

**Request for Applications (RFA)  
Make Rural Nebraska Healthy Again Through Food as Medicine**

RFA #	TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE	RELEASE DATE
RHTP-1.2	\$10,000,000	03/10/2026
APPLICATION DUE DATE	PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE	APPLICATION SUBMISSION/QUESTIONS
4/8/2026	1/1/2026-7/31/2027	<a href="mailto:DHHS.RHTP1@nebraska.gov">DHHS.RHTP1@nebraska.gov</a>
INFORMATIONAL/QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION		
Date: 3/12/2026	Time: 1pm Central Time	Meeting Number: 2480 450 5224 Meeting Password: 3Uvk2j3DYNT
Join by link:	<a href="https://sonvideo.webex.com/sonvideo/j.php?MTID=m3ca85f9199661e908b1ca798e7798708">https://sonvideo.webex.com/sonvideo/j.php?MTID=m3ca85f9199661e908b1ca798e7798708</a>	
Join by phone:	1-408-418-9388	

**1. RFA OVERVIEW**

**1.1. Funding Information**

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) was awarded \$10,000,000 in Federal funds as part of the Nebraska Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Initiative One, which is to Make Rural Nebraska Healthy Again Through Food as Medicine. These funds were awarded through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), specifically for RHTP initiative 1.2. Through this RFA, DHHS will assess the landscape of food cooperatives and food pantries that procure locally grown items used in school nutrition programs and identify readiness for partnerships with schools. The initiative will strengthen regional and local food aggregation hubs through the development of procurement tools for producers. The period of performance is 1/1/2026-7/31/27. The strategic goals related to this initiative are to:

- Reduce obesity risk.
- Improve access to healthy foods.
- Reduce access to processed foods.

**1.2. Eligibility**

Eligible Applicants must be a:

- Producer (farmer or rancher);
- Food cooperative;
- Food pantry; or
- Non-profit entity.

Eligible applicants must also be partnering with schools currently or highly ready to partner with schools.

### **1.3. Use of Funds**

Funds may be used for:

- Investments toward cold storage, delivery, equipment, and community gardens, including food safety supplies and equipment.
- Technology needed to maintain adequate records and data, such as food received, food distributed, food stored, households served, volunteer coordination, staffing coordination, training, safety of the location for clients and staff, food safety, and nutrition education and training.
- Investments in developing “last mile” logistics systems to strengthen connections between participating small rural producers and local school systems through equipment to supply fresh foods, ensuring efficient and reliable food distribution.

### **1.4. Funding Restrictions**

Expenditure of these funds must be for necessary, allowable, and reasonable costs incurred during the Period of Performance from 1/1/26 to 7/31/27. The dates and allowable uses of funds may be subject to change. Allowable costs follow 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 300, and do not include construction.

The maximum amount of allowable administrative costs is 7.5%. Administrative costs must be capped at 7.5%. Administrative costs include cost categories such as:

- Staff costs related to program administration and/or financial management and audit;
- Costs related to procurement and contracting; and
- Administrative IT systems.

Funds cannot be used to purchase food. Using funds in a manner inconsistent with activities described above or on activities DHHS has not approved may result in withholding, reducing, or recovering funding. DHHS may also reduce, withhold, or recover funding if an organization fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress, does not submit required reports, misuses funds, or otherwise does not comply with the terms of the award.

### **1.5. Outcomes**

Funding must be used to meet the strategic goals (identified above) and for the initiative outcomes identified below:

- Build or strengthen sustainable partnerships between eligible entities and schools.
- Improve healthy food access for students and their families through increases to entity infrastructure and capacity.

Entities must identify the metrics by which performance will be measured to meet the aforementioned strategic goals and outcomes. Metrics must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

- Example: The entity will increase the pounds of protein products distributed to schools by 25% as a result of purchasing a refrigerated truck.

### **1.6. Award of Funding**

A maximum of \$80,000 will be awarded to eligible entities unless an entity applies as a fiscal agent for a consortium of smaller eligible entities. NOTE: The maximum an entity acting as a fiscal agent may award to each of the smaller eligible entities is \$80,000. Funds will be awarded through an agreement. No promise for funds is binding on DHHS, and no funds will be paid to any Applicant until an agreement has been executed by both the Applicant and DHHS. Entities awarded funds will receive funds through cost reimbursement.

## 1.7. Reporting Requirements

Applicants must have a financial system in place to monitor their expenditures. Participating entities may be audited at any time. All receipts must be made available upon request. Participating entities will be expected to adhere to requirements around data collection, reporting, and federal fund management. The requirements related to these funds will be more fully described in a subsequent agreement. Contractual monitoring and evaluation of financial reporting on expenses and reporting on outcomes will be conducted by DHHS to ensure progress and scale. DHHS will evaluate expenses for compliance

## 2. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1. Application Scoring

DHHS reserves the right to evaluate Applicants and award funds in a manner utilizing criteria selected at DHHS' discretion and in the best interest of meeting the objectives of the funding involved.

Applicants that are not currently partnering with schools or highly ready to partner with schools will not be eligible. Applications for eligible entities will be evaluated based on the following criteria as DHHS determines and as funding allows:

- Need for funds (10 points)
- Ability to serve rural Nebraska (15 points)
- Alignment with strategic goals and identified outcomes (15 points)
- Project design, sustainability, and workplan quality (20 points)
- Impact on expected outcomes (20 points)
- Budget and cost effectiveness (20 points)

Funding recommendations will be made in the following manner:

- Highly Recommend (90–100)
- Recommend (80–89)
- Consider if Funds Remain (70–79)
- Do Not Recommend (less than 70)

### 2.2. Application Contents and Submission

To submit an application, an entity must fully complete Form 1 - RHTP Initiative 1.2 Work Plan and Form 2 - RHTP Initiative 1.2 Financial Workbook. Submit both forms and associated documents electronically to [DHHS.RHTP1@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.RHTP1@nebraska.gov). Applications that do not contain the required information may be rejected.