

Prepared Meals Grant

Many Minnesotans are challenged by both food insecurity and the inability to prepare meals due to mobility challenges, limited resources, and disability factors. Historically, state and federal programs have focused on child and elder hunger insecurity. The target population of the grant are Minnesotans aged 18-60 years old and their dependents.

In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature awarded the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Office of Economic Opportunity (DCYF, OEO), a one-time appropriation to fund prepared meals programs in a two year pilot program to begin in SFY 2024. Funding is outlined in session law [Article 12, Section 33 lines 580.29-581.30](#).

Funding and eligibility

- In SFY 2024 and 2025, \$3.3 million in one-time funding was appropriated for the Prepared Meals grant with \$1.6 million available in SFY 2024 and \$1.7 million available in SFY 2025.
- Funding was to be distributed through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP).
- The purpose of the grant is to fund meal programs that primarily target individuals between 18-60 years of age, and their dependents experiencing food insecurity.
- Grants funded through this RFP focus on increasing food security and access, particularly in areas with the highest needs and serving those who have difficulty preparing meals.
- Tribal Nations or bands in Minnesota and nonprofit organizations were eligible applicants.
- Activities include food purchases, supplies, personnel, equipment and refrigeration, vehicle, and maintenance.
- Meals must be prepared in a licensed commercial kitchen and distributed within ServSafe guidelines.
- Grantees must avoid duplication with existing state and federal meal programs and funds must supplement, but not supplant, any state or federal funding used to provide prepared meals.
- Preference was given to applicants that proposed to provide prepared meals to racially and geographically diverse populations at greater risk for food insecurity, work with community partners to distribute meals in nontraditional meal sites reaching those most in need, and source at least 50% of ingredients from Minnesota food producers and processors and/or source food that is donated or would otherwise be wasted.

SFY 2024-2025 Grant process and awards

Managed by DCYF, OEO, all grants were awarded through a competitive RFP process. DCYF, OEO convened a committee of volunteers comprised of DCYF-OEO staff, other state staff, and external partners with lived and/or professional experience with food insecurity. This committee reviewed and scored applications.

Prepared Meal grants were awarded to 1 Tribal Nation and 7 non-profit organizations across Minnesota.

Meal distribution models of grantees varied widely:

- Expansion of an existing senior dining program to include the target population.
- Delivery to pre-natal and postpartum patients of 2 healthcare organizations, one clinic also targets patients with diabetes.
- Delivery of frozen meals to emergency shelters and food shelves.
- Shipment of meals to residences and community sites.
- Home delivery and takeout meals.
- Adding meals to two existing outdoor food distributions and delivering meals to a new partnership with an emergency shelter.

Impact

This funding is new in SFY 2024 and further details on services, projects funded, and impact will be available in SFY 2025.