



**2026 Partners in Community Food Project Grant (*formerly PIE Food Project Grants*)
PI Community Food Project Cover Letter**

Dear Applicant,

The Tamara D. Grigsby Dane County Civil Rights Department, in partnership with the Dane County Food Council, is pleased to announce the annual Partners in Community (PI Community) Food Project Grant (*formerly PIE Food Project Grants*).

This grant program was created in 2018 to encourage the **development of projects that advance equity and access in local food systems across Dane County**. In partnership with the City of Madison's SEED Grants (for food system projects based in Madison), this grant program extends food system funds throughout Dane County. The geographic area that your project serves must include somewhere other than the City of Madison.

We are looking for projects that will provide the **greatest impacts in strengthening our food system and cultivating community engagement and access**. Projects may request up to \$4,000 in funding. *For the 2026 PI Community Food Project Grants cycle, a total of \$35,200 is available.*

Proposals should enhance community voice in local food system development, and also **address one or more of the following Dane County Food Council (DCFC) goals:**

- Increase access to healthy, local, culturally-relevant food
- Strengthen regional agriculture and ease access to land for growing food
- Decrease food waste and loss via recovery and redistribution of good quality rescued foods

Grant Objectives:

We are seeking to identify local food system projects which have the greatest impact on our **vulnerable communities** who are underrepresented and/or underserved, with a special emphasis on Dane County communities outside the City of Madison.

Vulnerable populations:

- Groups who are disproportionately underrepresented, as leaders and as residents, in decision-making processes in the private and public sectors; and
- Groups who are underrepresented and/or underserved due to historical and current inequities in housing, infrastructure development, and public and private investment (access to transportation, grocery stores and farm land, etc) and therefore have greater barriers in place to accessing healthy, culturally relevant foods.
- Some examples of individuals who may identify as underrepresented and/or underserved may include: BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, racial or ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQIA+ communities, individuals with limited resources or income, people with disabilities, elderly individuals, unemployed or precarious workers, communities impacted by environmental hazards, individuals with limited English proficiency, and rural residents with limited access to services

We strongly encourage you to view prior PI Community Food Project Grant (*formerly PIE Food Project Grants*) awardees listed at the Dane County Civil Rights Department website: <https://equity.danecounty.gov/grants/PIE-food>. We also encourage you to think outside the box so that we can strengthen our food system from all sides and sectors. If you have questions about whether your project might be eligible, please contact Theola Carter at (608) 283-1471 or DCCRDGrantSubmission@danecounty.gov.

Projects will be given preference and/or awarded additional points for the following:

1. Projects that have the greatest impact on our most vulnerable populations, who are underrepresented and/or underserved within our food system.
2. Projects that demonstrate a short or medium-term impact.
3. Applicants who've not previously received PI Community Food Project Grant funding (or PIE Food Project Grant funding).
4. Projects with limited access to funding.

If your project serves communities within the City of Madison, we encourage you to apply for a City of Madison SEED Grant: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/programs/food/seed-grants>. SEED applicants may also apply for a PI Community Food Project grant. Funding can be received from both a SEED grant and a PI Community Food Project grant, but not to exceed the total project budget needed.

To apply, complete the application form found on the following pages. Please do not submit any additional materials not requested in this application. Additional materials will not be considered/reviewed.

- Applications are due by **4:00 PM on Friday, February 27, 2026**
 - Submit it electronically to DCCRDGrantSubmission@danecounty.gov.
 - If you are unable to submit electronically, mail it to:
ATTN: Theola V. Carter
Tamara D. Grigsby Dane County Civil Rights Department
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 356
Madison, WI 53703
- **Mailed applications must be postmarked by 4:00 PM on Friday, February 27, 2026**
- If you have questions or need assistance completing the application, please contact Theola Carter at (608) 283-1471 or DCCRDGrantSubmission@danecounty.gov.

We look forward to reviewing your application.

Sincerely,
Theola V. Carter, MPA
Manager of Policy and Program Improvement
Tamara D. Grigsby Dane County Civil Rights Department





2026 Partners in Community Food Project Grant (formerly PIE Food Project Grants)
PI Community Food Project Grant Application

Projects may request up to \$4,000 in funding.

For the 2026 PI Community Food Project Grants cycle, a total of \$35,200 is available.

Grant Objectives:

We are seeking to identify local food system projects which have the greatest impact on our vulnerable communities who are underrepresented and/or underserved, with a special emphasis on Dane County communities outside the City of Madison.

We are not attempting to identify the applications which are the best written. In other words, we use scoring to measure the impactfulness of the project, not to discount applications for mistakes which do not translate into the ability to successfully implement the program or project.

As this is a small grant opportunity, funding does not need to be predicated on a long-term vision of sustainability. Rather, short and medium-term impact should be prioritized.

Please see the next page for detailed scoring criteria.

Guidelines used by Reviewers:

These are the guidelines that reviewers will consider when scoring applications.

| Scale for 5 point questions | Scale for 10 point questions |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 – Missing/incomplete information• 1 – Poor/Below average response• 2 – Fair response• 3 – Good/average response• 4 – Above average response• 5 – Excellent response | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 – Missing/incomplete information• 2 – Poor/Below average response• 4 – Fair response• 6 – Good/average response• 8 – Above average response• 10 – Excellent response |

The baseline for all responses is FAIR. Points should be added based on the ability to exceed that baseline, or subtracted when the baseline requirements aren't met.

Low scores indicate **POOR** or **FAIR** responses. Scores of zero should be reserved for applications with missing or incomplete information. Middle scores indicate **GOOD** responses. Top scores in each scoring category should be reserved for **EXCELLENT** responses that go above and beyond.

