

Appendix C: Program Specifications

Food Equity and Economic Development in New Jersey (FEED NJ) Pilot Program Proposed Program Specifications December 19, 2024	
Funding Source	<p>FEED NJ will initially be funded by \$30 million in proceeds from NJEDA’s 2023 and 2024 Food Desert Relief Tax Credit Auctions. Should any unused or unspent funds from previously approved NJEDA food security programs or additional proceeds from the 2024 Food Desert Relief Tax Credit Auction become available, staff are requesting delegation to the Chief Executive Officer to accept and deposit up to \$5,000,000 of these funds into ERF for FEED NJ.</p>
Program Purpose	<p>FEED NJ will make grants available for projects to strengthen food access and food security focused on New Jersey’s most acute Food Desert Communities (FDCs). In doing this, the program aims to catalyze innovative, sustainable, and scalable food security and food access initiatives with high potential to maximize community-level impact, while accounting for the unique context and circumstances of each FDC.</p>
Eligible Applicants	<p>Applicants must meet the following basic eligibility criteria to proceed to further scoring and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant is a for-profit or nonprofit entity that has been in existence for at least two years at the time of application • Applicant is in good standing with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection • Applicant is 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, applicant must provide evidence of site control or a path to site control at the time of application <p>Applicants are limited to one application per EIN. Municipalities and other government agencies are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity.</p> <p>Applicants may propose collaborating with other entities. If any other entity will incur 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.</p>
Geographic Eligibility	<p>This program focuses on 14 of New Jersey’s top 15 FDCs, excluding Atlantic City/Ventnor. These FDCs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trenton East • Bridgeton/Fairfield Twp/Lawrence Twp • Paterson South • New Brunswick city • Paterson North <p>The boundaries of eligible FDCs can be seen in the interactive map available on EDA’s website. To target resources to the most acute FDCs in New Jersey, FEED NJ will only support projects that propose to primarily serve residents of one or more of the 14 eligible FDCs. Applicants may also elect to serve additional NJEDA-designated FDCs, provided the primary focus remains on at least one of the 14 eligible FDCs.</p>
Eligible Uses	<p>Grant funds will be awarded only to applicants that indicate that they will use the grant funds for projects to improve food access and/or food security that primarily serve residents in one or more of the 14 eligible FDCs. Proposed projects may be new initiatives, an expansion of existing services, or both. The proposed project must primarily serve residents of one or more of the 14 eligible FDCs.</p> <p>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 other costs that are incurred after the date of grant agreement execution are eligible, subject to the Authority’s approval of the project budget and supporting documentation. For example, costs can include minor renovation, equipment, installation, salaries and fringe, and rent.</p> <p>As required by law, construction, including use of trades in construction related to installation of equipment, will be subject to state affirmative action requirements for contractors, and such work with a cost of \$2,000 or more will be subject to New Jersey prevailing wage requirements. Additionally, grantees must utilize contractors registered as a New Jersey Public Works Contractor with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development for work subject to prevailing wage.</p>
Application and Review Process	<p>A competitive application process will be established for this program. Applications will be accepted during a six-week application period. Applications will first be evaluated for completeness and eligibility. Applicants that fail to provide required information will be provided 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.</p> <p>All complete and eligible applications will proceed to scoring. Scoring will be conducted by a committee of NJEDA staff. Staff will use the below scoring criteria to determine if the application meets the requirements of the program. See Appendix B of the Board Memo for a full scoring rubric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Capacity (20 points)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Impact (20 points) • Work Plan Quality (15 points) • Project Viability and Sustainability (15 points) • Community Engagement (15 points) • Strength of Budget and Budget Narrative (15 points, 8 point minimum required) <p>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.</p> <p>In the event of a tie in scoring, the recommendation for award will be made based on point 1 below. If point 1 is equal, then recommendation for award will be made based on point 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preference to applicant with a higher “Project Impact” criterion score 2. Preference to applicant that has secured additional outside funding for total project costs, as demonstrated through the budget narrative
Board Approval	<p>Following scoring, applications will be presented to the Board for funding approval. Staff will request funding 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.</p> <p>If funds remain, 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. If the applicant declines the partial funding, staff will notify the next highest scoring applicant that meets the minimum score requirement.</p>
Grant Amounts	<p>Applicants may request a grant amount 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 EDA 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.</p>
Grant Term	<p>Selected applicants will enter into a grant agreement with NJEDA. Applicants can propose to complete their projects within either 12 or 24 months, subject to one 6-month extension, at NJEDA staff’s sole discretion, if NJEDA determines the grantee is diligently pursuing the use and the delay was unforeseeable and not in the grantee’s control.</p>
Fees	<p>As allowed by EDA’s recently revised fee rules, no application fee will be charged due to the nature of this program, which is designed to serve the most acute FDCs across the state. Because the program is aimed at reducing food insecurity in areas of high need, and because applicants are likely to include nonprofit organizations with a mission of addressing hunger and poverty, staff propose charging no application fee nor any other fees in this program.</p>

<p>Closing Requirements</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Post-Closing Compliance</p>	<p>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 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.</p>
<p>Funding Disbursement</p>	<p>Funds will be disbursed according to the following schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; and • 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. <p>Approval of these reports will be contingent on 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.</p>
<p>Recapture Provision</p>	<p>Among other standard defaults, NJEDA may recapture any grant funds used for an ineligible purpose and may recapture any grant funds for a purpose outside of any approved scope of work. Failure to submit required reports may be an event of default.</p>