



New Jersey Statewide Six Dimensions of Food Security Measurement Project

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

DUE: June 19, 2026 at 5 PM ET

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Background & Purpose

In 2022, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to establish an [Office of the Food Security Advocate \(OFSA\)](#) within its executive branch, signaling a statewide commitment to advancing coordinated, equity-centered, and data-informed approaches to food security. Since its establishment, OFSA has worked to strengthen cross-sector collaboration, elevate lived expertise, align statewide efforts, and advance a broader understanding of food security that extends beyond traditional economic measures.

As part of these efforts, OFSA adopted the [Six Dimensions of Food Security framework](#) (*access, availability, utilization, stability, agency, and sustainability*) as the foundation for its strategic planning and statewide coordination efforts. The six dimensions framework recognizes food security as a complex and interconnected social condition shaped by economic, environmental, social, structural, and policy factors. In 2024–2025, OFSA implement the state’s first large-scale data collection initiative grounded in the six dimensions framework. Findings from the [Exploring the Six Dimensions of Food Security in New Jersey report](#) informed development of the New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan and established an important baseline for future statewide measurement and planning efforts.

The [New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan](#) identifies strengthening information exchange, data coordination, research, and data-informed decision-making as a foundational statewide priority through Focus Area 1: *Enhance Information Exchange and Access to Improve Public Awareness, Optimize Programs, and Support Data-Driven Decision-Making*. Focus Area 1 specifically calls for investment in data coordination, impact analysis and research, and public-facing data visualization and dissemination tools to support statewide food security action.

Reliable and consistent food security data are critical to informing effective statewide and local action. Community-based organizations, food banks, healthcare systems, anti-hunger advocates, local governments, agricultural partners, philanthropy, coalitions, and policymakers all rely on high-quality data to identify needs, allocate resources, monitor trends, evaluate impact, and guide strategic investment. However, the discontinuation of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) annual food security reporting created a substantial gap in the nation’s food security data infrastructure. The loss of this longstanding federal data source limits the ability of states and communities to monitor trends over time, compare progress across regions, identify disparities, and inform policy and programmatic decision-making.

In response to this gap, OFSA seeks to support implementation of a Statewide Six Dimensions of Food Security Measurement Initiative capable of producing both statewide and county-level estimates related to food security conditions across New

Jersey. This initiative is intended to advance Focus Area 1 of the New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan while reinforcing statewide use of the six dimensions framework to guide coordinated planning and systems change efforts. The initiative will support the collection, analysis, dissemination, and interpretation of food security data aligned with the six dimensions framework and provide actionable findings to support statewide strategic planning, county coalition activities, policy development, resource allocation, research, and community-driven implementation efforts across New Jersey.

Intended Outcomes

Intended outcomes of the New Jersey Six Dimensions Measurement project include:

- Advancing Focus Area 1 of the New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan through strengthened data coordination, research, and data dissemination activities;
- Producing reliable statewide and county-level estimates aligned with the Six Dimensions of Food Security framework;
- Supporting data-informed planning, implementation, and policy development across sectors and communities;
- Increasing understanding of geographic, demographic, and systems-level differences in food security conditions across New Jersey;
- Strengthening statewide capacity to monitor food security trends and evaluate progress over time;
- Supporting future implementation and evaluation activities related to the New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan;
- Expanding public access to actionable food security data through dashboards, reports, and dissemination tools;
- Providing local governments, coalitions, nonprofits, healthcare systems, agricultural partners, and policymakers with data to guide strategic investment and implementation efforts;
- Advancing equitable and community-informed approaches to food security measurement and evaluation; and
- Strengthening New Jersey's leadership in innovative, comprehensive, and systems-oriented food security measurement efforts.

Program Overview

Available Funding

There is \$640,000 available for this two-year project. Funding will be awarded through a Request for Applications (RFA) process. There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for funds. The project period will begin July 1, 2026, with project periods extending up to 24 calendar months.

Eligible Projects

Projects must implement a Statewide Six Dimensions of Food Security Measurement Initiative capable of producing both statewide and county-level estimates related to food security conditions across New Jersey, and address one or more of the intended outcomes listed above in the Intended Outcomes section of the RFA.

