Office of the Food Security Advocate

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

Regional Innovation Pilot Program – Public/Private Partnership Matching Grant

Fiscal Year: FY27
Administering Agency: New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA)
Applications Due: December 7, 2026 via email attachment to OFSA@ag.nj.gov

I. Funding Opportunity Overview

The New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA) announces the availability of **$1,000,000 in state funding** through a competitive Public/Private Partnership Matching Grant to support the Regional Innovation Pilot Program. This funding opportunity is authorized under the FY27 State Budget appropriation for *Regional Innovative Food Security Initiatives* and is intended to operationalize a public–philanthropic partnership that advances food security through strengthened local agricultural supply chains.

This NOFA is aligned with OFSA's statutory purpose under N.J.S.A. 52:27J-3 and with **Focus Area 2** of the New Jersey Statewide Food Security Strategic Plan (Expand Community-Based food infrastructure and market channel creation for enhanced ongoing food access, utilization, and availability) and **Focus Area 3** (Build and support local partnerships to advance community-driven food security approaches). Particularly with Focus Area 2, this NOFA seeks to deploy funding that supports:

1. **Food Access and Availability Infrastructure**: Increase investment in transportation, technology, and infrastructure improvements to increase availability and access to food across the food supply chain and access to food/nutrition programs.
2. **Agriculture Workforce and Land Access**: Promote community-centered approaches that support the agricultural workforce and increase access to land for food production.
3. **Market Channel Creation**: Leverage federal, state, institutional, and charitable food purchasing dollars to support farmers and regional supply chains, expand local procurement opportunities, and build long-term demand for a variety of New Jersey-grown foods.

4. **Food Enterprise Investment**: Invest in community-rooted food enterprises and infrastructure to strengthen appropriate and preferred food utilization and economic opportunity.

This NOFA supports the establishment of a coordinated, pooled philanthropic partnership that will match or exceed the $1,000,000 state investment, resulting in a minimum of $2,000,000 in combined resources for regional pilot activities across New Jersey.

II. Statutory Authority and Alignment

Funding is authorized pursuant to the FY27 New Jersey State Budget language, which provides that:

"The amount hereinabove appropriated for Regional Innovative Food Security Initiatives shall be used by the Office of the Food Security Advocate to design and implement one or more regional pilot programs within the State to streamline the provision of food supplied by New Jersey-based agricultural producers to State residents in need; and provide grants in amounts determined by the Executive Director of the Office of the Food Security Advocate to food assistance organizations participating in the pilot program, subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting."

III. Purpose of the Funding

The purpose of this funding is to establish a formal public–private partnership that will deploy coordinated, regional investments to:

- Streamline the provision of food supplied by New Jersey-based food producers to residents experiencing food insecurity;
- Strengthen local and regional food supply chains and distribution infrastructure;
- Improve coordination among agricultural producers, food assistance organizations, philanthropy, and public agencies; and
- Generate evidence and learning to inform scalable, replicable food security models across the state.

IV. Funding Amount and Term

- **Total State Funding Available:** $1,000,000
- **Required Match:** Dollar-for-dollar match or exceedance from philanthropic sources (minimum $1,000,000)
- **Total Anticipated Pilot Resources:** At least $2,000,000
- **Grant Term:** Upon execution through June 30, 2027
- **Funding Structure:** State funds will be deployed through a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between OFSA and the selected philanthropic partner.

V. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Be a New Jersey-based philanthropic organization, pooled fund, fiscal intermediary, or similar entity with demonstrated experience in:
    - Managing multi-funder philanthropic resources;
    - Issuing and overseeing grants or subawards; and
    - Supporting food systems, agriculture, food security, or related community-based initiatives.
- Have the capacity to elicit, secure, administer, and document a philanthropic match that meets or exceeds the state investment.
- Demonstrate the ability to comply with state fiscal, reporting, and accountability requirements.

Partnerships or consortia are permitted, provided one entity is designated as the lead applicant and fiscal agent.

VI. Allowable Uses of Funds

State and matched philanthropic funds may be used to support regional pilot activities that:

- Connect New Jersey-based food producers with food assistance organizations or community distribution channels;
- Improve aggregation, storage, processing, transportation, or distribution infrastructure;
- Support coordinated regional models that reduce inefficiencies and improve food flow during both routine and disrupted conditions;
- Advance equitable access to locally sourced food for residents experiencing food insecurity; and
- Incorporate evaluation, data collection, and learning activities.

Funds may not be used for activities inconsistent with the FY27 budget language or outside OFSA's statutory purpose.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

OFSA Responsibilities

- Provide strategic direction and oversight for the pilot(s);
- Ensure alignment with budget language, the Food Security Strategic Plan, and state financial practices;

- Monitor performance, reporting, and evaluation activities; and
- Coordinate with the Division of Budget and Accounting for fiscal compliance.

Selected Partner Responsibilities

- Secure and document the required philanthropic match;
- Administer pilot funds in accordance with the MOA and OFSA guidance;
- Implement transparent grantmaking or investment processes;
- Track expenditures, outputs, and outcomes; and
- Participate in evaluation and learning activities as required by OFSA.

VIII. Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

The selected partner will be required to:

- Submit regular fiscal and programmatic reports to OFSA;
- Track outputs and outcomes related to food distribution efficiency, producer participation, and community reach;
- Participate in OFSA-led evaluation activities designed to assess impact, equity, and scalability; and
- Contribute to a final summary report documenting lessons learned and recommendations for future expansion.

IX. Application Requirements

Applications must include, at minimum:

1. Organizational overview and relevant experience
2. Description of the proposed public–private partnership model
3. Plan for securing and managing the philanthropic match
4. Proposed approach to regional pilot investments
5. Fiscal management and reporting capacity
6. Evaluation and learning approach
7. Timeline through June 30, 2027

X. Review and Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Alignment with statutory mandate and strategic plan focus areas;
- Strength and feasibility of the public–private partnership model;
- Capacity to secure and administer the required match;
- Demonstrated fiscal and programmatic accountability;

- Commitment to equity, transparency, and learning; and
- Readiness to deploy funds within the FY26 timeframe.

XI. Anticipated Timeline

- **NOFA Announcement**: November 20, 2026
- **Questions Accepted**: Through November 30, 2026
- **Q&As Posted to OFSA Funding Opportunities Webpage**: December 1, 2026
    - For questions about this funding opportunity, please contact OFSA at ofsa@ag.nj.gov. In accordance with state policies, all questions received by November 30, 2026 will be answered by December 1, 2026 and available to all interested applicants via a link on OFSA's Funding Opportunities page.
- **Applications Due:** December 7, 2026 via email attachment to OFSA@ag.nj.gov
- **Anticipated Award Notification:** December 2026

XII. Contact Information

Please submit any questions and application responses to:

Office of the Food Security Advocate
OFSA@ag.nj.gov