

## Virginia Food Access Investment Fund Application Instructions and Checklist

### **Instructions**

The application for the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (VFAIF) program will give you the opportunity to describe your program and how it relates to the eligibility criteria that are outlined in the [VFAIF Guidelines](#); the criteria are also listed at the end of these instructions.

The first step in the application process is to complete a pre-proposal and submit it to program staff at the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). Upon submitting the form, applicants should contact VDACS staff to discuss the pre-proposal. After an initial conversation with VDACS staff, the applicant will develop an application and budget. Applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback from VDACS staff prior to submitting the final application. Applications that are submitted without the prior knowledge of VDACS staff will not be considered.

The VFAIF program contact at VDACS is:

**Sara Santa Cruz: 804-398-0382; [sara.santacruz@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:sara.santacruz@vdacs.virginia.gov)**

The VFAIF program application is made up of eight parts.

- I. Overview: Provide the basic information about your project, including its title, start and end date; contact information, and requested funding amount. Note that the project end date may be approximate.
- II. Required Criteria: Describe how the project meets each of the required criteria.
- III. Prioritized Criteria: Describe how the project meets each of the prioritized criteria.
- IV. Budget and Budget Narrative: Complete the budget form. Show the costs of the project overall and the costs for the part of the project's funding that you are requesting through the VFAIF grant. Add lines in each category as needed, and leave blank any items that don't apply. Provide a narrative explaining the costs in each of the categories. Attach additional sheets as necessary.
- V. Work Plan: Describe the steps that you will take to reach completion of the project, who will perform these steps, and an approximate timeline for each step.
- VI. Metrics and Outcomes: Explain the outcomes of the project and how you will determine that these outcomes have been reached.
- VII. Community Support: Provide the name and affiliation of one or two community leaders (formal or informal) to accompany you to an interview if you are chosen. This person should be able to speak on behalf of you and the project. Note that you may opt to bring a different person to the interview than the person you listed on the application.
- VIII. Include a copy of your resume in you application packet. Note: if the applicant is a business, organization, or other entity, submit a resume for the primary contact person for this project.

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Mail or scan your completed pre-proposal and application packet to:

**VDACS Virginia Food Access Investment Fund**  
**Attn: Sara Santa Cruz**  
**102 Governor Street**  
**Richmond, VA 23219**  
[sara.santacruz@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:sara.santacruz@vdacs.virginia.gov)  
**The application deadline is April 30, 2021.**

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**Application Review**

In preparing your VFAIF application, have you completed the following?

- Submitted your pre-proposal to VDACS staff
- Made contact with VDACS staff
- Completed application form
- Completed budget form and budget narrative
- Completed work plan
- Provided name and affiliation of at least one community leader to vouch for the applicant
- Attached a resume

**Grantee Review**

Once you are accepted into the program, you will be required to provide the following information.

- Commonwealth of Virginia Substitute W-9 form with original signature
- Documentation of active or pending SNAP or Virginia Fresh Match participation, as applicable
- VDACS staff will work with you to track your Virginia-grown purchases

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### **VFAIF Project Criteria**

#### **Projects must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding:**

- Have a retail component where consumers can purchase fresh meats, seafood, dairy, produce, and/or healthy food options
- Directly serve residents within underserved, low food access communities
- Demonstrate a history of community engagement, work in the community, and community support for the project
- Accept SNAP benefits and offer Virginia Fresh Match incentives
- Purchase a minimum of 25% of fresh products from Virginia's small, beginning, limited resource, Veteran, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (as designated by USDA/ERS [ers.usda.gov](http://ers.usda.gov)).

#### **Prioritization will be given to projects that meet the following criteria:**

- The entity receiving funds is owned or substantially led by individuals from historically marginalized and vulnerable communities, or is working in an active, ongoing partnership with these individuals, which must include shared leadership, decision-making, resources, and/or shared economic benefit
- Provide customer access, either by providing/coordinating transportation to the business or by providing a mobile market component that brings products to the community
- Integrate community culture and artistic expression in the business model
- Develop new markets and enterprises, creating real and sustainable economic opportunities
- Provide a path for financial sustainability and positive outcomes to the community, including education, leadership and youth development, employment of community residents, job training, or workforce development
- Demonstrate success in creating partnerships and/or efforts to leverage additional funding. Include a defined plan to create partnerships that allow the business to offset the cost of products sold to the consumer

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