



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

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County Offers \$1 million in Grants and Loans for Food Retail Projects

Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) program currently accepting applications through April 15th

March 01, 2021, EL PASO, TX— The County of El Paso, in partnership with PeopleFund and the Center for Community Health Impact at UTHHealth School of Public Health, is now accepting applications for the second round of grants and loans under the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) program. The program offers \$500k in low-interest loans and \$500k in grants for projects that increase the availability of healthy food in underserved areas.

The new application window will be open from March 1st- April 15th, and may be of interest to food retailers, food hubs, farmer’s markets, mobile markets and real estate developers. HFFI projects can be capital intensive in nature, and generally demonstrate a plan to accelerate the construction, establishment, rehabilitation or expansion of food retail or food retail infrastructure. Both businesses and non-profit organizations are eligible and may learn more about the program and how to apply at: <http://hffi.epcounty.com>.

“As we continue to weather the pandemic, we must remember that many of the ailments that plague our community, and exacerbate COVID-19 as co-morbidities, are diet based,” said Commissioner Stout. “I am proud the court has continued its commitment to help our community make healthy food choices by incentivizing retailers to do business in parts of the County they may overlook, and provide healthier options to low-income families.”

In 2019, El Paso County approved an annual allocation of \$500k to fund projects aimed at expanding access to healthy foods in areas of the community where healthy, affordable food options are scarce. This came after the “Food for Every Child” report identified areas across El Paso County where low-income residents lacked access to food retail and suffered high deaths due to diet-related illnesses. HFFI programs in different parts of the country have been an effective tool for state and local governments to bring new supermarkets, grocery stores, and other food retail models to underserved communities.

“To make healthy choices, people first need access to healthy and affordable food. The HFFI program is an important effort to support food retail and infrastructure to increase

access." Gabriela Gallegos, Associate Professor at UTHHealth School of Public Health with the Center for Community Health Impact. The Center serves as the food access partner, providing technical assistance for the program.

During the 2020 funding cycle, the County funded a farm stand and cold storage facility in the Socorro historic district, a meal prep kitchen operating out of a gym in Horizon, and a food distribution center in central El Paso. These projects spanned greatly in scope, the awards ranging from \$18k to \$150k. The County and its partners remain open to and interested in unique projects that provide creative solutions to help increase access to healthy foods among the most vulnerable populations.

[The El Paso County Economic Development Department](#) administers programs which seek to enhance the business operating climate and promote heritage tourism throughout El Paso County. These efforts serve to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

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EL PASO COUNTY HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE



The El Paso County Healthy Food Financing Initiative is a public-private partnership that offers grants and loans to support and accelerate the construction, establishment, rehabilitation, and/or expansion of food retail and food retail infrastructure that will increase healthy food options for currently underserved residents of El Paso County.

Available funds:

- \$500,000 in grants from El Paso County
- \$500,000 in low-interest loans from PeopleFund

Eligible Applicants: businesses or non-profit organizations; may be regional grocery chains, national grocery chains, singular grocery retail outlets, food hubs, farmer's markets, mobile markets, other food retailers, and real estate developers.

Eligible Projects: must benefit low- to moderate-income residents in an area of El Paso County with below-average supermarket density or below-average grocery sales.

Eligible Activities: pre-development, site assembly & improvement, construction & rehabilitation, equipment, staffing, staff training, security, inventory & working capital, marketing & nutrition education.

APPLICATIONS OPEN MARCH 1-APRIL 15.

For more info and to apply, visit
<http://hffi.epcounty.com>





CONDADO DE EL PASO

INICIATIVA DE FINANCIACIÓN DE ALIMENTOS SALUDABLES



La Iniciativa de Financiación de Alimentos Saludables del Condado de El Paso es una asociación público-privada que ofrece subvenciones y préstamos para apoyar y acelerar la construcción, establecimiento, rehabilitación y/o expansión tanto del comercio minorista de alimentos como de su infraestructura que ampliará las opciones de alimentos saludables para los residentes marginados actuales del condado de El Paso.

Fondos disponibles:

- \$500,000 en subvenciones del condado de El Paso
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Solicitantes elegibles: negocios u organizaciones sin fines de lucro; pueden ser cadenas regionales de supermercados, cadenas nacionales de supermercados, puntos de venta minoristas independientes de abarrotes, centros de alimentos, mercados de agricultores, mercados sobre ruedas, otros comerciantes minoristas de alimentos y promotores de bienes raíces.

Proyectos elegibles: deben beneficiar a residentes de ingresos bajos a moderados en un área del Condado de El Paso con una densidad de supermercados o de ventas de abarrotes por debajo del promedio.

Actividades elegibles: desarrollo previo, montaje y mejora del sitio, construcción y rehabilitación, equipo, dotación de personal, capacitación de personal, seguridad, inventario y capital de trabajo, mercadotecnia y educación en nutrición.

SOLICITUDES ABIERTAS DEL 15 DE FEBRERO AL 31 DE MARZO.

Para obtener más información y presentar una solicitud, visite <http://hffi.epcounty.com>

