drop down option for the rows your performance measures (as well as tasks) are in. Click on this drop down.
3. In the drop down, you should have 5 options for the performance measure response type, choose one.

Q72: We are leasing our property, and will be doing an electrical upgrade to the property in order to accommodate plugging in the [refrigerated] truck [to be used as a standby refrigerated unit when not in use]. I know that the electrical upgrade can be funded, but are there any issues with us leasing the property? Will we need to provide proof of the lease, does it need to be long term, etc?

A72: There is not a problem with you performing an electrical upgrade on a leased property as long as the upgrade is used in relation to your project throughout the length of your self-determined contract term. We do not require you to provide proof of your lease.

Q73: I have completed the grant application for the Emergency Food Relief Delivery Grant and have validated all responses. However, the submit button is grayed out so I can't select it. What else do I need to do so that I can submit it?

A73: Please reach out to the SFS Helpdesk as they should be able identify specifically what is causing the error and how to fix it. They can be reached at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or 518-457-7717. If you opt to email them, it is recommended to include a screenshot of the issue along with a detailed description.

Q78: I did a password reset today on my account seeing that I never logged in with the info they provided. I never received the reset link. What's my next move? Could I forward you the original logging information?

A78: We would suggest that you reach out to the SFS helpdesk. They would be able to best assist you in getting access to your account. The helpdesk can be reached at 877-737-4185 (toll free), 518-457-7737, or by email at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. We have been told that if you call, it is better to call early in the morning as they get very busy throughout the day with calls.

Q79: I am applying for the Grant EFRO24. We are a 501 c3. We went through the verification process earlier this year. Do we need to do another to apply for this grant?

A79: If you are referring to the prequalification process, you do not have to do that process again as long as everything is still up to date.

Q80: In exploring the opportunity, as one of the largest food pantries in [the County], I see that this is available mainly for municipalities not for non-profits. Do you have a moment to answer questions about the criteria to team up with a municipality on this grant? We have many active and long term (over 55 years) trusted partners, but would like to ask a couple questions about the criteria for choosing a partner.

A80: We have two grant programs open right now with one being the Municipal Food Scraps Recycling Initiatives Grant Program and the other being the Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant Program.

If you are interested in working on food scraps recycling initiatives, you would need to partner with a municipality. However, to apply for the Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant, you would not need to partner with a municipality. Any 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that provides emergency food relief in NYS is considered an eligible applicant for that grant opportunity.

Q81: I am working on a local emergency food relief equipment grant response on behalf of [an organization]. I read the Q&A and saw that application forms such as the sexual harassment certification and the EO16 can be found within the application, however, I cannot find them. Can you please advise on where to locate these forms?

A81: You should be able to access the documents by clicking at the link titled "Event Comments and Attachments" at the very bottom of the main application page in SFS.

Q82: Upon [entering the total project cost into the "Your Unit Bid Price" in the Lines section on the main application page], I did have an error message pop up, [that stated "Amount requested in Line #1 does not equal Budget Amount]. Do you know why this issue is occurring and what we can adjust to be approved?

A82: To solve the error, you need to enter the amount of grant funds requested into the box under "Your Unit Bid Price" on the main application page instead of the total project cost.

Q83: Per the RFP page 12 of 18, 9. Eligible and Ineligible Expenditures, a. Eligible Project Expenditures, "Trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment (e.g., trailers, insulated food storage containers, scales, etc.) used in the transport of food". Can we tailor our project concept to the purchase of one or more Dual Temperature Refrigerated Containers. Under this model a lesser grant request would be made (well under the max allowable \$100,000). Would this be an allowable grant expense instead?

A83: Yes, as mentioned in the RFA, insulated food storage containers are an eligible expense that you could include in your application for this grant opportunity.

Q84: Using the example on page 10 [of the webinar presentation], if we are buying \$93,754 of equipment, it will require \$31,251 of matching funds. This totals \$125,005. See

attached screenshot. In filling out the budget worksheet, which number should we put in the "Grant Funds Request" column; and which should go in the "Match Funds" column? If I complete it as below it shows the 25% matching, which is good, but it shows the Total as "\$156,256" which I do not understand. WE are trying to get \$93,754 refunded.

A84: Based on the information you provided, if you are looking to be reimbursed for \$93,754 you would want to enter that information into the "Grant Funds Requested" column. You would then want to keep the \$31,251.33 in the "Match Funds" column. This would mean you would be providing more than 25% match in order to be reimbursed for a total of \$93,754. The total project cost would be \$93,754 plus the volunteer/staff in-kind cost (in this case \$7,812.83 worth of time), so the match needed would then come out to a total of \$31,251.33 (\$7,812.83 + 23,438.50 of in-kind match) (or 33%).

If you would only want to provide 25% match, in whatever form of match you have, you would put \$70,315.50 in the "Grant Funds Requested" column and then \$23,438.50 in the "Match Funds" column. However, this would mean you would only get reimbursed \$70,315.50 of the \$93,754 (75% of the project cost).

