

The Market Entry Fund

CO-RETAILING AWARD PROGRAM

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

The Market Entry Fund (TMEF) is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2019, to enable equitable participation in the market place by traditionally marginalized and underrepresented entrepreneurs who are in the early stages of food production and manufacturing, by providing needed scholarships and supports that will help them enter and compete better in the market place. To further that mission, The Market Entry Fund provides the following program services:

- 1) Consultation on business planning, development, strategy & other start up supports
- 2) Branding & Marketing – product promotion and branding across cultures and market segments
- 3) Go-to-Market & Market Access – support the cost of logistics and facilitate access to consumer shelves in different markets and get all or high margins.
- 4) Price Structuring – coaching, setting realistic, competitive consumer prices and maintaining it.

TMEF partners with expert organizations and individuals to address issues in the market place that food producers who are women and/or are people of color face. Food producers are growers/farmers as well as manufacturers who take the farm goods and turn them into value-added goods.

The Co-Retailing Award Program is offered under Category 3 of TMEF’s program services. More opportunities in the other categories will be available in the future as resources become available. Visit our website and sign up for our newsletter to get future announcements about opportunities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The food supply chain is complex and complicated, and there are many organizations and individuals working to address challenges in the global context. TMEF’s objective is to tackle specific and local obstacles within our reach – one of those being low margins for local foods. Small, local producers work long and labor-intensive hours to produce food for us, and they deserve better margins than typically offered if they are to be sustainable. TMEF seeks innovative approaches to help local producers minimize the cost of getting their goods to local markets, while increasing the overall pricing for their goods. This is where the Co-Retailing Award Program comes into play. It is the first year this Program is offered and we expect to not only enable a handful of producers to go to market with higher margins for their goods, but we plan to use this as a learning year, if we are to position future resources for the best impact.

Purpose of the Award: To help local food producers test their products with co-retailing by paying the cost for a select group of food producers to join co-retailing, which gives producers all of the retail sales proceeds from the sale of their goods, while managing the retail logistics and administration on their behalf. TMEF will work with Seasoned Specialty Food Market (Seasoned) as its operational partner. Seasoned is the first in the state to test this new grocery model called co-retailing – whereby, Seasoned – the grocery store – handles the sales logistics, such as staffing, location and promotion for food products, while giving back 100% of sales proceeds to the producer. While still in its early stages, this new grocery concept at Seasoned has served more than 30 local food producers since March 2018.

Benefits of the Award: Each food manufacturer who is selected will get the following benefit for up to 12 months, starting around November 2019:

- 1) steady, consistent, year-round retail shelf for a pre-determined quantity of product(s),
- 2) retail staffing for those product(s)
- 3) online and other promotion for those product(s)
- 4) sales reporting and tracking and
- 5) all of the retail sales proceeds from the sale of those product(s).

Eligibility: To receive an award under this partnership between TMEF and Seasoned, food manufacturing businesses must be producers who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- 1) Must be licensed by the state Dept of Agriculture as a food manufacturer.
- 2) Must be a producer incorporated in the state of Minnesota.
- 3) Must be women-owned and/or person of color-owned (defined as at least 51% owned and operated by entrepreneurs from these communities).
- 4) Must be in business for no more than 3 years and/or have less than \$100,000 in gross revenue per year since inception.

Current co-retailers at Seasoned Specialty Foods are eligible to apply BUT must be finalizing their current and direct contract with Seasoned Specialty Foods by no December 31st, 2019. Preference is given to those producers whose business or product is new on the market, and/or whose business has not benefitted from co-retailing.

Selection Criteria (not exhaustive): We encourage anyone who meets the eligibility criteria to apply, and applicants who will be the most competitive in the process are those that meet the following selection criteria and/or help TMEF create a robust and diverse portfolio of manufacturers. Selection criteria include the following categories. Important Note: Businesses selected for co-retailing under this program will need to sign agreements with Seasoned and/or TMEF before awards and services are final and executable.

- 1) Readiness to be on consumer shelves (be thorough in replying to questions about readiness, e.g. ability to produce at volume if needed, packaging and labeling are ready to go, state/agency licensing and regulatory requirements have been met and more. See application questions).
- 2) Uniqueness of products (we seek to bring a diverse selection of products to the shelves and will select carefully and diverse set of products).
- 3) Diversity of producers (having geographic and cultural richness in our portfolio is desirable. We encourage many communities from across the state to apply).

Awards will be selected by a group of individuals knowledgeable in the area of food and agriculture, beverage and/or startups and general business. Between 6-10 Awards may be awarded.

Summary of Timeline:

Application Opens: October 8, 2019

Applications Due: October 28th

Finalist Selection by: November 5th (*Finalists will be asked to drop off samples*).

Winners Announced: November 8th

Products on the Shelf by: November 18th (Granted all paperwork is returned by Awardee on time).

How to Apply: Visit our website for further details and to **download the application questions**. Contact: Kayla Yang-Best, Board of Directors, The Market Entry Fund, info@marketentryfund.org.