



Kansas Healthy Food Initiative **Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grant Program**

2026 Application Guidelines

CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: www.kansashealthyfood.org

Email: khfi@k-state.edu

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KHFI BACKGROUND, PARTNERS, AND PROGRAM GOALS

The Kansas Healthy Food Initiative (KHFI) is a public-private partnership that aims to increase access to affordable, healthy food to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.

KHFI provides technical assistance for those seeking to strengthen access to healthy foods, as well as financing through a mix of loans and grants to develop new, expand, or renovate healthy food retail in underserved and low-resource communities throughout Kansas. The program works to bridge informational and financing gaps faced by healthy food stakeholders and food retailers operating in low- to moderate-income areas.

Seeded by the Kansas Health Foundation, the initiative is a partnership among the Rural Grocery Initiative (part of K-State Extension), Network Kansas, and IFF (a community development financial institution), with strategic guidance provided by The Food Trust.

As of September 2025, KHFI has funded 77 projects in 46 counties totaling \$4,929,982 in loans and grants.



KHFI PREDEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT SUMMARY

In 2025, KHFI began offering grants to organizations and businesses that are planning projects to expand healthy food access at the retail level. These may include brand new enterprises or the expansion of existing businesses. This financial assistance is geared toward projects that are still in early concept or predevelopment stages and are not yet ready for full implementation. Project activities include but are not limited to:

- Market or feasibility research
- Architectural design assistance or site planning
- Community assessments and engagement
- Business planning
- Legal counsel

KHFI's Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grant Program seeks to improve healthy food access at the retail level in low-resource and underserved areas of Kansas. By providing support for initial planning and predevelopment soft costs, these grants facilitate projects that ultimately create or expand healthy food offerings across the state.

Through funding from the Reinvestment Fund's HFFI Partnerships Program, over \$600,000 of technical assistance grants will be available from 2025 through 2027. In 2026, \$200,000 is available for the Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grant Program. Projects are limited to only one Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grant per year. Awards will typically range between \$5,000 to \$40,000, though a larger amount may be considered for projects that demonstrate significant need. Applicants should provide a thorough description of their project needs in order for the KHFI team to evaluate fully. A list of previously awarded KHFI Predevelopment TA Grants is available on the [KHFI website](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects must expand healthy food offerings at the retail level, and they must accept/plan to accept SNAP or support a retail outlet that accepts SNAP. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Opening or expanding a grocery retail outlet that sells affordable and healthy foods, such as whole fruits and vegetables (fresh, refrigerated, frozen or canned), whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy, lean meat and protein.
- Developing an innovative food system project that increases access to healthy foods at affordable prices, such as a farmers' market or food hub.
- Improving distribution of locally sourced, healthy foods to retail outlets.

Eligible Entities

A variety of applicants may apply for funds. Eligible entities include but are not limited to:

- Businesses (e.g. corporations, limited liability companies, sole proprietors, cooperatives, partnerships)
- Non-profit organizations
- City or county governments
- Tribal governments
- Food policy councils

Eligible Areas

Projects must serve low-resource and underserved areas of Kansas. Projects may be in urban or rural communities.

You can use the national Healthy Food Financing Initiative eligibility map to check if your project is likely to be eligible for KHFI funding.

1. Visit <https://www.investinginfood.com/eligibility>.
2. Scroll to map at bottom of the page to find the eligibility map.
3. Type in the location of your project and press Enter.
4. If your location is in a purple-shaded area, then it is eligible for KHFI funding.
5. If your location is *not* in a purple-shaded area, contact KHFI staff at khfi@ksu.edu. We will check additional low-resource and underserved metrics to determine if the project is eligible for KHFI funding.

Eligible Uses of Funds

Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grants are intended for planning, predevelopment, and pre-operating activities that will lead to expanded healthy food access at the retail level. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify specific technical assistance provider(s) to complete such activities.** Technical assistance providers could include consultants, attorneys, design firms, or other professionals with relevant skills and expertise. The budget provided in the submitted application should be as accurate as possible as KHFI will not increase the grant size after an initial application has been selected for funding. KHFI staff cannot help you identify consultants, however, you may consider referring to the North American Food Systems Network (NAFSN) [Community Food Systems Consultants Directory](#) or talking to other grocers, community projects or resource providers like the Kansas Small Business Development Center.