Projects must also directly advance Focus Area 1 of the [New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan](#): *Enhance Information Exchange and Access to Improve Public Awareness, Optimize Programs, Support Data-Driven Decision-Making*. This focus area recognizes that strengthening food security efforts requires coordinated data infrastructure, accessible information exchange, public awareness, and shared accountability across sectors. It promotes improving access to timely and actionable data, strengthening statewide and local data coordination, expanding public-facing information and communication tools, and supporting research and evaluation efforts that inform policy and practice. The focus area also emphasizes the importance of transparent and community-informed data systems that help organizations, coalitions, agencies, and residents better understand food security conditions. Additionally, this focus area lays the groundwork for sectors and organizations to collaborate in advancing data-driven decision-making and shared learning across New Jersey's food security landscape. Projects will implement one or more of the following strategies:

1. **Data Coordination:** Coordinate state agencies across sectors to make existing food security–related data available across programs, voluntarily and where possible.
2. **Impact Analysis and Research:** Conduct analyses on the health and economic impacts of food insecurity and research the effectiveness and cost-benefit of food security initiatives and policies.
3. **Data Visualization and Dissemination:** Invest in coordinated, intuitive, asset-based data dashboards and visualization tools that can be customized to support community initiatives.

Explore [Appendix A for expanded descriptions of each of these strategies](#).

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be physically located and operate in United States. Eligible applicants include:

- **Research Colleges and Universities:** United States-based research colleges and universities, both public and private institutions. Research centers and institutes housed on college and university campuses are also included.
- **Research Agencies:** Both for-profit and non-profit research agencies based in the United States conducting quantitative and qualitative research including those that have worked with other state and federal agencies.
- **Public Health Agencies:** Both for-profit and non-profit public health institutions based in the United States conducting quantitative and qualitative research including those that have worked with other state and federal agencies.

Eligible applicants must demonstrate substantial research, methodological, and applied expertise related to food security measurement, multidimensional frameworks, and community-informed evaluation. Competitive applicants should possess the following qualifications and credentials:

1. Demonstrated research experience related to the six dimensions of food security including conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, and applied evaluation.
2. Peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, or methodological products focused on food security measurement design, instrument development, or research methodology.
3. Demonstrated familiarity with New Jersey's food security landscape, county-level systems, demographics, and regional implementation contexts, including experience working with state agencies, county partners, and community organizations.
4. Documented history of conducting New Jersey-specific food security research and analysis, including use of administrative, survey, qualitative, or mixed-methods data.
5. Staffing structure with personnel possessing expertise in food security, nutrition security, public health, or related fields relevant to multidimensional food security research and expertise in research methodology, data analysis, evaluation, facilitation, and stakeholder engagement, including experience managing large-scale applied research initiatives.

6. History of successful management of state, federal, philanthropic, and/or university-supported research contracts or partnerships related to food security, public health, and/or systems change.

Eligibility Restrictions

The following entities are ineligible for funding:

- Federal agencies, departments, offices, and bureaus
- State of New Jersey departments, offices, and agencies

Allowable Expenses

Budgets can include direct costs related to personnel (including fringe), contractors, equipment, software, meeting expenses, and travel costs specific to the operationalization of this research. This includes support of graduate students in academic settings. Direct costs are costs specific to the research itself and do not include costs associated with operating the agency/institution. All applicants will be limited to no more than 10 percent allowed indirect costs. Additional Information on allowable expenses is outlined below:

- Equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more) that are purchased using research funds must be used during the grant period for the sole purpose of accomplishing the stated project objectives. The project must reflect appropriate equipment depreciation or request depreciation flexibility. If purchased equipment is not fully dedicated to the grant project, including extension beyond the grant period end date, the applicant must determine what percentage of the equipment's time or space will be dedicated to project activities when developing a budget.
- At any time, during or after the funding period, if OFSA determines any equipment purchased using these funds are no longer being used in alignment with the purposes of this program, or have been sold, OFSA may demand that the property or funds be returned. All property associated with this research are purchased using funds from OFSA and are therefore property of OFSA.
- Travel costs should be limited to mileage and paid at the prevailing IRS rate. Any travel costs beyond mileage must have a justification.
- Funds may only be expended during the research period of performance. Any unspent funds at grant period end must be returned to OFSA within fifteen (15) business days of grant end date.

Budgets may not include:

- Supplies (e.g., office supplies for general use, although these may be covered under the 10 percent allowable indirect costs)
- Travel expenses not related to project activities
- Reimbursement for pre-award costs
- Lobbying or advocacy

Grantee Requirements

Project Monitoring and Reporting

Grantees will meet with OFSA quarterly to provide additional updates, express concerns, and request technical assistance outside of scheduled reporting requirements. Grantees will submit a brief midpoint project report and one final project report at the conclusion of the funding period and submit any materials (e.g., educational, promotional, interview guides, data collection) developed as a part of this project with their final reports.

Financial Reporting

This funding will be administered by the New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA) with support from the NJDA fiscal team. Grantee will be required to track monthly expenses and retain receipts and should be able to provide that documentation upon request. Grantee will be required to submit quarterly financial reports. Documentation should be retained for three years from the date of submission of the final financial report.

Application Submission Information

Applications Due: June 19, 2026, at 5pm ET

Question & Answer Period: June 8, 2026 – June 15, 2026

Initiative Term: Two years, to commence upon approval from OFSA, timeline may be subject to change.

All interested applicants should submit the required application information specified below including an [itemized budget](#), budget narrative (attached separately) and [Risk Assessment form](#) (attached separately). A curriculum vitae for each member of the research team should also be included. All documents should be emailed to ofsa@ag.nj.gov by June 19 at 5pm ET. Use the email subject line, “Six Dimensions Measurement Application” when submitting the application. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. If you have any questions about this funding opportunity, please contact: New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate at ofsa@ag.nj.gov.

Application Content Requirements

A template is not being provided for the RFA and submission should include the following information:

Section 1. Applicant Information

- Applicant Organization Information and Description
- Primary Contact
- Budget Manager Contact

Section 2. Statement of Work/Project Plan

Section 3. Research Team

- Names and role of each member of the research team
- Curriculum vitae for each member of team not including research/graduate assistants from applicants within the academic sector

Section 4. Budget

- Itemized budget
- Budget narrative

Section 5. Risk Assessment Form

- Organization funding and accounting information

Selection Process

- Following an initial screening process for confirmation of the applicant organization's eligibility, OFSA will review and determine the technical merits of each application.
- Each applicant will be assigned one primary reviewer and at least one other reviewer.
- Reviewers will independently score each application based on the criteria outlined in the Scoring Rubric section of this RFA.
- Reviewer scores will be averaged and discussed among the reviewing team. This process will generate a list of fundable, competitive applications for consideration.
- OFSA will require all reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process.
- Names of applicants applying will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.
- Award notifications will be delivered to applicants via email up to four weeks after the RFP due date.

Scoring Rubric

Point Value (out of 100)	Application Template Heading and Scoring
10 Points	Section 1. Applicant Information
50 Points	Section 2. Scope of Work/Project Plan
20 Points	Section 3. Research Team
10 Points	Section 4. Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.1 Itemized Budget - 5 Points• 4.2 Budget Narrative Justification – 5 Points
10 Points	Section 5. Risk Assessment

Appendix A. New Jersey Food Security 3-Year Strategic Plan Focus Area 1

Focus Area 1: Enhance Information Exchange and Access to Improve Public Awareness, Optimize Programs, Support Data-Driven Decision-Making

FOCUS AREA 1 | STRATEGY 1

Data Coordination: *Coordinate state agencies across sectors to make existing food security–related data available across programs, voluntarily and where possible.*

This strategy supports the development of a voluntary, coordinated, cross-agency/organization data infrastructure to improve data collection, tracking, analysis, and program responsiveness. By aligning definitions of terms and measures, establishing formal data-sharing agreements, and developing common indicators of food security across state programs (e.g., SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, education, childcare, employment, charitable food, family services, and housing), New Jersey can improve its ability to identify food insecurity trends and related factors, which can be useful to inform real-time decision-making. An interagency governance framework and accompanying shared data inventory can help agencies work together as peers, co-developing an understanding of who is being served, where gaps exist, and how systems can operate more efficiently together toward shared, positive outcomes. Enhance transparency by sharing data collection methods and providing de-identified, aggregate data publicly while preserving individual data privacy.

FOCUS AREA 1 | STRATEGY 2

Impact Analysis and Research: *Conduct analyses on the health and economic impacts of food insecurity and research the effectiveness and cost-benefit of food security initiatives and policies.*

Quantifying the impacts of food insecurity, especially on health and healthcare costs, educational, developmental, and economic outcomes, and across all life stages, can provide crucial information to help drive investment and policy change. This strategy promotes partnerships with researchers, healthcare systems, and public agencies to estimate the costs of food insecurity and the return on investment in addressing it. An example that includes evaluating the impacts associated with food is medicine programs (e.g., produce prescriptions, medically tailored groceries). Findings should be translated into plain language and used to inform program design, public awareness, and advocacy.

FOCUS AREA 1 | STRATEGY 3

Data Visualization and Dissemination: Invest in coordinated, intuitive, asset-based data dashboards and visualization tools that can be customized to support community initiatives.

Community-facing dashboards can be developed through an optional opt-in model with data from state agencies (and other entities with access to relevant data), supporting data transparency and accountability. These tools can make data actionable by translating complex information into visually appealing, accessible tools that provide information for data-driven and effective program planning, policy advocacy, and funding applications, while protecting individual privacy and data confidentiality. This strategy supports investment in a shared, multi-sector, interactive dashboard that maps food insecurity trends, highlights community assets, and integrates program data from multiple sectors. Tools can be co-designed with community-based organizations to ensure usability and relevance and paired with training or mini-grants to support local implementation when possible.