

Food Security

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

As you prepare your online grant application, please carefully review the following four key sections to ensure you meet all the necessary requirements for a successful submission: 1) Dates and Deadlines, 2) Important Application Information, 3) Grant Funding Focuses, and 4) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

DATES AND DEADLINES

- Application Open: **Wednesday, March 4, 2026**
- Application Deadline: **Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)**
- Notification of Application Status: **August 2026**
- Required Cohort and Grantee Orientations: **August and September 2026**

IMPORTANT APPLICATION INFORMATION

Pre-Application Resources

- **Informational Webinar:** All applicants are required to [watch our informational webinar](#) on the Food Security grant program prior to completing their application. Watching the webinar will help prepare you for a strong and competitive application.
- **Online Application Link:** [Click here](#) to access the online application for the Food Security grant program. Use Google Chrome to access the application in our grants management system.

Application Guidelines

- **Grant Funding:** Florida Blue Foundation is funding approximately \$3.2 million for this grant program, offering four-year grants. The total funding request for the grant period should fall within the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000, with an approximate annual allocation of \$75,000 to \$100,000.
- **Application Deadline:** The deadline is Wednesday, April 22, by 3:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). We recommend submitting your online application 7 - 14 business days prior to the deadline to avoid potential technical issues. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

If your organization is new to our grants management system, please register at least two weeks in advance, as registration requires verification and approval. This will ensure you have enough time to complete the registration process and submit your application by the deadline. If you have trouble registering, please refer to the FAQs – Grant Management System.

- **Selection of Funding Focuses:** Organizations may apply to one or both Funding Focuses and must complete a separate application for each funding focus. Please note that current foundation grantees and large organizations

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with more than one affiliate/chapter and multiple divisions, should review the FAQs – Eligibility section of this document for specific guidance.

Application Requirements

- **Attachments:** All completed attachments must be uploaded in PDF format (pdf). Please ensure that all attachments are converted to PDFs before uploading them to the online application system.
- **Program Milestone Document:** The Program Milestone document is available for download on the online application link and must be completed and uploaded as an attachment. This document will capture detailed information for each year of the proposed program, including objectives, tasks, and expected outcomes.

There is no limit on the amount of information that can be provided. If selected as a grantee, this document will serve as the basis for all reporting requirements for funded programs and will be used to evaluate progress and outcomes throughout the grant period.

- **Budget Matrix and Narrative Template:** The Budget template is available for download on the online application link and must be completed and uploaded as an attachment. Please note that up to 10% of the total grant amount may be claimed for indirect costs, which are expenses necessary for the general operation of the organization and not directly related to a specific grant project. The Budget Narrative should include a brief explanation for each Florida Blue Foundation grant expense, by year, for all years of the proposed program.

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 per meeting: \$800 per person/per year.

- Florida Blue Foundation's annual Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards: A two-day event typically held in Orlando. We recommend estimating the hotel cost at \$250 per night, registration at \$200, and transportation costs. 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 sometimes scheduled in conjunction with the Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards or at another time during the year scheduled at a central location. The schedule generally allows for closer organizations to be able to travel back and forth in one day.
- **Audited Financial Statement:** Applicants will be required to upload their organization's most recent audited financial statement, which should not be older than two years. If it is not available, we will accept your organization's internal financial statements, including a Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and a Statement of Activities (Income Statement), for the most recent two years.

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- **[Florida Solicitation of Contributions Certificate](#)**: Applicants will be required to upload their Florida Solicitation of Contributions Certificate, issued by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. This certificate should be less than one year old, as it must be renewed annually. This is required for nonprofits to solicit funds in Florida.

If your organization is exempt, please attach a copy of the exemption letter issued by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Please note that some state agencies and organizations may be exempt from this requirement. If an organization is not based in Florida, please refer to FAQs – Eligibility.

- **Additional Documentation**: Applicants will be instructed to upload their organization’s current documentation, including: IRS Tax Form 990, Program Organizational Chart, Letters of Agreement for Collaborations/Partnerships (if applicable), and a list of Board of Directors. Please refer to the online application for detailed instructions and guidelines.

Food Security Survey

The Florida Blue Foundation uses the Food Security Survey to track progress towards food security. This brief retrospective assessment is administered by organizations twice a year, without duplication, to collect data on program effectiveness. To demonstrate impact, grantees must achieve a minimum 40% increase in food security over a three-year average, as measured by the survey. This metric allows the Foundation to assess the success of funded programs in helping underserved communities make progress towards and ultimately achieve food security.

