



Arizona  
Food Bank  
Network

# Friends of the Farm

AzFBN's Farm-to-Food Bank Program

# Program Overview



Farm-to-food bank program that supports small to medium sized farmers by purchasing an agreed upon amount of local products at market prices



Food purchased is distributed through our broader network of food banks and agency partners all across the state



Provides a unique market opportunity for farmers to build foundational skills, gain experience, expand production capacity, diversify their market & develop strategic initiatives



Further AzFBN's core mission in providing nutritious foods to underserved communities and supporting our regional food bank partners



# Friends of the Farm

## *Now Accepting FY27 Applications!*



**Term 1:** July 1, 2026 – October 31, 2026 (4 months)



Application Deadline: March 30, 2026



Contracts will be awarded: May 2026



**Term 2:** December 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 (7 months)



Application Deadline: September 30, 2026



Contracts will be awarded: November 2026

*Project budgets are limited to \$35,000 per term.*



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# Program Participation Framework



## *Emerging Grower*

- Experience: Less than 3 years
- Goal: Build foundational skills, basic infrastructure, & gain experience with market participation
- Funding Cap: Up to \$10,000

## *Established Grower*

- Experience: 5+ years; actively selling through institutional, wholesale, grocery, or other long-term market relationships
- Goal: Maintain stable operations, diversify markets, and contribute surplus product to support community food access
- Funding Cap: Up to \$20,000



## *Scaling Grower*

- Experience: 3+ years; primarily selling through farmers markets, CSAs, or small local outlets
- Goal: Increase efficiency and production capacity with a clearly defined growth objective, expand into new or more stable markets, strengthen infrastructure, and implement strategic initiatives that move the farm toward long-term viability
- Funding Cap: Up to \$35,000



# *Application Snapshot*

**1**

**General Background  
& Participation Goals**

**2**

**Product Proposal Plan  
(Template Provided)**

**3**

**Food Safety  
Documentation**

1

## General Background & Participation Goals

### Background:

- Farm & Applicant Background
- Organization / Farm Type
- Farm Size
- Years in Operation
- Current Market Outlets
- Website / Social Media links  
(if applicable)

### Participation Goal:

- Gain experience selling to local markets and build consistent production
- Achieve consistent market sales and access new markets
- Contribute surplus produce to food banks while diversifying sales
  - *Prepare to expand on this goal*

2

## Product Proposal Plan

- Term Selection(s)
- Budget Request Range
- Prepayment
- Request/Justification
- Product Categories
- Delivery Frequency
- Service Range

### Proposal Spreadsheet (Optional Template Provided):

- Products offered
- Unit Cost / Unit Type
- Quantities Per Delivery
- Total Product Cost (within proposed budget range)
- Delivery Fees / Associated Costs

### 3 Food Safety Documentation

#### Food Safety Documentation /

#### Certifications:

- USDA Certified
- GAP Certified
- Produce Safety Alliance (PSA)

#### Certificate of Training

- AzFBN Food Safety Plan (FSP)

#### FRIENDS OF THE FARM

#### GROWER/PRODUCER FOOD SAFETY PLAN GUIDE

*Creating a food safety plan is essential for farmers to ensure the safety and quality of their agricultural products. Below is a template for a food safety plan that farmers can use as a starting point. Keep in mind that the specifics of your plan may vary depending on your farm's size, products, and local regulations. It's crucial to tailor this template to your specific needs.*

#### I. Introduction

Farm Name:	[Your Farm's Name]
Physical Location:	[Farm Address]
Mailing Address:	[Mailing Address]
Date:	[Date of Plan Creation]
Contact Information:	[Your Name, Phone Number, Email Address]
Emergency Contact:	[Emergency Contact Information]

#### II. Farm Overview

Description of Farm Operation:	[Provide an overview of your farm, including types of crops or livestock you produce]
Map of Farm Layout:	[Attach a map that identifies key areas of your operation such as fields, storage facilities, water sources, and access points. Your map can be included as a separate attachment or at the bottom of this document.]
Key Personnel:	[List the individuals responsible for food safety on the farm and their roles.]

#### III. Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

Field Preparation & Maintenance:	[Describe practices related to soil preparation, planting, irrigation, and crop maintenance]
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# Farm-to-Food Bank Product Desirability Tip Sheet

Food banks are looking for items that are...

## *Hearty and Versatile*

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are always in demand. Top-requested items are hearty, shelf-stable crops that go a long way in making a complete meal.
- Hearty items are nutrient-dense, filling, easy to store or transport, and versatile for multiple meals.
- Example Crops: Potatoes, carrots, onions, sweet potatoes, bell peppers

## *Familiar and Accessible*

- Clients are more likely to select and use items they recognize.
- When proposing products, consider how they align with the cultural preferences of the communities you hope to serve. Less familiar items can be a great fit when paired with recipe cards or simple preparation guidance. If this is something you're able to provide, please note it in your application or product spreadsheet.
- Example Crops: Lettuce, spinach, cucumbers, zucchini, apples

