

Food Hub Worker Safety and Infrastructure Grant

Report on Grant Distribution/Awards for Round One

July 2024

[Food Hub Worker Safety & Infrastructure Grant Website](#)

Program Overview:

During the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session, the legislature allocated \$1.5 million to the Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN) for the Food Hub Worker Safety & Infrastructure Grant Program. This funding was initially included in the expansive 2023 Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) and was advocated for by a broad cross-section of OCFSN members. Late in the session, the funding was moved to the Budget Reconciliation Bill (Senate Bill 5506) and passed at the end of session.

This document provides the details and outcomes from the first round of program grant funding. For the two years, the Food Hub Grants program is investing \$1,000,000 in Food Hub Worker Safety and Infrastructure Grants, \$300,000 in Food Hub Network Technical Assistance Investment, and \$150,000 in program administration. With the guidance and support of local food hubs and help from four members involved in Oregon's local food systems, OCFSN distributed \$696,591.43 in its first round of state funding through the Food Hub Worker Safety and Infrastructure Grant Program to 20 Oregon food hubs and regional food system infrastructure to support building local economies and disaster resilience.

Grant Program Goals:

- To create an accessible grant program that provides resources to improve safety and capacity of food hubs in Oregon.
- To create a grant program that prioritizes food hubs building local economies and disaster resilience:

- Through the grant application review rubric, we will prioritize hubs located and/or serving a rural community and
- hubs led by and serves Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and refugee communities
- Hubs that have limited access to grant funding & have demonstrated commitment to delivering on OCFSN mission: strengthening local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state.
- Direct individual support to grant applicants to strengthen applications.
- Robust reporting and testimonial gathering to show impact of this funding on regional and community food systems in Oregon.

Team Members Involved:

Grant Project Team - OCFSN Executive Director of Network Development and contracted support team:

- Coordination, administration, applicant support, initial application review and rubric point verification, follow up with farmers, and reporting.

Expert Advisory Committee:

- Expert advisors with experience with food hubs to advise on the development of the grant program.

Grant Review Committee:

- Individuals to review grant applications.

By the Numbers:

Applications:

The Worker Safety Grants and Infrastructure Grants each have a small and a large funding categories. Having two grant pools helps us meet two granting priorities: get safety and infrastructure dollars to as many hubs as possible **and** include larger grants that will have a greater impact on individual operations.

- Worker Safety Grants: Improving worker safety equipment & infrastructure.
 - Low Barrier: awards up to \$4,999
 - Capacity Building: awards between \$5,000-\$25,000
- Infrastructure Grants: Strengthening local food distribution and regional food system resilience with increased warehousing & cold storage capacity.

- Low Barrier: awards up to \$4,999
- Capacity Building: awards between \$5,000-\$75,000

Eligible applications received = 37

Award Details:

20 Food Hubs awarded partial or full grant funding. 3 Food Hubs were awarded both Worker Safety and Infrastructure funding for a total of 23 awards

- 17 Infrastructure grants awarded
 - 13 capacity building grants totalling **\$631,716.24** in awards
 - 4 low barrier grants totalling **\$17,876.29** in awards
- 6 Worker Safety grants awarded
 - 3 capacity building grants totalling **\$32,042.90** in awards
 - 3 low barrier grants totalling **\$14,956.00** in awards

\$696,591.43 awarded in total

Demographics for Awarded Grants/Grantees:

- 9 BIPOC
- 6 single caregiver
- 5 trans or gender non-conforming
- 3 immigrant or refugee

Location of Grantees:

- North Coast - 4
- South Coast - 4
- Portland Metro - 3
- Willamette Valley - 9
- Southwestern Oregon - 5
- Central Oregon - 2
- Eastern Oregon - 1

Types of Funded Projects:

- Refrigerated vans for delivery between regions
- Walk-in fridges, chest freezers, scales, reach-in coolers
- Rolling carts, anti-fatigue mats, protective gloves, canopy for outdoor pop-ups

- Pallet jacks, electric jacks, rackable pallets
- Produce boxes, bulk bins, mobile shelving, storage containers

Food Hub Network Technical Assistance Investment:

The Food Hub Network is investing \$300,000 of this funding over two years in statewide shared resource development and training In addition to the Infrastructure & Worker Safety grants. This investment included on-site Worker Safety evaluations and trainings (8 counties), group Worker Safety training (statewide), and investment in leadership and skill building with food hub program managers (statewide/24 regular participants), leadership training across the network (statewide/across all Oregon Community Food System Network working groups), and targeted business development support for higher volume food hubs (4 businesses).

Testimonials and Level of Impact:

The need for resources to expand and strengthen local food systems within each food hub was clearly identified through each application. Below are a few impact statements on how the funding will improve capacity:

“Investing in a walk in fridge will serve as cold storage for all perishables purchased through our program. Produce and proteins purchased through our program will partially be donated to partner organization as well as be used to stock free food boxes that will be available weekly to BIPOC community members”

“OCFSN’s funding would greatly increase the capacity of our food hub, Oregon’s smallest, most remote food hub. Increased capacity means more people in Wallowa and Union counties accessing high-quality, nutrient dense food grown by their neighbors. It means paying local farmers and ranchers a living wage, which will inspire them to continue to work their land in a sustainable manner.”

“Pop up Canopy is for summer use in the fields when it is hot. Both when we are working to block out the sun’s rays and to provide cover for the delicate greens if we are not able to harvest early in the morning. As farmers, we are constantly exposed to UV to minimize the exposure keeps people safe from the heat and from developing cancer.”

“Adding this [cargo van] vehicle to our small fleet will increase the capacity and reliability of our distribution and reduce maintenance costs and downtime while prioritizing employee safety through appropriate handles, steps, and lights”

Grant interest by food hub applications:

We have seen significant interest and need for this grant program. For this first round there were a total of 23 projects of 46 eligible applications requesting over \$1.8 million out of the available \$700k.

- Counties represented in eligible applications but not selected: Deschutes, Coos, Multnomah, Washington, Clatsop, Lane, and Hood River
- Four of the denied applicants were nonprofits, and six were LLCs

Awarded Food Hubs:

The reach of local food hubs awarded is statewide, furthering our efforts to support building local economies and disaster resilience.

Name of Food Hub	Food Hub County
CentOr Provisions	Deschutes
Black Food Sovereignty Coalition	Multnomah
Bohemia Food Hub	Lane
Central Coast Food Web	Lincoln
Clatskanie Food Hub	Columbia
CoMadre Manufacturing Co.	Multnomah
Good Groceries LLC	Wallowa
Gorge Farmer Collective	Wasco
Growing Ancestral Roots	Benton
Josephine County Farm Collective	Josephine
Lane County Bounty	Lane
Local Ocean Seafoods	Lincoln
North Coast Food Web	Clatsop
OtterBee's Market	Curry
Port Orford Sustainable Seafood	Curry
Regional Black Community Food Center	Multnomah

Valley Flora LLC	Curry
Wild River Commercial Kitchen	Coos
Willamette Farm and Food Coalition in collaboration with Burrito Brigade	Lane
Yaquina Lab LLC	Lincoln

The [Oregon Community Food System Network](#) (OCFSN) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation supporting collaborative efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state.