Examples of eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- Community engagement
- Community food assessments
- Workshops and training sessions for community members
- Marketing and advertising campaigns
- Event coordination for community forums or meetings
- Market research to assess site location and customer preferences
- Feasibility studies
- Financial analysis for budgeting and forecasting
- Business planning assistance
- Consulting services for financial or operational guidance
- Appraisals to assess land value and potential costs
- Architectural or design assistance
- Legal counsel
- Environmental and energy assessments
- Other soft costs associated with pre-construction planning

Ineligible Uses of Funds

Examples of ineligible activities and projects include but are not limited to:

- Charitable entities such as food banks or food pantries
- Nutrition education
- Research
- Restaurants
- Food production
- Construction
- Renovation
- Equipment
- Land or building acquisition
- Operating capital

This is not a comprehensive list. Before awarding grant funds, the Kansas Healthy Food Initiative (KHFI) will verify that applicants' proposed expenses are eligible for funding according to federal regulations. KHFI will work with successful applicants to adjust final budgets and remove ineligible costs as needed.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

In 2026, there will be two application rounds for KHFI's Predevelopment Technical Assistance Grant Program. The deadlines for each application round are listed below.

Round One: February 27, 2026 by 11:59 PM Central

Round Two: September 25, 2026 by 11:59 PM Central

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and scored by KHFI staff. Funding decisions will be made by the KHFI Investment Committee. Applicants will be notified of their grant award status approximately six weeks after the close of each application round. Projects that are not successful in one round may resubmit for consideration in a future round.

OFFICE HOURS

In 2026, the KHFI team will host biweekly drop in office hours when the application is open. Office hours may be used to share about your project idea, ask questions about the application process, confirm project eligibility, etc. The office hours will take place via Zoom on Thursdays from 11 AM to 12 PM Central Time on the following dates:

Round One: January 29th, February 12th, and February 26th

Round Two: August 20th, September 3rd, and September 17th

[Register for the Zoom link](#) to participate in the office hours.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Successful applicants will receive notification of their award via email from KHFI staff. Selected grant recipients will be required to sign a grant award agreement, which will outline the grant amount, terms and conditions of the award, effective date, reporting requirements, and other pertinent information. Grant recipients will have two weeks to sign and send back the grant agreement. If working with a technical assistance provider, KHFI will pay them directly.

As a condition of the award, grantees may be required to report the following, as applicable:

- General project updates
- Experience with technical assistance provider(s)
- Number of Quality Jobs (full time and part time) created or retained
- Retail square feet created
- Increase in staple and perishable foods
- Increase in sales of local/regional food
- Number of project end users (customers, clients, community members)
- Additional funding sources secured
- Increase in square feet devoted to selling staple and perishable foods
- Any other metrics requested, as needed

In order to receive funds, grantees will be required to provide the following documentation:

- Final budget
- Invoice, if applicable
- W-9 of funding recipient(s)
- Bank account information for ACH payments to funding recipient(s)
- Signed grant agreement
- Any other materials requested, as needed

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Applications will be scored based on demonstrated need, operator experience, community support, and so on. Final award decisions will be made by the KHFI Investment Committee. The following questions (starting on the next page) must be answered using the online application form, available at:

https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3f6tVH59dw3QnEq

Applicant Information

1. Business or organization name (if available)
2. Contact name
3. Phone
4. Email
5. What is the racial/ethnic identity of the owner(s) of this project?
6. Is at least 51% of this project owned by women?

