

LOCAL SUPPLIER FOOD SAFETY SUPPORT PILOT PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2026



FUNDING PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Assist Nova Scotia-based farm, seafood and food and beverage companies to meet and maintain the food safety requirements for a specific retailer (e.g. Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, Costco, Walmart or smaller retail outlets) or customer (e.g. Sysco, Gordon Food Services, institutions) with the goal of providing safe high-quality local products to Nova Scotia consumers.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Who can apply:

- Food and Beverage businesses
- Farms
- Seafood Businesses
- Commercial Kitchens
- Co-packers for Food and Beverage Businesses
- Micro-Businesses

All applicants must:

- be at least 19 years of age
- be producing a retail ready food product
- be eligible for and enrolled in the Nova Scotia Loyal Program (<https://portal.nsloyal.ca/producers/register>)
- be able to demonstrate that they are currently producing product and, if applicable, provide proof of payment from a current retail customer or business.
- demonstrate they are meeting the food safety requirements of an existing retail or food service customer and/or working to obtain product listing with a new retail or food service contract

Additionally For Food and Beverage Businesses:

- be registered through Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks
- be a licensed food processing business

Additionally For Farm Businesses:

- be currently and properly registered in the correct income category under the Nova Scotia Farm Registration Act

Additionally For Seafood Businesses:

- be currently appropriately licensed and in good standing with the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Additionally For Commercial Kitchens:

- Must be approved/permitted to operate and subject to inspection by a Provincial Inspector

Additionally For Micro-businesses:

- Must be using approved/permitted commercial kitchen or co-packer

Definitions:

- **Micro-Business:** Owner-operated business with a very limited number of employees (1-4 employees), as recognized in Nova Scotia economic development programs.
- **Co-packer:** Third-party food manufacturing facility that produces and packages food products for other businesses, operating under applicable food safety regulations and licensing requirements (must provide proof of licensing).
- **Commercial Kitchen:** Food preparation facility that operates as a "food establishment" under Nova Scotia's Health Protection Act and Food Safety Regulations, where food is produced for sale or distribution and must meet applicable food safety and inspection requirements (must provide proof of licensing). Restaurants are not eligible.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Funding is provided for businesses who are looking to achieve and/or maintain food safety standards to meet current or new retailer or institutional food safety requirements. Please make note of which activities below are specific to your situation.

Funding support of up to 70% of eligible costs is available for a variety of activities, subject to specific maximum funding amounts for each activity. The maximum funding available to any applicant under the program is \$30,000 over the duration of the program.

Under the Micro-Business Stream, funding support of up to 100% of eligible costs is available to a maximum of \$2,400 over the duration of the program.

The program is open for the **2026–28** fiscal years and will remain open until all available funding has been allocated. Funding for the program is limited and the final decision to support will be determined by Perennia.

Excluding training costs, no more than 80% of non-repayable funding can be received for eligible costs incurred and paid for by the applicant, regardless of source. Applicants are required to disclose all funding sources.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES - GENERAL FOOD BUSINESS STREAM

Component 1: Training

Eligible training will be funded at 100% of registration fees to a maximum of \$2,200 per applicant for the duration of the program.

TRAINING

Available to all applicants

The following Perennia courses are eligible for funding.

Developing and Implementing Preventive Controls / Prerequisite Programs

This training session will help ensure companies understand how to develop, implement, and document preventive controls to prevent, control and mitigate food safety risks. (4 half days - virtual)

Developing a HACCP Plan/Preventive Control Plan

This training session will help ensure companies understand the risks to food safety and how these are identified, controlled, and documented. Control measures are based on internationally recognized HACCP principles. (2 days in person, food provided)

HACCP Refresher (available only to persons who have previously completed both of the above courses or equivalent training) This training session is to assist companies with the maintenance and re-assessment of their HACCP-based Food Safety Management Systems, meeting both customer requirements and regulatory requirements. (3.5 hours – virtual)

The first two courses should be taken in order.

To qualify for the HACCP Refresher, the attendee must supply satisfactory evidence of having completed the first two courses (or equivalent training modules from another provider).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to register for the training sessions at <https://www.perennia.ca/learning/quality-and-food-safety-learning-opportunities/> (many courses are offered, please take care to choose from the above mentioned titles).

