

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund

VFAIF: How to Pre-apply



VFAIF: Overview

- Created by the General Assembly in 2020
- Statewide program administered through VDACS
- Invests in new or expanding food retailers that address food access issues
- Focused on promoting equity and justice in local food systems
- Rooted in community leadership
- Individual award amounts will range from \$5,000 - \$50,000
- Reimbursable grant

VFAIF: Eligible Expenses

VFAIF funds can cover the following costs:

- Personnel
- Travel
- Infrastructure
- Equipment
- Supplies/Materials
- Contractual
- Purchase of Virginia-grown products
- Other

VFAIF: 2022-23 Grant Timeline

Important dates

- **November 1 to December 16 – Pre-proposal period is open.**
 - December 21 - February 10 – Grant round is open for select applicants.
 - May 2023 – Award announcement
 - June 1 – Project period begins

VFAIF: Steps to Submit a Pre-proposal

Step 1

Read the guidelines and determine if your project is eligible by meeting 6 requirements:

1. Must have or will have a food retail component; and
2. Must accept or will accept SNAP/EBT; and
3. Must be informed and supported by the community; and
4. Must improve food access in low-income, low-access communities;
5. Must have leadership made up of members of the community that is being served by the project; and
6. Must source or will source at least 25% of its fresh retail food from Virginia producers.

VFAIF: Steps to Submit a Pre-proposal

Step 2

Attend an optional VFAIF webinar, which you are doing now. 😊

Step 3

Complete the pre-proposal through the Foundant portal, which you can find on the VDACS [web page](#).

Step 4

Applicants will be notified on December 21 if they are invited to submit a full application.

VFAIF Projects from 2021

Shalom Farms and Richmond Food Justice Alliance (RFJA)

- Partnership between two non-profits
- Shalom Farms has capital and capacity to assist RFJA in setting up its food access program; Shalom Farms will slowly phase out when RFJA is ready to run independently
- Overall, one has more capital and is serving as a bridge until the other can fully implement pop-up markets in low-income/low-access areas

Youth Earn and Learn

- Programming focuses on teaching youth entrepreneurial skills
- Youth-led pop-up markets in low-income/low-access neighborhoods
- Led by a community member for their community

VFAIF Projects from 2021

Honaker Wholesale

- Sells fresh produce in low income/low access rural area
- Received funding to purchase more coolers for their small store
- Reported that since implementing Virginia Fresh Match, their sales have tripled!

Doña Fer Grocery Store

- Sells fresh produce in low income/low access and primarily Latinx neighborhood
- Received funding to purchase a new cooler and repair an existing cooler
- The community provided letters of support for the project because it wanted these equipment upgrades

Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD)

A community-anchored development strategy that:

- uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities and healthy neighborhoods, and
- explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and shared power by and with low-income, low-access communities.

www.efod.org

Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD)

What does EFOD look like?

- Community-led decision making and ownership of solutions
- Businesses are supported to stay in the community over time
- Community economic security is developed
- Community culture is maintained and promoted

What doesn't EFOD look like?

- Charity model, with little personal agency
- No long-term community assets built
- Outside-owned development or project



Example EFOD Projects

What does EFOD look like?

- Convenience store adding refrigeration and freezer capacity to increase culturally appropriate fresh produce and adds SNAP/Fresh Match
- Market adding a mobile component and hiring community youth for workforce
- Café responds to local resident advisory committee wanting café to add fresh produce from local producers in addition to pre-prepared foods and to add a community gathering space

What doesn't EFOD look like?

- Food pantries
- School meal programs
- Community food donation boxes
- Purchase of land
- Anything “for” a community without the community’s input

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Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing-food-access-investment-fund>

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