

Natural Refrigerants in Retail Food Refrigeration and Cold Storage – Larger systems (greater than 300 lbs)

Grants Request for Proposal (RFP)

Questions and answers

Q1. I am working with a client who manages a number of Grocery stores in Minnesota, and they are looking to replace their refrigerants in their system to low global warming potential refrigerants. Would they be able to qualify for the Minnesota climate smart food systems (CSFS) grant program?

A1. It is hard to say if your client is eligible without more information about the proposed project and applicant. Read the RFP carefully to understand eligible applicants (Section 3), eligible projects (Section 4), and replacement refrigerants (Section 4). Here is a link to the Request for Proposals: [Natural Refrigerants in Retail Food Refrigeration and Cold Storage – Larger systems \(greater than 300 lbs\)](#).

If eligible, businesses may apply for funding for multiple sites; each site needs its own application.

Q2. I was wondering if there was a requirement for the business to pay part of the cost? A couple of years ago we were awarded a grant, and funds became tight so were not able to come up with the 25% required. We have really old refrigerant, but it would still be extremely difficult for us to come up with the 25% if required.

A2. The match requirement for all grantees is 50%, meaning the grant recipient will cover 50% of the total project cost and the grant award will cover 50% of the total project cost, up to the maximum grant award.

See Table 1 of Request for Proposals for maximum grant amounts, match requirement, application windows, and funding available per organization and facility type. Here is a link to the Request for Proposals: [Natural Refrigerants in Retail Food Refrigeration and Cold Storage – Larger systems \(greater than 300 lbs\)](#).

Matching funds must be cash and may be obtained through loans or other non-state grants or non-federal funds, if the applicant chooses.

Small business applicants are encouraged to consider a 0% interest [Small Business Environmental Improvement loan](#) to use in conjunction with their grant. Loan funding can be used as matching funds or as gap funding, to cover the project prior to receiving grant reimbursement.

0% interest [Environmental Assistance loans](#) are another finance option. Eligible loan costs are limited to acquiring machinery and equipment, including freight and installation, and related improvements. Participatory loans require a match from a participating financial institution. Direct loans require a 25% match from the loanee.

Q3. I recently learned about the Natural Refrigerant Grant Program for refrigeration projects and I am very interested in applying. I would appreciate any information regarding the eligibility requirements, application process, evaluation criteria, and supporting documents needed to submit a competitive application. Specifically, I would like to know:

- Who is eligible to apply for this grant? *
- What documentation is required?
- Are there matching fund requirements?
- What types of refrigeration projects qualify for funding?

- What information should be included to strengthen an application?
- What are the application deadlines and review timelines?

I am interested in replacing an existing refrigeration system with equipment that uses natural refrigerants and would like to ensure that my project meets all program requirements before applying. Thank you for your time and assistance. I look forward to your guidance.

A3. View the [RFP](#) on the [CSFS: Natural refrigerants in retail food refrigeration and cold storage RFP](#) website for eligibility criteria, match requirements, application materials, and the application deadline. The application review process is in Section 8 of the RFP.

A strong application is a complete application. Review Section A and B application forms carefully to make sure you've entered all information requested about your existing and proposed systems. Include floor plans of your existing and proposed systems and have a thorough budget and project timeline. Complete Exhibits C, D, E, and H, as applicable.

Providing accurate descriptions of your existing and proposed equipment is critical. Share the RFP and application with your contractor and discuss your project to make sure it meets requirements before starting to apply.

You'll see that many areas in Application forms A and B have space to enter optional text. You may use these spaces to clarify your response if you feel it would help reviewers understand your project.

Reviewers will use the Application assessment sheet on pages 16 and 17 of the RFP to evaluate the project and applicant.

The Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) is available for general assistance with your application. MnTAP help is free, and they can help you understand and locate eligible equipment and review your application for completeness. Contact Ashwin Nambudiripad, Associate Engineer, at ashwin@umn.edu or 612-624-4653.

Q4. Can this grant be used by meat processing facilities to install a new additional freezer for slaughtered animals to cool?

A4. You mention the facility is installing a "new additional freezer." To be eligible, the project would need to replace existing, operational, refrigeration systems holding more than 300 lbs of refrigerant at full charge, combined, at one facility. See the full description of eligible and ineligible projects in Section 4 of the [RFP](#).