Special Considerations

To further support our mission, Florida Blue Foundation demonstrates a strong commitment to serving specific vulnerable communities and leveraging innovative technologies. While not required, applicants that meet the following criteria will be given special consideration in the evaluation process:

- 1) Organizations that provide services in the following ZIP codes: 32206, 32805, 33612/33613, 33142, and 33311, plus Florida's rural counties. [Click here to reference Florida Department of Health map of rural counties](#).
- 2) Organizations that incorporate innovative AI-powered solutions into their program. If your organization plans to leverage AI to improve access to food services, enhance service delivery efficiency, and personalize interventions, please describe your approach. Highlight any innovative AI-powered tools, such as chatbots or predictive analytics, which will enhance your program.

Please note, this information should be detailed in the Special Consideration section of your online grant application.

Grantee Details

The following details outline the key requirements and expectations for selected grantees:

- **Grant Effective Date**: Grant agreements will be effective as of August 2026, with operations expected to begin in September 2026.

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- **Grantee Orientation:** Attend two mandatory virtual orientations, a Cohort Group Orientation, and an Individual Grantee Orientation, scheduled for August – September 2026. Specific dates and times will be provided once confirmed.
- **Annual Foundation Event:** 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 confirmed.
- **ACH Payments:** Florida Blue Foundation will disburse payments via ACH transactions, and you will be required to provide requested banking information.

Eligibility Criteria

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) public 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
5. Have the capability to reach target populations described under this application, and
6. Have been in operation for at least three years since receiving their IRS 501(c)(3) designation

What We Support	What We Do Not Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries, including benefits • Employee training • Rental fees for program/meeting costs • Webinar or other types of media/technology • Program materials/equipment • Required travel related to this grant • Training/educational materials • Printing and dissemination • Indirect costs – <i>an amount up to but not to exceed 10% of the total grant amount (Indirect costs are expenses necessary for the general operation of the organization and not directly related to a specific grant project).</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have a 501(c)(3) public charity designation • Research and development • Individuals • Capital campaigns • New start-ups • Profit making enterprises • Buildings (brick and mortar)

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FOOD SECURITY GRANT FUNDING FOCUSES

Florida Blue Foundation aims to improve access to affordable, healthy, and nutritious foods for vulnerable populations who live in food insecure communities.

To achieve this goal, we are funding two key focuses:

Focus 1: Transforming Health through Food

Healthy eating is a crucial component of overall well-being, and access to nutritious food can play a significant role in preventing and managing chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity which are prevalent in Florida. This funding focus supports programs that apply *Food is Medicine* principles to deliver effective interventions that improve health outcomes and quality of life. Funding will support initiatives that provide nutrition prescriptions, education, counseling, and medical nutrition therapy to individuals and communities. Programs that provide fresh produce and healthy food to support lifestyle changes and improve overall community well-being are a priority. Partnerships between health care providers, grocery stores, food banks, and community organizations that address food insecurity as a social determinant of health are encouraged.

Focus 2: Growing Access, Growing Capacity

Vulnerable populations in Florida, including children, families, and seniors, often face significant barriers to accessing healthy food, particularly in food desert communities. This funding focus supports organizations that provide essential services to address food access gaps and promote community resilience. Funding will support food distribution programs, including food banks, delivery services, pantries, and mobile markets, as well as urban agriculture and collaborative solutions that increase access to nutritious food. Effective organizations with strong foundations are best positioned to drive lasting change; therefore, support for operational needs is a critical component of this funding focus, enabling them to sustain and grow their efforts over time.

Background

The Foundation is committed to funding programs that empower vulnerable populations to overcome food insecurity and access nutritious food, promoting healthier choices and improved overall well-being.

In 2024, a staggering 13.7% of US households – 18.3 million families - struggled to access food, a 0.2% increase from 2023, according to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service \(USDA ERS\)](https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/laserfiche/publications/113623/ERR-358.pdf?v=36851).¹ In Florida, 1 in 7 people (3,247,180 individuals) face hunger, including 1 in 5 children (806,870 children).² Food insecure residents would require an additional \$2.27 billion dollars per year to meet their basic food needs at an average cost of \$3.69 per meal, which corresponds to a statewide shortfall of roughly 616 million meals annually.³

Food security is a critical social determinant of health that affects individual and population-level health outcomes. In Florida, where chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity are prevalent, food insecurity can exacerbate

¹ Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024). Household food security in the United States in 2024 (Report No. ERR-358). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/laserfiche/publications/113623/ERR-358.pdf?v=36851>

² What Hunger Looks Like in Florida, Feeding America. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/florida>. Accessed February 5, 2026.

³ Food Insecurity among the Overall Population in Florida, Feeding America. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/florida>. Accessed February 19, 2026.

