Healthy Food Incentive Program RFA Questions, May 2025

1. **Can you clarify the statewide vs. regional approach for this program, and which FoodShare members will qualify to participate?**

Under 2023 Wisconsin Act 201, the Department of Health Services is required to contract with one or more nonprofit organizations to administer a healthy food incentive program across Wisconsin. DHS issued a request for applications (RFA) in December 2024. However, no applicant successfully met the RFA requirements.

DHS modified the RFA and divided the state into regions. Our hope is that dividing the state into regions will help nonprofit organizations across the state apply to work with eligible retailers in their region. Applicants may apply to administer the program in one or more regions. Successful applicants must contract with eligible retailers in their region(s) and may contract with eligible retailers outside of their region(s). Applicants are only required to administer the program in the region(s) specified in their application.

FoodShare members from anywhere in Wisconsin must be able to participate in the program if they visit an eligible retailer. Any current FoodShare member who wants to shop at an eligible retailer must be able to get the incentive, assuming there are incentive funds available. FoodShare members may not be restricted from participating in the Healthy Food Incentive Program based on where they live or other criteria set by the applicant.

2. **For region to be considered “reached,” is there specific criteria to determine adequate coverage within a region?**

Successful applicants must contract with eligible retailers in their region. To achieve adequate coverage, applicants should work with enough retailers to maximize the availability of participating retailers within a region.

3. **How will funding be allocated across regions? Why was the decision made to allocate funding across five regions?**

Total funding for the program is $425,000, with no more than 25% used for program administration.

Act 201 requires that the program be administered statewide. To ensure access in every region, administrative funds will be divided evenly across the five DHS regions ($21,250 per region). An applicant who proposes implementing the program in two regions could apply for 2/5 of the administrative budget ($42,500). Incentive funding will be evenly divided across the five regions ($63,750 per region). Applicants do not need to submit a budget for incentive funds. On June 26, 2025, DHS will issue notification of award(s).

Funding will be awarded to any successful applicants. For example, if there are successful applications in two regions, 2/5 of the available funding would be awarded. The remainder of funding would be reserved.

Please note, DHS reserves the right to reallocate funding as needed. For example, if a region has a high take-up rate upon implementation, additional incentive funds could be provided to that region to meet the demonstrated need, if available.

4. **What is a 501(c)(3) entity?**

Act 201 requires DHS to contract with one or more nonprofit organizations to administer the Healthy Food Incentive Program. 501(c)(3) refers to an organization that is recognized by the federal Internal Revenue Service as tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

5. **What is the definition of an eligible retailer? Are farmers' markets included? Would any food distribution centers be included?**

Act 201 defines an eligible retailer as any supermarket, grocery store, wholesaler, small−scale store, corner store, convenience store, neighborhood store, bodega, farmers' market, direct−marketing farmer, nonprofit cooperative food−purchasing venture, or community−supported agriculture program authorized to accept SNAP benefits by the USDA. For more information on how retailers can become authorized to accept SNAP benefits, please visit https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/apply-to-accept.

6. **Please explain the program operations. For example, how will the incentives be distributed? How are the fresh fruits and vegetables going to get to the intended participants? How will the nonprofit know if an incentive is used?**

Applicants should specify their plans for program design through the RFA. For example, it is the responsibility of the applicant to propose how they will produce vouchers (if used), track usage, and ensure that the program achieves its intended outcomes.

7. **How long will the program last? Is it possible to stock up?**

The program was provided one-time funding of $425,000 and will close once those funds are expended, unless additional funds are provided (for example, through the state budget process).

Act 201 allows the department to establish a maximum amount of benefits that may be matched per day for a FoodShare member and requires the nonprofit to establish a timeline for the expiration of matching monetary amounts, no later than one year after the amount is provided. Under Act 201, the nonprofit shall ensure that expired amounts remain with the nonprofit and, upon expiration, are available for use to provide matching amounts to other FoodShare recipients under the program.

8. **For the budget template, can you provide an example of an indirect cost for this program? Can the applicant put unanticipated extra costs in the budget line "Other"?**

Indirect costs refer to supplies and services associated with administration, such as office rental space, internet, and phone service for staff. Applicants should specify all costs. Applicants should not include unanticipated extra costs.