



FY26 Strengthening Our Network Grant Application Guidelines

Purpose of Funding

The Strengthening Our Network Grant offers funding up to \$25,000 to support capacity building initiatives. This grant is offered on a rolling basis to allow members the flexibility to apply at a time that aligns with their organization's capacity needs. This approach ensures that no opportunity is missed due to rigid deadlines, and it supports a diverse range of projects and initiatives. By accommodating various timelines, we can better serve the unique needs of each member organization and foster innovation and growth within our network.

Eligibility Criteria

Agency must be an OFH Partner Agency distributing food through OFH for at least 1 year.

Agency must be in compliance with following network standards:

- Network Standard Report (no major findings from most recent agency visits)
- Current food safety certification
- Current on civil rights training
- Current on statistics
- Current accounts payable

Agency must have utilized Ozarks Food Harvest at least four times in the last 12 months

Grant Requirements & Agreements

- Agency must acquire and submit TWO bids/quotes for any equipment requests
- If a previously approved item is discovered to be available at a lower than initially quoted price, or member procures a different brand, or item, than originally proposed, it is imperative to first communicate with The Food Bank, before purchasing the item. This step ensures optimal allocation of funds
- If the total project cost is more than \$25,000, agency must submit a **budget summary** and a letter from organizational leadership stating the remaining funds are secured to complete the project.
- Project must be completed within the one-year grant period
- Agency is responsible for the maintenance and operation of any equipment purchased in partnership with Ozarks Food Harvest
- Should the church/organization cease its distribution and/or partnership with Ozarks Food Harvest, we request that the church/organization transfer the equipment to another feeding program in the Ozarks Food Harvest network [provided the equipment is in working order.]
- Authorize a representative from Ozarks Food Harvest to visit your program at a convenient date(s) to see your program in action



Grant Period and Funding Options

This grant opportunity is competitive and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Members of Ozarks Food Harvest may submit 1 application within a 12-month period between July 1st and June 30th.

Grant Funds will be disbursed after award decisions are made and must be spent within 1 year of receipt of funds. Funding is limited and award amounts may be less than the requested amount.

Please allow up to one month for approval (from the time we receive the completed grant application and required documentation, to the time of award/denial. This may vary, depending on the scope of the project request)

Funds will be made available 5-7 business days of application approval.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Completeness of application and clarity of proposal
- Feasibility of capacity-building project, as described
- Potential impact on organizational capacity and/or sustainability

Eligible Expenses

Member organizations have the opportunity to request support for any project or equipment essential to advance their organization to the subsequent level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational development.

Agency must own the building in which they operate, to be eligible for the following expenses:

- Renovation costs associated with improving the flow of distribution or increase food storage space (i.e. knocking down a wall)
- Resurface existing parking lot-from gravel to pavement [eligible, only if it also benefits OFH deliveries]
- Increase parking lot square footage [only if it improves logistics of an outdoor distribution]
- New dock or dock improvements
- Walk-in cooler or freezer
- Other



Ineligible Expenses

Examples of ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Payroll expenses
- Real estate purchases
- Rental payments
- Overhead costs
- Advertising expenses
- Structural upgrades such as roofing, insulation, windows, plumbing, etc.
- Office furniture
- Food expenses

Reporting Requirements

Agency must submit a mandatory Final Impact Report, one year from date of award. Failure to submit the report will lead to the temporary suspension of the member, until the report is received. Moreover, this non-compliance may impact the allocation of any forthcoming grants.

Report templates will be provided prior to the final report deadline.

Report of grant activities may include, but is not limited to:

- A description of project results including the number of meals served, number of families/individuals served, challenges
- Perceived impact
- Photos of project implementation
- Key successes/best practices and challenges
- At least 5 testimonials and/or stories from staff, volunteers, and/or clients
- A copy of any media coverage and/or communication efforts
- Invoices/proof of expenditures



Communications & Publicity Requirements

Ozarks Food Harvest requires all grants awarded to be publicized by agency within the 1-year grant period. All media relations and communications concerning the Agency's grant award, including any use of the Ozarks Food Harvest name or logo, must be coordinated with, and approved in writing by OFH's Communications Department. A communication template and OFH logos will be provided to all grant recipients post award.

If funding is granted, the following requirements must be met:

- Agency must promote the grant award via one or more of the following sources within one month of receiving grant funding [project does not need to be completed]:
 1. Facebook – copy of FB post
 2. Instagram – copy of post
 3. X – copy of post
 4. Website – copy of post on website
 5. Newspaper – copy of newspaper article
 6. Local Media – [i.e. copy of link to media report]
 7. Church bulletin – copy of church bulletin
- Agency must recognize Ozarks Food Harvest as the donor when promoting or publicizing grant award.
- Agency must identify as an Ozarks Food Harvest Partner Nonprofit in all public service announcements, news releases, articles, etc. associated with the funding
- Agency must provide a link to Ozarks Food Harvest's website in a prominent place on the Nonprofit Partner's website, if they have a website

Any questions regarding these guidelines and grant application should be directed to:

OFHmembergrants@ozarksfoodharvest.org