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these conditions and worsen health outcomes. Food insecurity is estimated to contribute to over \$77 billion in additional health care costs annually in the U.S., making it a critical issue to address.⁴

According to Feeding America, addressing food insecurity through evidence-based interventions like Food is Medicine, which leverages the therapeutic potential of food by providing essential nutrients and promoting healthy eating habits to prevent and manage chronic diseases, can make a significant impact on reducing the burden of chronic disease.⁵ Supporting initiatives that apply Food is Medicine principles, such as providing nutrition prescriptions, education, and counseling, and deliver fresh produce and healthy food, will bridge the gap in food security and foster a healthier future for these communities. Research has consistently shown that reliable access to fresh, local foods is a powerful catalyst for healthier choices, leading to better health outcomes and a reduced risk of chronic diseases

Ensuring access to nutritious food is essential for 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 pervasive issue that affects many communities, with vulnerable populations, including children, families, and seniors, often facing significant barriers to accessing healthy food. Initiatives like delivery services, mobile markets, and urban agriculture can help bridge the gap by increasing access to nutritious food in underserved areas. The consequences of food insecurity can be severe, with far-reaching impacts on people's health and well-being.⁶

Florida Blue Foundation will provide four-year grants to nonprofit organizations with a proven track record of addressing food insecurity. Our goal is to help underserved communities make progress towards and ultimately achieve food security.

⁴ Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024). Household food security in the United States in 2024 (Report No. ERR-358). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

⁵ Smith, Morgan, Ronli Levi, and Hilary Seligman. Food is Medicine: Final Report and Key Learnings 2021. Feeding America, 2021. Web. Accessed February 5, 2026.

⁶ Food Security in the U.S., U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDA ERS). <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us>. Accessed February 5, 2026.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Food Security Survey and Data Reporting

Q: What is the Florida Blue Foundation Food Security Survey?

A: The Florida Blue Foundation Food Security Survey is a brief retrospective assessment that tracks households' progress from food insecurity to food security over time. Organizations administer the survey twice a year, without duplication, to collect valuable data on the effectiveness of their programs.

Q: What is the required percentage increase in Food Security that the grantee must achieve measured by the Food Security Survey?

A: Grantees are required to *achieve at least a 40% increase in Food Security* over a three-year average. This benchmark is based on the Food Security Survey. By tracking this percentage increase, the Foundation can evaluate the effectiveness of an organization's program in helping underserved communities make progress towards and ultimately achieve food security.

Q: What are some of the data reporting expectations?

A: In addition to the Food Security Survey, to help with documenting program impact, you will be expected to report the pounds of food distributed/meals served and an unduplicated count of new and existing clients served along with information specific to your program on a monthly basis. You will also need to submit brief six-month reports on your program indicators, expenses, and client demographics using Florida Blue Foundation report templates.

Grants Management System

Q: I'm having trouble registering or my organization Tax ID number is not recognized in your grants management system.

A: Click on "Contact Us" located in the blue box at the top of the page. You can also email: floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com; or call: 1-800-477-3736, ext. 63215. Please include your name, organization name, organization Tax ID, contact information, and interested grant program name. A team member will get back to you.

Eligibility

Q: Are current grantees eligible to apply to the same grant program? Or different grant program?

A: We encourage current Foundation grantees with multi-year grants to wait until your current grant agreement and funding have officially ended before reapplying to the same program. Please note that our Funding Focuses may change from year to year.

However, you can explore other funding opportunities that are different from your current funded program with the Foundation. We recommend considering opportunities that best align with your organization's goals and objectives. For more information, please visit: www.floridablue.com/foundation.

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?

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A: Yes, each affiliate or chapter may submit its own application. If multiple affiliates or chapters plan to submit similar programs, we recommend submitting one statewide application that combines these efforts.

For large organizations with multiple divisions, such as universities, colleges, hospital systems, or government agencies, please note that only one application per Funding Focus is allowed.

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 requested funds will be directed to the Florida program and the organization can provide the required documents in the Attachments section of the online grant application, including the [Florida Solicitation of Contributions Certificate](#) from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Decision-Making Process

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

A: A review committee composed 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: Will I receive feedback if my grant application is declined?

A: We appreciate the time and effort invested in each application, and the interest in receiving feedback on areas to improve and strengthen. Due to the high volume of applications submitted annually, we are unable to provide individualized feedback to all applicants. We strive to ensure fairness and consistency in our review process for all applicants. A declined application is not a reflection on the merit or potential impact of your proposal.

Our multi-year grant programs are highly competitive, and we can only fund a limited number of proposals across the state. We encourage you to explore our other funding opportunities, which can be found on our website at www.floridablue.com/foundation. There, you can review our funding focuses and apply to the opportunity that best aligns with your organization's goals and objectives.

Q: Where can I find previously funded and successful examples of projects that suit the Foundation's other Funding Focuses?

A: The Foundation's website is a great resource for additional information that highlights some grantees. For more information, please visit: www.floridablue.com/foundation.

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. Florida Blue Foundation has approximately \$3.2 million to fund the statewide Food Security grant program in 2026 .

Need Help?

If you still have questions, you may contact us via email: floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com; or via phone: 1-800-477-3736, ext. 63215. Please include your name, organization name, organization Tax ID, contact information, and interested grant program name.