



**New Jersey Economic Development Authority  
Food Equity and Economic Development Pilot Program  
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the Food Equity and Economic Development in New Jersey (“FEED NJ” or “Program”) Pilot Program on February 20, 2025 at 10:00 AM ET. Applications will be accepted through April 3, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET.

As approved by the Authority Board on December 19, 2024, the Program will make available up to \$30 million in grant funding through a competitive application process to eligible applicants for projects that strengthen food access and food security in New Jersey’s most acute Food Desert Communities (“FDCs”), excluding Atlantic City/Ventnor. The Approved Board Memorandum can be accessed at: <https://www.njeda.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Board-Memo-FEED-NJ.pdf>.

There is no application fee for this program. The application can be accessed at: <https://www.njeda.gov/feednj/>.

**Purpose and Overview**

The Food Desert Relief Act (“FDRA”), signed into law in January 2021, directed NJEDA to collaborate with the New Jersey Departments of Community Affairs and Agriculture to designate up to 50 FDCs across the state. The FDRA also allocated a total of \$240 million in tax credits to NJEDA and allowed a portion of these to be sold to fund programs to alleviate food deserts and support food security initiatives in FDCs. FEED NJ was created to use the proceeds from the sale of FDRA tax credits to address the multifaceted challenges of food insecurity in New Jersey's most acute FDCs. The program aims to catalyze innovative, sustainable, and scalable food security and food access initiatives with high potential to maximize community-level impact.

**Funding Source**

The Program will utilize up to \$30 million of funding from proceeds of the NJEDA's 2023 and 2024 Food Desert Relief Tax Credit Auctions. The FDRA allowed the NJEDA to sell a portion of the \$240 million in tax credits allocated by the FDRA (\$40 million annually) through tax credit auctions. Eligible bidders could purchase available credits for a minimum of 85 percent of face value for New Jersey Corporate Business Tax or Insurance Premiums Tax liabilities. The proceeds from these auctions must be used to fund programs to alleviate food deserts and support food security initiatives in FDCs through grants, loans, and/or technical assistance.

The total funding and potential award amount are based upon current information about funding availability. NJEDA reserves the right to increase that award amount and number of awards should additional funds become available.

**Program Details**

FEED NJ aims to strengthen food access and food security, particularly in New Jersey's most acute FDCs. The program specifically targets 14 of New Jersey's top 15 FDCs, excluding Atlantic City/Ventnor as it was the sole focus of the Atlantic City Food Security Grant Pilot Program. These FDCs are located across eight counties and include portions of 11 municipalities, home to 567,349 residents. The eligible FDCs are North, Central and South Camden/Woodlynne, Newark South, Newark West, Camden East/Pennsauken, Trenton West, Newark North and Central, Newark East, Salem City, Passaic City, Trenton East, Bridgeton/Fairfield Twp/Lawrence Twp, Paterson South, New Brunswick City, and Paterson North. The boundaries of an FDC generally do not include an entire municipality because FDCs are designated at the block-group level. The boundaries of eligible FDCs can be seen in the [interactive map](#) available on EDA's website.

Applicants may also elect to serve additional NJEDA-designated FDCs, provided the primary focus remains on at least one of the 14 eligible FDCs.

### **Eligibility**

Eligible applicants are for-profit or nonprofit entities that have been in existence for at least two years at the time of application. Municipalities and other government agencies are **not** eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. Applicants are limited to one application per EIN.

Applicants must be in good standing with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Additionally, applicants must be registered to do business in New Jersey and in substantial good standing with the NJ Division of Taxation, as evidenced by a current Tax Clearance Certificate. For projects involving construction, evidence of site control or a path to site control must be provided at the time of application.

Applicants may propose collaborating with other entities. If any other entity incurs expenses as part of the proposed project, those expenses and that entity's role must be described in the application. NJEDA will disburse grant funds only to the applicant entity directly and will not permit a joint venture. Joint ventures are **not** eligible to apply for this grant opportunity.

### **Eligible Uses**

Proposed projects may be new initiatives, an expansion of existing services, or both. Eligible costs can include but are not necessarily limited to minor renovation, equipment, installation, salaries and fringe, and rent. Acquisition of land or buildings, ground-up construction, fines incurred because of code or zoning violations, and major renovations (e.g., construction of an additional floor or an addition to the building footprint) are **not** eligible costs. All costs must be incurred after the date of grant agreement execution and are subject to the Authority's approval of the project budget and supporting documentation. Additionally, construction-related work must comply with state affirmative action requirements and prevailing wage requirements.