Q85: In the RFA, and in the response to many questions in the Q&A document, it is stated that "Any 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that provides emergency food relief in New York State, excluding New York State Food Banks, are considered eligible applicants."

However, we are confused by this bullet point later in the eligibility section of the RFA: "For the purposes of this grant opportunity, a community-based organization is an organization that: Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City;"

Does this restriction apply to all 501c3 applicants for this opportunity? Are we eligible to apply if our activities include distribution farther than our town?

A85: Your organization would be eligible to apply even if your activities include distribution farther than your town.

Q86: We are based in the North Country and get a lot of snow. Not being able to plow our driveway and loading areas inhibits our distribution of food and we would like to purchase a snowblower. Would this be an eligible expense as related equipment under, "Trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment (e.g., trailers, insulated food storage containers, scales, etc.) used in the transport of food"?

A86: Unfortunately, a snowblower would not be an eligible expense under this grant opportunity.

Q87: Where is the budget part in the RFA?

A87: Information on the budget can be found Section 5 of the RFA which starts on page 6 of the RFA document.

Q88: Sexual Harassment Certification -- is this for the organization or for the person submitting on behalf of the organization?

A88: The Sexual Harassment Certification is for the organization.

Q89: If we are requesting \$100,000 in funding + 25% in matching funds @ (\$25,000) then we submit a budget for the \$100,000 or total \$125,000?

A89: When entering your budget into the SFS application, you would want to input \$100,000 into the "Grant Funds Requested" part of the budget and then calculation your match from the \$100,000. SFS will then automatically calculate the total project cost for you.

Q90: Many applicants have requested support in completing the work plan and budget aspects of the grant application in SFS.

A90: There are many resources that exist that detail how to complete these two parts of the application:

- In the webinar that was hosted on November 13th, we provided an overview on how to complete these two sections:
<https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/ldr.php?RCID=089da3275eedc43b929f82dd311a93c5>
- SFS Coach provides many trainings that are helpful. The video titled 'Searching/Responding To Grant Opportunities (Bids)' also walks through completing the budget and workplan in SFS

Q91: My brief question is, would an eligible project for funding be to purchase a shed for the purposes of food storage as a reimbursable expense? Would the secondary costs that we would seek reimbursement for also be eligible: to insulate the shed, add electric power to cool food, and then to add refrigerators inside the shed?

A91: Unfortunately per the RFA, this opportunity is restricted to trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment used in the transport of food, cooling equipment and related installation costs, and emergency generators and related installation costs dedicated to preserving food for donation. Therefore, the shed purchase/construction would not be an eligible expenditure for reimbursement. However, the project costs associated with the shed can count towards your match contribution as the other expenditures you listed (insulating the shed, adding electric power to cool food, and adding refrigerators inside the shed) would be eligible for reimbursement under this grant opportunity.

Q92: Per the RFP page 12 of 18, 9. Eligible and Ineligible Expenditures, a. Eligible Project Expenditures, "Trucks, refrigerated vehicles, and related equipment (e.g., trailers, insulated food storage containers, scales, etc.) used in the transport of food".

Can we tailor our project concept to the purchase of one or more Dual Temperature Refrigerated Containers. Under this model a lesser grant request would be made (well under the max allowable \$100,000).

Would this be an allowable grant expense instead?

A92: Yes, as mentioned in the RFA, insulated food storage containers are an eligible expense that you could include in your application for this grant opportunity.

Q93: Based on my understanding, eligible expenses include any equipment related to the transportation of food (e.g. trucks or other vehicles), and can be refrigerated/cooled transportation or non-refrigerated/cooled transportation – for example, eligible expenses could be either a regular van used for transportation shelf-stable pantry items, or a refrigerated van used for transporting perishable food. Is this correct?

A93: Yes, the vehicle used for the transportation of food could be refrigerated or non-refrigerated. Both examples you provided would be eligible.

Q94: Also based on my understanding, eligible expenses for storage of food would need to be cool/refrigerated storage, not non-refrigerated/non-temperature controlled storage. Is this correct?

A94: That is correct. In this grant opportunity, eligible equipment types include equipment used in the transport of food, cooling equipment, and emergency generators. Storage equipment would need to be used to transport food or keep food cold in order to be an eligible expense.

Q95: Can we include multiple items in our request – for example, a refrigerated truck and walk-in fridge – or can we only request funding for one item?

A95: You can include multiple items in your request. The only limitation to the number of items you can request is that the maximum grant amount for this opportunity is \$100,000. Please also note that only one application per applicant can be accepted. You can add multiple items to the one application you can submit.

Q96: If funds were awarded, are the disbursed after the purchase is made?

A96: Yes, this is a reimbursement-based grant program.

Q97: Would we need to include the names of funders for other sources of funding?

A97: You do not need to include the name of the funders in the application for other sources of funding. Eligible forms of match under this grant opportunity include cash, funding from other grant sources (cannot include other State or Federal Grants), funding from project partners, and in-kind sources that are directly related to the project.

Q98: Would you be able to tell me how much money is left for this grant?