Receipts can be submitted for reimbursement for the course cost with a certificate of completion. Travel expenses are not covered.

Component 2: Cost-Shared Funding

Activities in this category are meant to assist applicants to meet or maintain food safety requirements. When choosing suppliers or providers for these activities, applicants should demonstrate a preference for Nova Scotia based businesses. Eligible activities will be funded at 70% of eligible costs up to the maximum noted in each category.

AUDIT FEE SUPPORT

70% of eligible audit costs to a maximum of \$5,000 per applicant for the duration of the program

Available to all applicants

Eligible costs include a third-party audit conducted by a recognized certification body, as per retailer (e.g. Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, Costco, Walmart) or food service company/institutional (e.g., Sysco, Gordon Food Services, universities, hospitals, etc.) requirements.

Audits are to be performed by an accredited certification body.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include auditor/consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

If an annual audit was funded under this program in a previous application, the same annual audit will not be eligible to be funded again (for example, an annual GMP audit or annual SQF audit).

GENERAL FOOD SAFETY SUPPORT

70% of eligible food safety support costs to a maximum of \$5,000 per applicant for the duration of the program

- Available to applicants currently meeting retailer requirements by consistently passing their required third-party audits
- Applicants must choose this eligible activity or Food Safety Program Development – expenses cannot be claimed under both

This is for companies with a strong food safety program in need of additional consultant/specialist support. Such support could include program maintenance, audit preparation (i.e. preaudit assessments, internal audit, validations, risk assessments, employee training), or assistance with addressing corrective action reports or non-conformances that arise from an audit or regulatory inspection. Additionally, this component can assist companies with a strong program to meet food safety requirements for a new retail market or to enter the institutional market.

The goal is for companies to continue to successfully pass their audit to maintain their market and open new ones which may require different food safety requirements.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

70% of eligible food safety program development costs to a maximum of \$20,000 per applicant for the duration of the program

- Available to applicants currently selling in retail markets but not meeting retailer requirements
- Available to applicants producing a retail ready food product and actively working to obtain a product listing with a retail or food service contract
- Applicants must choose this eligible activity or General Food Safety Support – expenses cannot be claimed under both

This is for companies with incomplete food safety programs that are not meeting retail or institutional food safety requirements and who require more comprehensive support. Such support includes an assessment of the current food safety and quality management system against specific regulatory, retail or quality and food safety program requirements, in preparation for an audit to meet retailer or customer food safety requirements.

The goal is for companies to be able to successfully pass their audit to achieve or maintain their market.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

FACILITY UPGRADES TO MEET FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

70% of eligible facility upgrade costs to a maximum of \$20,000 per applicant for the duration of the program

Available to all applicants

Includes facility upgrades to meet food safety requirements as recommended in an assessment, audit or regulatory inspection, to safely process products to meet a retailer or food service company food safety program. This could include hand washing sinks, new doors or walls to meet food safety requirements, or equipment required to prevent condensation/food safety hazards, equipment to assist with traceability etc.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

A written recommendation must be provided to prove that an auditor, inspector, or other regulatory official recommended the upgrade(s). This can be an email, letter, or audit report.

All approved work under this section is to be completed by service providers with the appropriate accreditation/certification and licensing (Example: an electrician or plumber must be licensed to do the work).

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES - MICRO-BUSINESS STREAM

Under the Micro-Business Stream, applicants may receive funding for up to 100% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$2,400. The maximum amount that a micro-business applicant can receive across all program components is \$2,400.

Component 1: Training

Eligible training will be funded at 100% of registration fees up to \$2,400.

Eligible Training:

- 1. Introductory Skills for Creating Your Food Safety Program**
This course provides an overview of food safety systems, including HACCP, regulations, and key components, while building foundational skills in understanding and documenting a complete food safety program. (Online - 58 minutes 36 seconds)
- 2. Conditions Respecting Establishment & Conveyances and Equipment**
This session covers preventive maintenance, facility design and inspections, equipment calibration, and water quality to support food safety and help apply these practices in a facility. (Online - 33 minutes 2 seconds)
- 3. Hygiene, Competency, Sanitation, Pest Control & Non-Food Agents**
This session covers cleaning and sanitizing, pest control, pre-operational inspections, chemical control, hygiene practices, and employee training to minimize contamination and support a food safety program. (Online - 49 minutes 13 seconds)
- 4. Unloading, Loading and Storing**
This session covers minimizing contamination through traffic flow management, proper handling, transport and storage of materials, and understanding purchasing considerations and approved supplier programs. (Online - 24 minutes 50 seconds)
- 5. Creating Your Product Specific HACCP Plan**
This session provides an overview of HACCP, including food safety system components, hazard identification, and the preliminary steps and principles needed to implement a HACCP plan. (Online - 65 minutes 55 seconds)
- 6. Product Traceability and Recall**
This session covers product traceability and recall, including implementing traceability, managing recall procedures, training a recall team, testing recall programs, and developing a business continuity plan. (Online - 45 minutes 26 seconds)
- 7. Allergens, Food Additives and Foreign Matter**
This session covers allergen management and foreign material control, including the importance of GMPs and HACCP, regulatory requirements, and how to identify and manage allergen and contamination risks in a facility. (Online - 35 minutes 10 seconds)

It is the responsibility of the applicant to register for the training sessions at <https://www.perennia.ca/learning/quality-and-food-safety-learning-opportunities/>. Receipts can be submitted for reimbursement for the course cost with a certificate of completion.

Component 2: Cost-Shared Funding

Activities in this category are meant to assist applicants to meet or maintain food safety requirements. When choosing suppliers or providers for these activities, applicants should demonstrate a preference for Nova Scotia based businesses. Eligible activities will be funded at 100% of eligible costs up to the maximum noted in each category.

AUDIT FEE SUPPORT

100% of eligible food safety support costs to a maximum of \$2,400 per applicant for the duration of the program

Available to all applicants

Eligible costs include a third-party audit conducted by a recognized certification body, as per retailer (e.g. Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, Costco, Walmart) or food service company/institutional (e.g., Sysco, Gordon Food Services, universities, hospitals, etc.) requirements.

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GENERAL FOOD SAFETY SUPPORT

100% of eligible food safety support costs to a maximum of \$2,400 per applicant for the duration of the program

- Available to applicants currently meeting retailer requirements by consistently passing their required third-party audits
- Applicants must choose this eligible activity or Food Safety Program Development – expenses cannot be claimed under both

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The goal is for companies to continue to successfully pass their audit to maintain their market and open new ones which may require different food safety requirements.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

FOOD SAFETY SUPPORT PROGRAM

100% of eligible food safety program development costs to a maximum of \$2,400 per applicant for the duration of the program

- Available to applicants currently selling in retail markets but not meeting retailer requirements
- Available to applicants producing a retail ready food product and actively working to obtain a product listing with a retail or food service contract
- Applicants must choose this eligible activity or General Food Safety Support – expenses cannot be claimed under both

This is for companies with incomplete food safety programs that are not meeting retail or institutional food safety requirements and who require more comprehensive support. Such support includes an assessment of the current food safety and quality management system against specific regulatory, retail or quality and food safety program requirements, in preparation for an audit to meet retailer or customer food safety requirements.

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FACILITY UPGRADES TO MEET FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

100% of eligible facility upgrade costs to a maximum of \$2,400 per applicant for the duration of the program

Available to all applicants

Includes facility upgrades to meet food safety requirements as recommended in an assessment, audit or regulatory inspection, to safely process products to meet a retailer or food service company food safety program. This could include hand washing sinks, new doors or walls to meet food safety requirements, or equipment required to prevent condensation/food safety hazards, equipment to assist with traceability etc.

Quotes need to itemize tangible deliverables and do not include consultant/specialist consumables or expenses.

A written recommendation must be provided to prove that an auditor, inspector, or other regulatory official recommended the upgrade(s). This can be an email, letter, or audit report.

All approved work under this section is to be completed by service providers with the appropriate accreditation/certification and licensing (Example: an electrician or plumber must be licensed to do the work).