### **Application Submission and Review Process**

Applications will be accepted via the Program's online application portal during the six-week application period from February 20, 2025 10am EST to April 3, 2025 5pm EST. Applicants must complete all required application questions fully and upload all required documents. NJEDA staff will review all applications for completeness and eligibility. Applicants that fail to provide required information will be given an opportunity to cure those deficiencies before a final completeness and eligibility review. Following this review, applications that are incomplete, including those that do not provide responses to all required questions or fail to provide all required documentation, will be rejected. Applications that do not meet the applicant eligibility criteria will be declined and will not proceed to scoring.

All complete and eligible applications will proceed to scoring. Scoring will be conducted by a committee of NJEDA staff. A minimum score of 70 points, including a minimum of 8 points in the Strength of Budget and Budget Narrative criterion, will be required out of a maximum total score of 100. Only applications scoring at or above both of these two minimum scores will be considered for an award.

**A copy of the FEED NJ scoring criteria is available at <https://www.njeda.gov/feednj/>.**

Following scoring, applications will be presented to the Board for funding approval. Funding will be allocated to the highest scoring applicants, proceeding in decreasing order of score to other applicants that meet the minimum score requirement, until insufficient funds remain to fully fund the next eligible application.

In the event of a tie in scoring, the award will be made to the applicant with a higher “Project Impact” criterion score. If that score is equal, then the award be made to the applicant that has secured additional outside funding for total project costs, as demonstrated through the budget narrative.

If funds remain after the initial allocation, NJEDA staff will notify the next highest scoring applicant that meets the minimum score requirement and specify the amount of funds remaining. The applicant will have 10 business days from the date of being notified to either accept the partial funding and provide proof of additional funding to cover the remaining project costs or to revise their scope of work and budget to match the partial funding.

### **Grant Amounts**

Applicants may request a grant amount ranging from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$500,000. Grant funds may cover up to 100 percent of the proposed project costs. If grant funds from NJEDA are not requested to cover 100 percent of the proposed project costs, additional funding sources (both potential and secured) must be described in the budget narrative submitted with the application.

### **Closing Requirements**

Following approval by the Board and execution of their award letter, approved applicants must meet certain requirements of closing before a grant agreement will be executed. If applicant fails to meet closing requirements within 90 business days of receiving the grant agreement, NJEDA staff will return to the Board to seek approval for the next highest scoring eligible applicant that meet the minimum score requirement. For projects involving construction, applicants must provide evidence of site control for the duration of the grant term. For all other projects, applicants must provide evidence of site control for the duration of the grant term if applicable and at the discretion of the Authority. Applicants that identified outside funding sources in their project budget must provide evidence of commitment/availability of such funding.

### **Grant Funding Disbursements**

The disbursement schedule for the grant is as follows:

- 30 percent of the grant will be disbursed upon execution of a grant agreement between NJEDA and the selected applicant.
- Once the applicant’s quarterly expenditure reports demonstrate that the initial disbursement has been spent on eligible costs, further expenditures on eligible costs will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the grant amount, upon the Authority’s review and approval of the applicant’s quarterly expenditure reports.
- Up to 20 percent of the grant amount will be disbursed upon the Authority’s review and approval of the applicant’s final progress and expenditure reports. Approval of these reports will be contingent on

the applicant demonstrating that expenditures were made for eligible costs. Disbursements will be made only up to the value of actual eligible costs or the approved grant amount, whichever is lower.

Grantees will be required to provide progress and expenditure reports to NJEDA quarterly, starting at grant execution and extending through the end of the grant term of either 12 or 24 months. At the sole discretion of the Authority, one 6-month extension may be granted if NJEDA determines the grantee is diligently pursuing the use and the delay was unforeseeable and not in the grantee's control. At the end of the grant term, these quarterly reports will be replaced by final progress and expenditure reports. These reports must provide updates on grantees' progress against their proposed project timeline, data on the project's outcomes and impact (e.g. number of people served), and project costs since the last report.

### **Fees**

No application fees will be charged for this program.

### **Additional Requirements and Information**

Comprehensive information about FEED is available at <https://www.njeda.gov/feednj/>.

Questions concerning this Program's Notice of Funding Availability should be submitted to [foodsecuritygrants@njeda.gov](mailto:foodsecuritygrants@njeda.gov).

### **State and Federal Requirements**

Funding for this grant is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions including grant awards by the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology.