

## Food Security

**[Watch an informational webinar on the Food Security grant program.](#)**

### Important Dates/Deadlines

- Application open date: On or about **Wednesday, March 27, 2024**
- Application due date: **Monday, May 6, 2024, by 3:00 p.m.** (Eastern Time)
- All applicants will be notified of their status on or before **September 12, 2024.**
- Required grantee orientation: **September 2024**

**Florida Blue Foundation's programs are focused on improving health equity by impacting food security, advancing mental well-being, growing healthy communities, and addressing health disparities. This funding opportunity is focused on Food Security.**

### Description of the 2024 Food Security Grant Program

**Goal:** Improve access to affordable, healthy, and nutritional foods for vulnerable populations who live in food insecure communities.

### Background

The Foundation seeks to fund programs that support vulnerable populations who struggle to afford and access healthy and nutritious foods. We aim to improve food security for these communities and promote healthier choices. Research has shown that when people have reliable access to fresh, local foods, they are more likely to make healthier choices, leading to better health outcomes.

According to [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service \(USDA ERS\)](#), the household food insecurity rate in the United States has increased to 12.8% in 2022, affecting 17 million households nationwide. This is a significant increase from 2021's rate of 10.2% and 2020's rate of 3.9%. In Florida alone, 1 in 9 people (equivalent to 2,314,370 individuals) face hunger, with 1 in 6 of them being children (equivalent to 613,180 children).

It is essential to ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life. The USDA ERS defines food security as having consistent access to enough food for an active and healthy lifestyle. Unfortunately, food insecurity is a prevalent issue in all communities, with rural areas being particularly affected due to factors such as poverty, lack of transportation, unemployment, and high cost of living. The consequences of food insecurity can be severe, negatively impacting people's health and well-being.

Florida Blue Foundation will provide four-year grants to nonprofit organizations that have documented expertise and experience in addressing food insecurity. Programs should support equitable access to healthy food and program services and should focus on moving underserved or marginalized communities from food insecurity to food security.

## **2024 Food Security Funding Priority**

Florida Blue Foundation's overall goal is to move families, children, individuals, and communities from food insecurity to food security.

### **Priority: Improving Access to Healthy Food**

Food insecurity and the lack of access to affordable, nutritious food are linked to a higher risk of chronic health conditions. Conversely, access to fresh food plays a critical role in promoting healthier choices and improving overall health outcomes within communities. This program is dedicated to improving access to healthy foods and developing self-sufficiency by creating sustainable solutions to enhance food security. Programs should incorporate a strong nutrition education component to address health risks associated with food insecurity.

### **Special Note**

When completing the on-line application, please keep in mind that Florida Blue Foundation is looking for nonprofit charitable organizations to propose proven services that will be implemented to serve primarily underserved, underinsured, and low-income individuals in Florida and to reach more individuals in rural communities. Priority will be given to organizations that provide services in the following ZIP codes: 32206, 32805, 33612/33613, 33142, and 33311 plus Florida's rural counties – reference the Florida Department of Health map of rural counties provided in the Details section of the application portal and the Important Information and Attachments sections of the application (with the Program Milestone Document information).

### **Completing the Application**

The Program Milestone Document is available to be downloaded. The completed Program Milestone Document is to be uploaded to the application as an attachment. Basic information – name of organization, program title, amount requested, etc. – will be requested within the application. Program objectives, tasks, expected outcomes/results, and other details will be captured within the Program Milestone Document. The information within the Program Milestone Document will then be the basis for all reporting for the programs selected for funding.

### **Funding**

- The Florida Blue Foundation has approximately \$3 million for the funding of this program.
- The Foundation will fund four-year grants. The approximate amount per grant is between \$90,000 to \$100,000 per year.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organizations, public agencies, universities, colleges, training centers, community centers, schools, health care-related facilities, faith-based institutions, and others that:

1. Are incorporated in Florida
2. Have the capacity, expertise, resources, knowledge in the field, and time needed to carry out the intent of the program
3. Have expertise in delivering educational and awareness programs on targeted topics to targeted populations described in this application
4. Have expertise in developing and managing programs, and
5. Have the capability to reach target populations described under this application.

### **What We Do Support**

1. Salaries, including benefits
2. Employee training
3. Rental fees for program/meeting costs
4. Webinar or other types of media/technology

5. Program materials/equipment
6. Required travel related to this grant (e.g., attend Florida Blue Foundation's Annual Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards, and other potential annual program meetings, etc.)
7. Training/educational materials
8. Printing and dissemination
9. Indirect costs – an amount up to but not to exceed 10% of the total grant amount.  
*(Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant project function or activity but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.)*

### **What We Do Not Support**

1. Organizations that discriminate in their provision of goods and services based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, or marital status
2. Organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3)
3. Research and development
4. Individuals
5. Capital campaigns
6. New start-ups
7. Profit making enterprises as applicants

### **Grantee Requirements**

- Please be aware that should your program be selected for funding, the Florida Blue Foundation will disburse payments via ACH transactions, and you will be required to provide requested banking information.
- Successful applicants should be prepared to attend a mandatory grantee orientation that is tentatively scheduled to take place in September 2024. Specific date and time will be provided once confirmed.
- Successful applicants must attend the Florida Blue Foundation's annual Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards each year for the life of the grant. Dates and locations will be provided once they are confirmed.
- When developing your budget, please include funds for each year of the grant to cover potential annual program meetings and attendance at Florida Blue Foundation's annual Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards. Estimated cost: \$800 per person/per year.
- Grantees must have the capability to administer the Six-item Short Form Retrospective USDA Survey to new program participants twice annually.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the online application for the Food Security grant program.

### **Need Help?**

Check out the **Frequently Asked Questions beginning on the next page.**

If you still have questions, you may contact us via email: [floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com](mailto:floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com); or via phone: 1-800-477-3736, ext. 63215.

## Food Security Program Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Are current grantees eligible to apply to the same program? Or for a different program?**

A: Yes, as long as the proposal aligns with the intent of the grant. And, if applying to the same grant program, the proposal needs to be different than what is currently being funded.

**Q: What is the deadline to submit the 2024 Program application?**

A: Food Security: Before 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday, May 6, 2024.

**Q: When will applicants be notified of their status as approved or declined?**

A: Food Security: on or before September 12, 2024.

**Q: Do you fund 12-month applications?**

A: No. The Food Security grant program will award four-year (48 months) grants to nonprofit organizations.

**Q: How many proposals do you expect to receive? How many will you fund?**

A: We do not have an estimate of how many proposals we will receive. The Florida Blue Foundation has approximately \$3 million for the funding of the 2024 Food Security initiative.

**Q: What is the decision-making process of selecting applications for funding?**

A: A review committee made up of internal and external individuals who are knowledgeable and/or experts in this funding area make recommendations to the Foundation. The Foundation's Board of Directors has the final approval for all recommended applications.

**Q: For budgeting purposes, can you please provide an estimate of the numbers of days and nights spent at each of the events: Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards and at a potential annual program meeting?**

A: Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards - This is a two-day event typically held in Orlando. We recommend estimating the hotel cost at \$250 per night and registration at \$150. Remember to also add in transportation cost. There is no limit to the number of attendees from your organization. It is recommended that, at a minimum, the person who is managing the day-to-day operation of the program attend.

Other meetings - Meetings in subsequent years are not set in stone and sometimes they are scheduled in conjunction with the Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards or at another time during the year that may be scheduled at a central location. The schedule generally allows for closer organizations to be able to travel back and forth in one day.

**Q: Can these grant funds be used to purchase a building?**

A: No, our programs are not designed to fund brick and mortar grants. Our grants are designed to provide direct delivery services to the underserved and low-income individuals and communities across Florida.

**Q: Are indirect costs allowable?**

A: Yes, up to 10% of indirect costs are allowable under these programs.

*Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant project function or activity but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.*

**Q: What if our organization does not have an audited financial statement?**

A: In lieu of an audited financial statement, the Foundation requests the organization's Statement of Financial Position or Statement of Activities.

**Q: What format do you require for the letters of agreement with collaborators/partners?**

A: We do not have a preferred format for the letters of agreement between collaborators/partners; however, they must be specific to the grant application you are submitting and dated in line with the submitted application.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of collaborations/partnerships?**

A: There is no limit.

**Q: Is there a maximum number of objectives in the program milestone document?**

A: No, there is no maximum number of objectives.

**Q: For these programs, how does the Foundation define demographics?**

A: For the purposes of these programs, the Foundation defines demographics as the statistical data relating to the human population and particular groups within it (gender, age, ethnicity, income, etc.).

**Q: If an organization is not based in Florida but provides direct services in markets across the country including Florida, would the organization still be eligible to apply?**

A: Yes, as long as the organization can provide the required documents in the Attachments section of the application including the State of Florida Solicitation of Contributions certificate from the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

**Q: What is the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Certificate? Do state agencies need to provide one?**

A: The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services requires this certification for nonprofits seeking to solicit funds in the state of Florida. It must be renewed yearly. We request that you upload the current certificate that is less than one year old. It is a required attachment so if your organization is exempt, please attach the exemption letter from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

**Q: When will the grants become effective?**

A: As soon as the grant agreements are fully executed in September 2024, operations can begin when the organization is ready to launch the program.

**Q: I cannot register online or my organization Tax ID number is not recognized.**

A: If you are having trouble registering or cannot find your organization, please click on "Contact Us" located in the blue box at the top of the page and provide the organization name, address, and tax ID number. Someone will get back to you.

**Q: Is there someplace we might find a list of previously funded/successful proposals for examples of projects that suit the Foundation's funding needs in this program?**

A: The Foundation's [website](#) is a great resource for additional information and there you can find a link to the most current Impact Report which highlights many grantees.

**Q: Our organization has more than one affiliate or chapter across the state utilizing the same Tax ID number. Are we able to apply from multiple affiliates/chapters?**

A: Each chapter can submit an application. If the chapters plan to submit similar programs, our recommendation is to submit a statewide proposal. Large organizations that have

many divisions, such as universities, colleges, hospital systems, or government agencies, may only submit one application per funding priority. If you have specific questions, please reach out to the Foundation.

**Need Help?**

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