



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

Community Food Strategy

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DEADLINE: August 29, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, Family League of Baltimore (Family League) has been the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore. Family League's mission statement is *Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions that align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities.*

Family League's work seeks to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. We focus on four priority Results Areas: Cradle to Career Education, Healthy Families, Economically Secure Families, and Safe and Thriving Families.

As a careful steward of the funds awarded by the City, the State of Maryland, and federal and private entities, Family League braids its resources together to maximize the impact of each dollar invested in support of these results areas. We leverage these resources to serve Baltimore's children, youth, and families through our participation as a convener, implementation lead, or partner in numerous collaborative spaces.

DEFINITIONS

- **Food Sovereignty:** The right of people to eat healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It prioritizes the needs and leadership of those who produce, distribute, and consume food over the interests of markets and corporations.¹
- **Food Security:** When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences for an active, healthy life.
- **Nutrition Security:** Consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being, prevent disease, and, if needed, treat disease.
- **Food System Resilience:** The capacity of a food system and its components to consistently provide sufficient, appropriate, and accessible food, even in the face of various or unforeseen disruptions.
- **Healthy Food Priority Areas (HFPA):** Geographic areas where residents face compounded barriers to accessing healthy food, defined by low availability of healthy food options, limited income, lack of vehicle access, and distance to a supermarket.
- **Value-Added Products:** Foods that have been processed or enhanced in some way to increase their value, such as prepared meals, preserved goods, or culturally relevant recipe kits using locally grown ingredients.
- The **Food System Framework** refers to the interconnected components and processes involved in the production, processing, distribution, access, consumption, and waste recovery of food. This framework ensures holistic support of the local food ecosystem and guides funding and initiatives to address various aspects of the food system.²

¹ La Vía Campesina. (n.d.). What is Food Sovereignty? Retrieved from <https://viacampesina.org/en/what-is-food-sovereignty/>

² Healthy Food Policy Project. (n.d.). Food System Framework. Retrieved from <https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/framework>

PURPOSE OF INVESTMENT

Family League of Baltimore is committed to addressing food insecurity and promoting food sovereignty through community-driven strategies that are rooted in racial equity. This investment aligns with Mayor Scott's priority pillars, especially Clean and Healthy Communities. Baltimore City's commitment to creating a healthy, equitable food environment. Guided by the city's Healthy Food Environment Strategy, this Request for Proposals (RFP) supports efforts that empower residents to drive food policy decisions, improve access to healthy foods, and expand the reach of community anchors. It further emphasizes increasing the availability of fresh food in underserved areas, supporting urban agriculture initiatives, and ensuring that nutrition assistance and meal programs effectively address food insecurity.

This RFP aims to fund initiatives that strengthen Baltimore's food system by supporting projects that align with the following categories: Grow, Process, Distribute, Access, Eat, and Waste Recovery. By investing in these areas, we seek to dismantle systemic barriers and increase community power through locally rooted food system interventions. Priority will be given to projects that serve or are led by Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other historically marginalized communities. This investment aligns with our organizational mission and advances City and State priorities around supporting communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Family League of Baltimore is releasing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to support place-based, community-driven strategies that strengthen Baltimore's food system through a racial equity lens. The FY26 Community Food Strategy Grant seeks to fund projects that address food insecurity, support food sovereignty, and increase community power through locally rooted food system interventions.

Across Baltimore City, noteworthy accomplishments in food access have been made by residents, government, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector. Guided by the city's Healthy Food Environment Strategy, this RFP addresses aspects of food access beyond food retail including food assistance and food production, as well as the processes necessary to engage stakeholders across the food system. Applicants must propose place-based initiatives that align with **one or more** of the following funding categories:

1. **Grow** – Support for urban agriculture initiatives, including community gardens and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, BIPOC-led farms, land access support, and education for aspiring growers.
2. **Process** – Development of food hubs or shared-use kitchens that enable community members and small producers to create value-added products.
3. **Distribute** – Efforts to increase access to healthy foods through mobile markets, cooperative grocery models, produce delivery, or community food depots.

4. **Access** – Resident-led food assistance efforts, culturally appropriate food access, grocery access transportation, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) enrollment support.
5. **Eat** – Food and nutrition education initiatives, farm-to-school programs, intergenerational cooking classes, and mental nourishment models.
6. **Waste Recovery** – Community composting, food waste recovery, and circular economy initiatives focused on reducing food loss and promoting sustainability.