Project Summary

7. Type of project (select all that apply)
 - Grocery store
 - Convenience store
 - Farmers' market
 - Mobile grocery store
 - Food hub
 - Distribution
 - Other (please explain)
8. Stage of project
 - Start-up business
 - Expansion of existing business
 - Purchase of existing business
 - Other (please explain)
9. Location of project (Note: If the exact address is not yet known, please share the intended city and state at a minimum. If unknown, write N/A.)
10. Does this project currently accept or plan to accept SNAP, or will this project support a retail outlet that accepts SNAP?
11. Will the proposed project be accessible by public transit?
12. Will the proposed project support local/regional food systems? If so, briefly explain.
*Definition of Local and Regional Food Systems: "Food products that are raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region through systems of interconnected entities, channels, communities, and/or individuals."*¹
13. Will the proposed project support supply chain resilience? If so, briefly explain.
*Definition of Food Supply Chain Resilience: "Food supply chain diversification such that it provides consumers with access to fresh, healthy foods and provides retailers, food enterprises, and/or producers with more, better, and new market opportunities in favorable market conditions and in order to withstand and recover from disruptions and times of crisis or disaster."*²
14. (For existing food retail outlets) What is the current square footage of your retail outlet? *If startup, leave blank.*
15. (For existing businesses) What square footage is currently devoted to staple and perishable foods? *If startup, leave blank.*
16. (For existing businesses) What is the current percentage of sales that come from staple and perishable foods? *If startup, leave blank.*

¹ Investing in Food. (2023). *HFFI 2023 partnerships program request for applications (RFA)*.
<https://www.investinginfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HFFI-2023-Partnerships-Program-RFA.pdf>

² Investing in Food. (2023). *HFFI 2023 partnerships program request for applications (RFA)*.
<https://www.investinginfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HFFI-2023-Partnerships-Program-RFA.pdf>

17. (For existing businesses) What is the current percentage of sales that are locally or regionally sourced? *If startup, leave blank.*
18. (For existing businesses) If currently accepting SNAP, what percentage of sales are from SNAP? *If startup, leave blank.*
19. Total project cost
20. Total grant request
21. Expected project start date (Month, Year)
22. Expected project end date (Month, Year)
23. One goal of this grant program is to prepare projects for future financing, including KHFI financing. Do you intend to seek additional funding or investment within the next 12-36 months to support your business startup or growth? If so, please describe.

24. Project Overview (150 words) – 5 points

Provide a concise summary of the overall project and what you hope to accomplish. Explain what, if any, work has been accomplished to date. Briefly describe how you would use KHFI funds for planning/predevelopment activities.

25. Applicant Overview (150 words) – 5 points

Provide a history of the entity applying for funds, including years active, ownership structure, community partnerships, mission, etc. Also describe the applicant's ability to carry out this project. Evidence to substantiate this may include experience in retail or other food-related businesses, community support, or examples of other projects managed by the applicant.

26. Community to be Served (300 words) – 10 points

Outline the needs of the community that the proposed project aims to address, including relevant demographic data. Explain any challenges related to food access and detail who will benefit from the project. Describe if and how the community will be involved in the development of this project.

27. Project Objectives (300 words) – 10 points

Provide an in-depth explanation of the exact planning and predevelopment activities you wish to undertake. Describe why these activities are necessary and how they will advance this project. You are strongly encouraged to identify specific technical assistance provider(s) to help you complete the planning/predevelopment work. (Technical assistance providers could include consultants, attorneys, design firms, or other professionals you intend to hire.) Be as specific and detailed as possible.

28. Project Partners (150 words) – 5 points

Share details about any partners who are involved in this project and the role they play. Partners could include city officials, economic developers, other businesses, local organizations, foundations, etc.

29. Project Budget – 5 points

In the table provided, please clearly detail predevelopment expenses that you hope to fund through the grant. You do not need to provide the entire project budget. The budget should align with the needs and activities discussed under Project Objectives. In the "Justification" column, please explain how you arrived at the dollar amount. ***Quotes for services are strongly recommended and should be uploaded to the online application, if available.*** The budget provided should be as accurate as

possible as KHFI will not increase the grant amount after application has been selected for funding.

30. Project Timeline – 5 points

Share the anticipated timeline of the project, including anticipated start and end dates for the grant-funded planning/predevelopment activities.

31. Letters of Support – 10 points

Applications that include relevant and current Letters of Support will receive additional points. Letters of Support could come from local partner organizations, local economic developers, city officials, community members, and others who can attest to the need for this project and the applicant's ability to successfully administer it. Applicants may submit up to three Letters of Support.