Q5. I own Ebado's Mini Mart LLC, a small grocery store in Newport, Minnesota. We have commercial refrigeration equipment used for food and beverage sales. Before applying, I would like to know whether a small independently owned grocery/convenience store would be eligible for the Natural Refrigerants Larger Systems Grant Program.

A5. Please see Section 3. Eligible and ineligible applicants in the Request for Proposals at [Natural Refrigerants in Retail Food Refrigeration and Cold Storage – Larger systems \(greater than 300 lbs\)](#)

Also review the full criteria for eligible projects and replacement refrigerants in [Section 4 of the RFP](#).

One important eligibility item is that existing, operational system(s) being replaced must hold more than 300 lbs of refrigerant at full charge, combined, at one facility.

You describe yourself as a small grocery/convenience store. It is hard to say if the equipment will be eligible without more information. If you are using a mixture of remote condensing units and self-contained equipment, it seems unlikely your equipment will be eligible.

To verify your system(s) full charge, the refrigeration repair contractor that recently serviced your system would likely know the refrigerant capacity (in lbs. of refrigerant) if you do not already have that information.

Lastly, MPCA will have grant opportunities for replacing smaller refrigeration systems in the future. Sign up to be alerted at [Grants, loans, and contracts | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) under "Stay connected."

Q6. I own a small independent restaurant in Minnesota and am interested in the Natural Refrigerants Larger Systems Grant Program.

We currently operate a walk-in freezer with a refrigeration system that is approximately 20 years old. Over the past 18 months, we have experienced multiple refrigerant leaks requiring four separate refrigerant recharges and approximately \$3,000 in repair expenses. The refrigeration equipment now appears to be at the end of its useful life and likely requires replacement.

We are interested in replacing the existing system with a lower-GWP refrigeration solution that would reduce refrigerant emissions, improve energy efficiency, and help prevent food loss and waste.

Our walk-in freezer box is approximately 5' x 8'. Before obtaining contractor proposals, I wanted to determine whether a project of this size may be eligible for funding under the program and whether restaurants with a single walk-in freezer system are eligible applicants.

A6. One important eligibility item is that the existing, operational system(s) being replaced must hold more than 300 lbs of refrigerant at full charge, combined, at one facility. See the full description of eligible projects in Section 4 of the [RFP](#).

Based on the description of what the system is servicing (5'x 8' walk-in freezer at a restaurant), it seems unlikely the system holds more than 300 lbs. If you would like to verify the system's full charge, the refrigeration repair contractor that recently serviced your system would likely know the refrigerant capacity (in lbs. of refrigerant) if you do not already have that information.

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Q7. I'm wondering if a convenience store walk-in cooler would be eligible with this Grant.

A7. One important eligibility item is that existing, operational systems being replaced must hold more than 300 lbs of refrigerant at full charge, combined, at one facility. See the full description of eligible projects in Section 4 of the [RFP](#).

Based on the description of what the system is servicing (a walk-in cooler at a convenience store), it seems unlikely the system will have a capacity of greater than 300 lbs. To verify the system(s) refrigerant capacity, the refrigeration repair contractor that recently serviced your system would likely know the refrigerant capacity (in lbs. of refrigerant) if you do not already have that information.

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Q8. I was reviewing the information for converting over to a more friendly freon source. Currently our ice cream machines are using 502 freon, I think this is a very old freon. The newer models use 449 freon. Does 449 qualify as a friendly freon?

A8. Eligible replacement refrigerants are natural refrigerants, including but not limited to, carbon dioxide (R-744), ammonia (R-717), and propane (R-290). Unfortunately, 449 freon would not qualify as a natural refrigerant.

Q9. I'm not sure if it's too late to apply for this grant but I wanted to see if our project would qualify. We run a C-store in west-central MN and are looking to replace an open-air cooler as well as a new prep table. Would this equipment upgrade be eligible under this grant?

A9. This RFP will remain open, and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all dedicated funds have been dispersed or until **4:00 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, May 27, 2027**, whichever occurs first.

One important eligibility item to mention is that existing, operational systems being replaced must hold more than 300 lbs of refrigerant at full charge, combined, at one facility. Based on the description of your equipment (open air cooler and new prep table at a convenience store), it seems unlikely it will meet the eligibility criteria for charge size. See the full description of eligible projects in Section 4 of the [RFP](#).

If you would like to verify the system(s) refrigerant capacity, the refrigeration repair contractor that recently serviced your system would likely know the refrigerant capacity (in lbs. of refrigerant) if you do not already have that information

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