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES - ALL APPLICANTS

These include but are not limited to:

- cannabis products
- administrative costs and general overhead
- equipment purchase or rental not directly linked to resolving a food safety hazard
- HST
- in-kind contributions
- operating expenses and existing staff salaries
- tools not directly linked to resolving a food safety hazard
- travel
- marketing, advertising or retail displays
- building repairs, renovations or construction not directly linked to resolving a food safety hazard
- rolling assets
- Computer hardware (examples: tablets, computers, cases)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible applicants are invited to apply by completing the application form available at: perennia.ca/supplierfoodsafety

1. Submit a complete application between October 7, 2026 and September 15, 2027.
2. Provide quotes for eligible activities to be completed by auditors, consultants or for facility upgrades with your application
3. If applying for training list which of the three courses you will attend and the number of people that intend to register for each

Email the above to supplierfoodsafety@perennia.ca with Supplier Food Safety Program in the subject line (preferred method), or fax to 902-678-7266 or mail to:

Perennia Supplier Food Safety Program
28 Aberdeen Street
Kentville, NS B4N 2N1

Application Intake	Activity Period	Final Claim Deadline
October 7, 2026 – September 15, 2027	April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2028*	March 31, 2028

**Costs incurred before receiving a letter of agreement are at the discretion of the applicant and may not be funded.*

Note: Receipt of an application by the deadline does not mean the applicant is approved or that funds will be available.

APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Applications are assessed by a review committee based on the information and supporting documentation provided. If an application requires further assessment or information, Perennia staff will follow up with the applicant.
2. If approved, applicants will receive a Letter of Agreement (LOA) which identifies the eligible project activities, assistance offered, and the terms and conditions under which assistance is approved.
3. Applicants must review, sign and return the LOA to Perennia within 30 days of the date of the letter or funding will be forfeited.

CLAIMING PROCESS

A Program Claim Form will be sent after Perennia receives your signed Letter of Agreement. Complete and submit the form when the project is complete. The final claim deadline is March 31, 2028. Interim claims will be accepted at significant incremental stages.

1. Complete and sign the Program Claim Form.
2. Include copies of invoices for all eligible project costs incurred and paid for by the applicant. The following are not acceptable: Purchase Orders, Sale Acknowledgements, Bills of Sale, Quotes, Estimates, Statements.
3. Include proof of payment for each invoice – e-transfer confirmation, EFT, debit card receipt, digital image of cleared cheques (front and back), wire transfer details or credit card/bank statements (invoices marked paid and signed by the supplier are not accepted).
4. Provide supporting documentation as required by Perennia with your claim.
5. Submit claims by email to supplierfoodsafety@perennia.ca with Supplier Food Safety Program in the subject line (preferred method), or fax to 902-678-7266 or mail to:

Perennia Supplier Food Safety Program
28 Aberdeen Street
Kentville, NS B4N 2N1

If for some reason email, fax and mail are not possible please call 902-670-9572 at least two business days before the claim deadline to discuss other options

***No payment will be made for claims under \$20.00.**

ARM'S LENGTH TRANSACTIONS

Program funding will only be offered on transactions (invoices) that do not involve a supplier/service provider that is associated with the applicant, unless it is proven that an associated supplier/service provider is the only registered company providing that service in the area. In such cases that it is necessary to proceed with an associated supplier/service provider, the applicant must apply for a pre-approval from Programs before proceeding or submitting a claim to ensure that the associated costs will be approved for reimbursement.

AUTHORITY

Perennia shall have the authority to deny an application if there is evidence of misrepresentation of pertinent information or if Perennia feels that the application does not show adequate evidence that it will support the program objective.

EVALUATION AND AUDITING

Review and evaluation of projects may be carried out by Perennia, or other parties chosen by Perennia for the purpose of audit, analysis, evaluation, program development and determining financial assistance. This review and evaluation process may be conducted prior to project commencement, during work or upon project completion. Applicants may be asked to complete an evaluation survey related to their final claim.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Applicants consent to the release of their name and the amount of support received under the program. This specific information is deemed to be public information, to be actively disseminated by Perennia. Perennia may provide any information from an applicant to another public body or a law-enforcement agency in Canada to assist in an investigation, undertaken with a view to a law-enforcement proceeding or from which a law-enforcement proceeding is likely to result. Any other information provided, unless disclosed in the manner and for the purposes stated above, will be subject to the confidentiality and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please submit all documents related to the Supplier Food Safety Program to Perennia at the address, email or fax number below.

Perennia Supplier Food Safety Program

28 Aberdeen Street
Kentville, NS B4N 2N1

supplierfoodsafety@perennia.ca

Fax: 902-678-7266

For more information about the Program, please see <https://www.perennia.ca/supplierfoodsafety/>