Projects must be rooted in community leadership and demonstrate a commitment to equitable food systems. Priority will be given to organizations serving or led by Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other historically marginalized communities.

Applicants should clearly identify how their project aligns with the food system framework and explain how their work addresses systemic gaps in food access, production, or policy. Proposals should emphasize sustainability, collaboration, and the integration of community voice in the planning and implementation process.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Family League of Baltimore (Family League) uses the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) evaluation framework. It is a disciplined way of thinking about goals and outcomes that enables Family League and partners to use data, both numbers and the stories behind them, action plan and make decisions. This helps us to improve the lives of children and their families and improve the effectiveness of programs. Family League will collaborate with funded partners to create performance measures and ensure the partners have a practical evaluation plan. However, there will need to be at least one performance measure in each of the following categories:

- **How Much/How Many Did You Do/Serve?**
- **How Well Did You Do It?**
- **Is Anyone Better Off**

GRANT TERMS & APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Contract Award Amount: Not to exceed \$75,000.00

Grant Period: July 1, 2025—June 30, 2026

To apply, interested individuals or organizations **must**:

- Qualify as a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) status, a for-profit corporation, or a public entity;
- Have been in operation under the same organizational name for a minimum of two years;

- Be in Good Standing with Family League of Baltimore, if a current or past Funded Partner;
- Be in “Good Standing” with the State of Maryland (must provide a PDF copy of the certificate dated **within the past 30 days**). Certificate can be obtained from [here](#);
- For funding requests totaling **\$49,999 or less**, provide a copy of the organization’s Form 990 **within the past 12 months**.
- For funding requests totaling **\$50,000 or more**, provide a copy of the organization’s independently audited financial statements for its fiscal year-end **within the past 12 months**;
- Provide evidence of organizational capacity to implement a quality program as outlined in the RFA; and
- Provide evidence of organizational capacity to implement a quality program as outlined in the RFP; AND
- Provide a clear and concise operating budget.
- **Submit all required documents with the application by the posted due date.**
- **NOTE: If using a fiscal sponsor, both the Certificate of Good Standing and the Audited Financial Statements/Form 990 must be in the fiscal sponsor’s name.**

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit proposals through FUNDINGtrack, Family League’s online grants management system accessible through <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Submission must be completed by the date and time specified in this RFP and in the FUNDINGtrack application. The deadlines will be strictly enforced. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application process is completed by the deadline. Hard copies, emailed copies, and late submissions will not be accepted. Furthermore, Family League reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend or modify any provision of this RFP, or to withdraw this RFP at any time prior to the contract award. Family League shall not be bound by or liable under this RFP and/or any response thereto until a final written contract has been executed by Family League and the grantee incorporating the terms and conditions of the award.

Registration

All applicants must be registered in FUNDINGtrack. This is done by selecting the “Register” link on the portal’s home page, found here: <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Applicants will receive login credentials via email within three business days of submission of the registration form. Applicants are highly encouraged to register early.

Organization Information and Documentation

The Organizational profile enables all registered users of FUNDINGtrack to provide the key business and contact information needed from Funded Partners. All registered users should fully complete the requested information and upload the due diligence documentation required in this RFP.

Help Using the Online Application

For questions or problems, contact the Help Desk at FUNDINGtrack@FamilyLeague.zendesk.com, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE/QUESTIONS

A pre-proposal conference to review the procurement's purpose, applicant/application requirements, and submission instructions, will be held virtually on **August 11, 2025**. The meeting can be accessed via Zoom:

Topic: FY26 Community Food Strategy RFP Pre-proposal Conference

Time: Aug 11, 2025 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/82171497984>

Meeting ID: 821 7149 7984

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,82171497984# US (Washington DC)

+12678310333,,82171497984# US (Philadelphia)

Dial by your location

- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)
- +1 470 250 9358 US (Atlanta)
- +1 470 381 2552 US (Atlanta)
- +1 646 518 9805 US (New York)
- +1 786 635 1003 US (Miami)
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- 833 548 0276 US Toll-free
- 833 548 0282 US Toll-free
- 877 853 5247 US Toll-free
- 888 788 0099 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 821 7149 7984

Find your local number: <https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/82171497984>

Applicants should send their questions to fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org no later than the close of business on **August 11, 2025**. The team will review these questions and post responses on Family League's website on **August 15, 2025**.