A98: We are still accepting applications and plan to accept applications until the January 31st deadline outlined in the Request for Applications.

Q99: In question #7 about the matched funds; do we include where the source of the 25% match funds or what will the match funds be used for or both?

A99: For question #7, you need to describe the match sources (equaling at least 25% of total project cost) you will be using for this project.

Q100: Where do we attach the prequalification confirmation page?

A100: You do not need to include the prequalification confirmation page in your application. The system is able to automatically update us if your organization is prequalified.

Q101: If we are requesting 100,000 for the grant and I enter this, as indicated in your response, then the funded and max award reads 125,000 as in the attached pics. Is this correct?

A101: That should be correct as long as you entered \$100,000 into the "Grant Funds Requested" part of the budget table. The total project cost would be \$125,000, but you will only be requesting \$100,000 in grant funds.

Q102: I know that the submission period is not completely over, but I was wondering if you know when organizations might hear whether we will receive funding.

A102: We will begin reviewing applications after the application deadline (January 31, 2025) on a first-in, first-out basis. The anticipated award date listed in the Request for Applications (March 2, 2025) is an estimate for reviewing and awarding all grant applications under this program.

Q103: My organization has an office location and a distribution location. What address should I put for the project location in the application?

A103: You should use the address that is most associated with your proposed project.

Q104: If an agency filled out their application for the food relief grant incorrectly and their applications are incomplete, are you guys reaching out to them directly to make sure that they complete them or is there a notification that goes out to them?

A104: There are two items that must be submitted with an application and failure to submit them requires us to consider a bid non-responsive. These are the Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification and the EO16 Certification.

If other aspects of the grant application are completed incorrectly, we may have the ability to address them once we start to review applications. We will be able to reach out to them directly and will provide more details on how missing or incorrect items may be able to be changed after the January 31st deadline.

Q105: We are applying for this grant and want to know if we are purchasing a refrigerated vehicle for a mobile food pantry, does the vehicle have to be new or can it be pre-owned?

A105: The vehicle can be new or pre-owned.

Q106: I am reviewing the 2024 Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant that has a deadline of January 31, 2025, or until funds are exhausted. I see a note at the bottom of the website that the application period is now closed - would you be willing to confirm for me that this funding opportunity is no longer available? The way it is laid out on the website leaves me with a bit of confusion, I apologize but I do want to confirm in case I am misunderstanding. This would be the fund that supports freezers/refrigerated trucks/etc.

A106: The 2024 Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment Grant Program is still open and will remain open until January 31, 2025.

We offered a similar grant program last year and information on that program is still available on our website.

Q107: We have uploaded all our documentation for prequalification. But since January 8th, we are still waiting on char410. Is it possible we can have an extension on the deadline/ submit the application before while we wait on the attorney general's office approval of the char410?

A107: We are unable to offer extensions. All applications must be submitted by 3pm on January 31, 2025 and all not-for-profits must be prequalified at the time and date that the application is due.

Q108: [Applicant] submitted two grant applications in response to the Local Emergency Food Relief Equipment RFP on 11/21/24. I'm wondering when we can expect to be notified about the status of our applications.

A108: All projects will be evaluated by DEC for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out) starting after the application deadline of January 31, 2025. We anticipate announcing awards by March 2, 2025.

Please note, per the RFA, applicants may submit up to one application and multiple applications may not be submitted for the same project or project location. We will provide more information on how this affects organizations who have submitted more than one application when the review process begins.

Q109: We have questions regarding the grant application, do we need to provide a work plan and an MWBE form at this time or after the grant is awarded?

A109: A completed work plan in SFS is required as part of the grant application. We do not require an MWBE form to be submitted for this grant program.

Q110: When uploading our work plan, I'm assuming we submit it as an additional document, am I correct?

A110: The workplan is entered directly into SFS.

Q111: I received an email regarding a CHAR 700 which looked phishy. I wanted to confirm before opening the link. We addressed the Char410/500 during the application process.

A111: I would suggest reaching out to the SFS Helpdesk about this as they will be able to provide you more information on its validity. We don't require a form with that name to be submitted for this grant opportunity. They can be reached at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or 518-457-7717.

Q112: My organization already submitted an application for equipment for our food shelter, but after recent conversations, we thought of other equipment purchases that would greatly benefit our food distribution ability. Would it be possible to submit another application? Or if it is under a certain \$ amount, would it be possible to add onto our current application?

A112: Per the RFA, applicants may submit up to one application and multiple applications may not be submitted for the same project or project location. We will provide more information on how this affects organizations who have submitted more than one application when the review process begins.

Please keep in mind all projects will be evaluated by DEC for eligibility in the order in which they are received (first-in, first-out) starting after the application deadline of January 31, 2025.

Q113: I am looking for a grant opportunity for my catering business.

A113: Unfortunately, a catering business would not be an eligible applicant for our two open grant programs.

More information on other organics funding opportunities can be found on our website:
<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recycling-composting/organic-materials-management/funding-opportunities-for-organics-management>