## *Distribution -Friendly*

- Heartier produce distributes best: travels well, doesn't wilt quickly, and retains quality without specialized handling.
- When possible, plan to package items in ready-to-go portions - such as bunched or bundled crops, individually packaged salad bags, or clearly portioned units - to support seamless distribution from food bank and pantry partners to clients. Items such as melons, cabbage, and summer squash distribute well as whole units and do not require portioning or repackaging.
- Example Crops: Kale, cabbage, carrots, beets, summer squash

## *High-Impact Items*

- Protein sources, like meat and eggs, are consistently requested and make a big difference for food-insecure families.
- Example Items: Chicken, ground beef, turkey, eggs

## *Seasonally Complementary*

- Time your crops to complement what food banks are already receiving from donations. For example, demand for citrus and melons may drop when these items are abundant.
- Coordinating with food banks ensures your produce is purchased when it's most needed and avoids oversupply.
- Example Crops: Citrus, melons

## Friends of the Farm FY27 Application Checklist

Welcome! This checklist is designed to help you gather all the information and materials needed to complete the [Friends of the Farm FY27 Application Form](#) in one sitting. Completing this checklist in advance will make the application submission process smoother.

### Before You Begin

✓ Review the [Friends of the Farm: Program Participation Framework \(FY27\)](#) to understand which budget cap is most likely to align with your farm under the program's refined goals and parameters.

✓ Review our [Farm-to-Food Bank](#) - that food banks are most interested in needs.

✓ Decide which term(s) you are applying for:

- **Term 1:** July 1 – October 31, 2026
- **Term 2:** December 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

If applying for both terms, you will need to complete a separate application for each term. This guide will guide you to continue with a separate selection, budget request, proposal document, and other materials.

### Tips for Completing Your Application

- Gather all the below information
- Have spreadsheets ready for completion
- Ensure food safety documentation is up to date

### Section 1: Applicant Information

Be ready to provide:

- Farm / Organization Name
- Farm Address (Street, City, County, State, ZIP)
- Mailing Address (if different)
- Applicant Name, Role, Email
- Secondary Contact Name, Email

- Organization / Farm Type: Individual / Sole Proprietor, LLC, Cooperative, Non-Profit, Other
- Farm Size: Micro (≤5 acres), Small (6–49 acres), Mid-size (50–150 acres), Large (150+ acres)
- Years in Operation: Less than 1 yr, 1-2 yrs, 2-3 yrs, 3-5 yrs, 5+ years
- Current Market Outlets (select all that apply): Farmers markets, CSA / direct-to-consumer, Food hubs / aggregators, Cooperative, Wholesale buyers (restaurants, grocery stores, institutions), Direct sales to food banks or pantries, Online marketplace, Not currently selling / new operation, Other
- Website / Social Media links (if applicable)
- Food Safety Documentation / Certifications (select all that apply):
  - USDA Certified
  - GAP Certified
  - Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Certificate of Training
  - AzFBN Food Safety Plan (FSP) - (not certified)
    - [Click here for: FSP Template | FSP Guide](#)

Note: Proof of selection must be attached or emailed separately to [erica@azfoodbanks.org](mailto:erica@azfoodbanks.org)

### Section 2: Applicant Participation Goals & Collaboration

Be ready to answer:

- Have you previously participated in Friends of the Farm?
- Primary participation goal (select one):
  - Gain experience selling to local markets and build consistent production
  - Achieve consistent market sales and access new markets
  - Contribute surplus produce to food banks while diversifying sales
- Expand on your selected goal (Long answer text)
- List farm partnerships (if applicable):
  - If collaborating with other farms, list each partner
  - Each partner farm will need to complete a [Farm Partner Participation Form](#), should you obtain a Growers Agreement, to document their participation

## Friends of the Farm FY27 Application Form

Welcome to the Friends of the Farm FY27 Application! This survey collects all the information needed to assess eligibility, proposed budget, product selection, delivery, and food safety verification.

Completing this application does **not** guarantee acceptance into the program.

**Term Selection:** You may apply for:

- **Term 1:** July 1st, 2026 – October 31st, 2026 (4 months) – Deadline: [March 30, 2026](#)
- **Term 2:** December 1st, 2026 – June 30th, 2027 (7 months) – Deadline: [September 30, 2026](#)

**Before You Begin This Application:**

✓ Review the [Friends of the Farm: Program Participation Framework \(FY27\)](#) to understand which budget cap is most likely to align with your farm under the program's refined goals and parameters.

✓ Review our [Farm-to-Food Bank – Product Desirability Tip Sheet](#) for guidance on the local items that food banks are most interested in this year, and consider how your proposed products align with their needs.

✓ Download and complete the [Friends of the Farm FY27 Application Checklist](#) to have all necessary materials ready to complete this application quickly and smoothly!

**Once you've completed the Application Checklist, you're ready to get started.**

We look forward to receiving and reviewing your application!

# *Questions? Let's Chat!*

Schedule a meeting via phone or Zoom/Teams to discuss your application and options.



For additional information, contact AzFBN directly at  
[info@azfoodbanks.org](mailto:info@azfoodbanks.org) | 602-528-3434



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