Budget Guidelines

Please be sure that the budget:

- Does not exceed the award amount;
- Does not include in-kind contributions;
- Corresponds to the applicant's funding request;
- Is consistent with the program design/plans outlined in the corresponding proposal narrative; and
- Ensures administrative costs, if applicable, do not exceed 10% of total direct costs.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Review Panel

Applications will be reviewed and rated using a standardized scoring tool by a panel from Family League's Community Advisory Board (CAB). Recommendations will be further reviewed by members of Family League's Leadership and Senior Management Teams.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used in selecting the application to be awarded:

- Application adherence to proposal requirements,
- Budget reflects maximizing of resources/stewardship,
- Stakeholder letter of support,
- **Alignment with Food System Categories:** The proposal clearly addresses one or more components of the food system (Grow, Process, Distribute, Access, Eat, Waste Recovery) as outlined in the RFP.
- **Equity and Community Leadership:** Priority will be given to projects that advance equity by addressing disparities in food access, promoting culturally relevant nutrition, ensuring fair resource distribution, and engaging historically excluded communities.
- **Impact and Sustainability:** The project demonstrates a strong potential to create measurable impact and outlines a plan for long-term sustainability or systems change beyond the funding period.
- **Feasibility and Organizational Capacity:** The applicant has the operational capacity, experience, and readiness to implement the proposed project effectively and within the stated timeline.
- **Innovation and Collaboration:** The project offers creative approaches to addressing food system challenges and reflects collaboration with other community stakeholders, organizations, or sectors.
- **Budget-and Stewardship:** The budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and aligned with the scope of work. Applicants clearly articulate how resources will be used to maximize impact.

- **Project Summary:** should be detailed, place based and clearly articulate the goals and expected impact of the project. In addition proposal aligns with one or more of the food systems categories"

Announcement

Funding decisions are expected to be announced by: **October 31, 2025.**

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Administrative Contracting Documentation

If selected, the Funded Partner is required to complete All Administrative Contracting Documentation including:

- Certificate of Good Standing with the State of Maryland dated **within the past 30 days**
- Certificate of Insurance
- Audited Financial Statements (awards \$50,000 or more) or Form 990 (awards up to \$49,999.00) dated **within the past 12 months**
- Confidentiality Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- COVID-19 Safe Environment Acknowledgement Form
- Criminal Background Check Policy
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse Policy
- Financial Policies & Procedures
- Grievance Policy
- Record Retention Policy
- Subcontractor Policy

Data Collection

All Funded Partners will be required to submit data on every participant they serve. Funded Partners must have the capacity to collect, manage, utilize, and report participant-level and program data. The data will be entered into Family League's data system, or in such form as agreed upon by Family League.

Reporting

All Funded Partners must submit quarterly financial and programmatic reports, unless otherwise specified by Family League. These include, but are not limited to, a narrative report; data specified in each Funded Partner's Scope of Work, including outcome information; and line-item financial information.

Training and Technical Assistance

All Funded Partners must participate in staff development activities as required by Family League. Information related to training opportunities, both required and optional, will be shared with Funded Partners on a regular basis. Additionally, Family League is committed to providing technical assistance and welcomes Funded Partner feedback.

Grant Award

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee an award. Family League is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. Family League reserves the right to withdraw an award prior to execution of a contract with a Funded Partner in Family League's sole and absolute discretion.

Contract Terms

All Funded Partners must comply with all terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by Family League. These terms and conditions can be found on the Family League website at www.familyleague.org by submitting a proposal to this RFP, applicants attest that they have read and accept these conditions fully. A Scope of Work with details about specific requirements and measurable outcomes will be a requirement of grant recipients as an addition to the contract.

Criminal Background Checks

All Funded Partners must conduct criminal background checks for employees. These practices must comply with the terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by Family League. All Funded Partners must have established standard operating policies and procedures for conducting, reviewing, and if necessary, responding to the results of the record checks.

Additional Funder Conditions

Any additional terms and conditions imposed by funders following the release of this RFP shall become a part of the contract between the Funded Partner and Family League.

Key Dates and Deadlines

KEY DATE	ACTIVITY
August 4, 2025	RFP posted
August 11, 2025	Deadline to Submit Questions
August 11, 2025	Pre-proposal Conference
August 15, 2025	Q&A Posted to Family League website
August 29, 2025	Submission deadline (by 4:00 pm)
September 1 –September 5, 2025	Technical Review and Cure Period
September 8 – October 10, 2025	Application Reviews and Approvals
October 31, 2025	Determination Notices
July 1, 2025	Contract Term Start