Reasons to score above FAIR may include a strong focus on equity and access - such as the following attributes, or other particular strengths:

- *Clearly directly serves vulnerable populations*
- *Demonstrates new approaches and/or impactful plans to address existing challenges*
- *Is focused in scope and represents a feasible effort towards impacting the project's goals*
- *Meets a currently unmet community need*
- *Explicitly ties the project to Dane County Food Council goals*

***Not Previously Funded:** 5 bonus points will be awarded to organizations that have never received funding from PIE Food Project grants or PI Community Food Project grants.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Title of Proposal:

Funding Amount Requested (up to \$4,000):

Agency/Organization/Group Name (Please provide the full, legal business name):

Address:

Contact Person:

Phone number: Email:

List the specific geographic area(s) of Dane County your PI Community Food Project will serve, which must include somewhere other than the City of Madison.

Is your group: a 501 (c)(3)? YES NO Incorporated under Chapter 181 Wisc. Stats.? YES NO

If no to both, do you have a fiscal agent? YES - Fiscal agent: _____

NO - Please contact Theola Carter: (608) 283-1471 or DCCRDGrantSubmission@dane-county.gov

Gray boxes are for reviewer use only.

PART I: FUNDING HISTORY & BUDGET (10 points available)

Previously funded?
5 points

Has your organization previously received PIE Food Project grant funding?

YES (0 points) NO (5 points)

If yes, describe how this project is different from your previous PIE-funded project(s)?
(2-3 brief sentences)

Reviewer:
0 5

Total Project Budget Summary (5 points)

Please provide information on the total costs for your PI Community Food Project. Add lines if needed. *Funding must be used by 4/30/2027.*

| Project Item Name (including staff positions) | Item Description and Purpose | Total Cost of Line Item | PI Community Food Project Grant Dollars Requested for this Item |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | \$ | \$ |
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| | | | |
| | TOTAL AMOUNTS | \$ <u>Total PI Community Food Project costs</u> | \$ <u>*This total should match your total amount of PI Community Food Project funding requested. *</u> |

***If you're also applying for a SEED Grant, please include or attach your budget for your SEED Grant application. ***

Reviewer:
0 5

PART I TOTAL (10 points available): _____

PART II: PROJECT OVERVIEW (30 points available)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Alignment with DCFC Goals 10 points | Describe how your PI Community Food Project aligns with one or more (or more) DCFC goal(s). (Write 3-5 sentences for each goal aligned with). Points are awarded based on the clarity of your response (not how many goals are addressed). | <p>Write 3-5 sentences for at least one (or more) goal(s) that your project aligns with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase access to healthy, local, culturally-relevant food• Strengthen regional agriculture and ease access to land for growing food• Decrease food waste and loss via recovery and redistribution of good quality rescued foods |
| Project Summary 5 points | 5-10 sentences: Please give an overview of your PI Community Food Project. | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | |
| Implemen- tation 5 points <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> Reviewer: 0 1 2 3 4 5 </div> | <p>*Think about the most important components or activities of your project.</p> <p>For each of these, please write 2-4 sentences describing what they are and how they will be carried out.</p> | <p>Project component/activity 1.</p> <p>Project component/activity 2.</p> <p>Project component/activity 3.</p> <p>(Describe at least 3; may add additional components/activities if needed.)</p> |
| Impact/ Outcomes on Vulnerable Populations 10 points <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> Reviewer: 0 2 4 6 8 10 </div> | <p>*Think about your project's intended short- and medium- term outcomes, especially in terms of how your project will impact the communities you'll serve or support.</p> <p>For each of these, please write 2-4 sentences describing what they are.</p> | <p>Outcome 1.</p> <p>Outcome 2.</p> <p>Outcome 3.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | (Describe at least 3; may add additional components/activities if needed.) |
|--|--|--|

PART II TOTAL (30 points available): _____

PART III: COMMUNITY IMPACT (15 points available)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Communities Served <i>10 points</i> | 4-6 sentences: How does your PI Community Food Project advance equity outside of your already existing organizational operations? | <i>In your answer, be sure to describe the vulnerable populations (who are underrepresented and/or underserved within our food system) that your PI Community Food Project seeks to serve or support. (Reference p. 1 of the cover letter)</i> |
| Reviewer: 0 2 4 6 8 10 | | |
| Community Engagement <i>5 points</i> | 3-5 sentences: Please describe how you have connected, consulted, and/or engaged with these communities in the project planning, and how you plan to do so during implementation. | <i>In the project planning and implementation, it is important to connect, consult, and engage with the communities who will be served or supported with this project. <u>This must include something more than only surveying.</u></i> |
| Reviewer: 0 1 2 3 4 5 | | |

PART III TOTAL (15 points available): _____

PART IV: DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

Printed Name:

Date:

Optional question (Unscored):

Do you want DCFC to contact you to help with making partner connections for your project or other project support?

Yes. Some specific components or aspects we'd like more support with are: _____

No

Deadline to submit: Friday, February 27, 2026 (4:00pm)

Please do not submit any additional documents - additional materials will not be considered/reviewed.

Submit to Theola Carter, Manager of Policy and Program Improvement

Electronically: DCCRDGrantSubmission@danecounty.gov

OR Mail:

ATTN: Theola V. Carter
Tamara D. Grigsby Dane County Civil Rights Department
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 356
Madison, WI 53703

THIS SECTION FOR REVIEWERS ONLY**FINAL POINT TOTAL FOR PI Community Food Project Grant Application**

55 Total Points available

