

Types and Sources of Local and Regional Food Systems Funding

Created as part of the [Local and Regional Food Systems Response to COVID: Recovery and Resilience](#) Project, this table outlines the main categories of funding sources that support local and regional food system resilience in the short, mid, and long term. For each general-category of funding sources, our research team and project partners identified key considerations for common and best-fitting uses, time frames, considerations for administration or groundwork and scope of funding for each source.



Funding Source	Best Fills What Need?	General Timeline to Receive Funds	Typical Funding Amount	Funding Length	Necessary Points of Contact	Special Considerations
Grassroots Funding Efforts: generally philanthropic with rare expectation for repayment	Immediate response to specific needs. Focused on place-based priorities.	Immediate to Short Term	<\$10,000	Immediate to 90-Day Response	Must have relationships with community members and be prepared for many small touch points, follow ups, and aligning with individual values.	Grassroots funding is often given with no strings attached. This type of funding rewards individuals and groups with strong social networks.
Philanthropic Funds: more structured philanthropic foundations with formal application processes and timelines	Funding gaps that align with the specific goals, missions, geographies, or values outlined by philanthropic donors.	There is the potential for quick pivots in funding priorities. There is often relationship building and donor cultivation that takes time before funding is secured.	Varies	1-5 years	There is the need to have an established relationship with philanthropic funders and program officers. Cultivating these relationships takes time and energy up front. May have expectations for frequent report outs, tours or talks related to funded projects	Philanthropic funding is often relationship driven. It is important to recognize that there are areas underserved by philanthropy such as the US South. Formal reporting requirements and funding stipulations. The likelihood of funding varies. Often get funds up front rather than in reimbursements. Scale, scope, and aims of philanthropies vary greatly, so thoughtful "matchmaking" is needed to align donor and recipient.
Local and Municipal Governments: grants and/or cost share	Often best to fill contractual or land/space needs. Well suited to fill local food access and nutrition funding needs. Projects and programs that align with local ordinances or strategic plans	Distribution of funds can move quickly if relationships with local agencies are established. Most often applicable after the 90-day disruption response window.	Varies	Short term to multi-year	Must have a working knowledge of your town, city, or county administration as well as local/regional/county municipal laws. It is useful if you have relationships with any local food practitioners or coordinators hired at municipal levels or who sit in food access/food justice oriented positions. In areas with Food Policy Councils, councils can serve as a good point of contact to learn how funds are mobilized and distributed during a disruption.	Local and municipal funding is often geared towards economic and/or workforce development, with some increased activity related to lands/open space and food security. Research the procurement laws in your municipality or state in order to register with the appropriate agency and ensure the ability receive payment through correct payment systems.
State Governments: grants or low interest loans	Funding fills specific needs identified by the State. May be state block grants passed through from federal partners to use for state-specific priorities (such as Specialty Crops, Local Food Procurement).	Legislative sessions and federal grant cycles may determine funding allocation and timelines.	\$25,000 - \$250,000 (higher levels for loans)	Short term to multi-year	State agencies and departments are the typical point of contact. Each state has a different set of agencies and priorities, and varying levels of engagement with food systems. Identifying likely agency and department partners and establishing communication should occur prior to disruption. State or local cooperative extension offices and agents can also support these efforts. Since much of state funding is determined during legislative sessions, some advocacy may be necessary to get a funding bill passed.	State allocation of funds often allows for things that federal grants do not such as equipment. Major federal funding initiatives often flows through and are administered by individual states. Recipients must follow state-specific procurement regulations to receive and administer payments. State funding may also go to consulting services after a disruption, and having established connections and regular communication with service provider networks is key for identifying those opportunities.
Federal Government: grants, cost share and low interest loans	Program planning, sometimes with Phase 2 programs to implement plans created in planning grants. Commonly embed outreach, applied research and evaluation as key outcomes.	Can be a lengthy process from application submission to fund disbursement, with a complex set of application and funding pass through models	>\$50,000 and up to \$1,000,000 for implementation grants	One year for planning and up to Multi-year for implementation and applied research	Federal agencies communicate producer assistance, grant and award opportunities through specific communication channels. It's important to know where and how to find timely agency information, including joining relevant mailing lists. Federal funds may be distributed from the federal agency or through local or state offices (e.g., State Farm Service Office). Local entities and agencies (including cooperative extension and other technical assistance networks) may disseminate funding opportunities.	Time intensive application requirements, fiscal reporting or management expectations, and fund matching requirements may make federal grant applications challenging for smaller, community based organizations. Depending on the program, the number of awards may be very low in proportion to the number of applicants.

A note on **Tribal Funding:** Tribal governments do not have a tax base and therefore do not have revenue generating streams to redistribute. Tribal governments have arms (ex. economic development corporations, casinos) that engage in the market to generate revenue that tribal governments use to provide community services. This system is reliant on the health of the economy and in economic downturns, tribal governments' ability to generate revenue is challenged. Tribes receive a large portion of their funding through government grants and loans from agencies such as the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) and [Indian Health Services](#). Tribes take on the administrative duties of these federal programs through 638 Authority - a legal tool for Tribal self-determination that gives Tribes the ability to take over control of eligible federal government programs. There are also philanthropic foundations dedicated to tribal funding. For more information on philanthropic funding opportunities visit [Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative](#), [First Nations Development Institute](#), and the [Native American Agriculture Fund](#).