

# **Food Ventures Program Guidelines**

## **Funding Year 2026-27**

**The Food Ventures Program** complements other provincial food-based funding programs by supporting access to Perennia's technical specialists' knowledge, expertise and services for Nova Scotia agri-food and beverage businesses.

**The overall objective is to support Nova Scotia businesses to increase sales.**

This program supports that objective by:

- Diversifying product offerings for current businesses;
- Extending best before dates and creating compliance labels for new markets and Nutrition Facts Tables (NFTs);
- Providing assessments that help businesses enter new markets through enhanced quality and food safety programs and processes, product processing optimization, commercial scale up and improved safety for high-risk food products;
- Coaching food and beverage businesses not currently selling to major retailers to develop food safety programs to move into those markets; and
- Increasing the overall business skills and knowledge required for a successful food business through technical advice and access to resources and training.

Not all applicants will be funded. Applicants will be reviewed and approved based on their ability to increase sales for their businesses through the support provided, complete the work and demonstrate the results of the investment in a final report.

## **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

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- Applicant must be 19 years of age or older and legally able to enter into an agreement with Perennia.
- Must be registered and active under Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks and/or be currently and properly registered in the correct income category under the Farm Registration Act.
- Must have active operations in Nova Scotia including a Nova Scotia address registered to the business.
- Applicants must produce, or have products produced on their behalf, in Nova Scotia and be able to provide proof upon request.
- Must currently have at least one commercially available product and be able to provide proof of current commercial sales upon request.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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- Funding support of up to 50% of eligible costs is available.
- The maximum funding available to any company is \$10,000 per program year.
- Funding for the program is limited and the final decision to support will be determined by Perennia.
- 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.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

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### Technical Advice

As part of the program, Perennia's Quality and Food Safety, Regulatory Food Safety, and Product Development specialists are available to answer technical questions and inquiries.

**Contact specialists for Technical Advice at [info@perennia.ca](mailto:info@perennia.ca)**

In some cases, where a product's food safety is high-risk and needs to be addressed quickly, the business may be required to provide some basic information or complete a form for a specialist to begin work immediately. These decisions are made solely at the discretion of Perennia.

Examples of technical questions include:

- General product development questions.
- General guidance on shelf-life studies to determine a recommended best before date for your product.
- General labelling and NFT questions.
- Preliminary ingredient sourcing suggestions.
- General guidance on beverage production.
- Preliminary packaging suggestions.
- Preliminary troubleshooting.
- Preliminary regulation interpretation.
- Basic guidance on food safety risk levels.
- General guidance on selling at public and retail markets.
- General guidance on environmental monitoring programs.
- General guidance on addressing corrective actions found during an audit or inspection.
- General guidance on third party certification programs to meet retailer requirements.
- General guidance on internationally recognized food safety programs.

Technical advice is not endless given our available resources. Businesses who are requiring more support than is provided under this component of the program will be advised this by the Perennia specialist and will have their options for paid services discussed before any further advice is given. This decision is at the sole discretion of Perennia.

The specialist will direct you to the relevant cost-shared funding components below if they could be eligible for funding.

### Cost-shared Funding for Perennia Services

This provides funding for applicants to access services provided by Perennia's Quality and Food Safety, Regulatory Food Safety, and Product Development specialists to address new issues that may be impeding or could accelerate revenue growth.

Eligible applicants can receive 50% funding of eligible expenses up to a maximum total of \$10,000 of funding per applicant over the course of the program year. Funding can cover specialist time and associated expenses such as travel to reach the client's place of business.

**Prior to applying, you MUST contact Technical Advice at [info@perennia.ca](mailto:info@perennia.ca) to discuss the work you want done**

Funding will not be available to cover routine annual operating costs associated with running a food or beverage business, such as annual internal audit and program maintenance support, updates to Nutrition Facts Tables for existing products already on the market or ongoing routine swabbing.

## Assessments and Reviews

Funding is available for the following services:

- **Gap Assessments, Needs Assessments and Coaching** of a current farm or food/beverage business not currently selling into a major market or those currently in a major market and trying to enter a new one. These services will assess any current quality and food safety management system(s), process and/or facility against specific regulatory, retail or quality and food safety program requirements.  
*If you have received funding in the past from Food Ventures for a pre-audit assessment or other quality and food safety program maintenance, we consider this a routine business expense and you cannot apply again for this service to be funded.*
- **Assessments of High-Risk Food Products** considered to pose food safety hazards or identified by regulatory agency inspectors for follow-up to validate safety for human consumption. Please reach out to [info@perennia.ca](mailto:info@perennia.ca) before submitting your application to determine if your product is eligible for funding.
- **Label reviews** to ensure compliance with Canadian labelling requirements for interprovincial sales.
- **Current product and process review** including formulation process evaluation and necessary development work for troubleshooting, scale up for commercial production, best-before date recommendation (shelf-life studies) or other adjustments.
- **Assessments of potential pathogen risks** at your processing facility.  
*If you have received funding in the past from Food Ventures for assessment of pathogen risks for the same facility, we consider this a routine business expense and you cannot apply again for this to be funded unless your product has changed.*

## Development Services

Funding is available for the following services:

- **Quality and food safety programs** required to enter a retail market for those businesses not yet in a major retailer.
- **Pathogen monitoring programs** to comply with food safety regulations, including monitoring for pathogens such as Listeria and Salmonella. Routine swabbing that is not required to develop a pathogen monitoring program is not eligible.
- **Nutrition Facts Tables** (NFTs) for new products, products entering a new market that have not had NFTs before or products that have had a significant change in formulation. Each applicant is eligible for funding up to five Nutrition Facts Tables per program year. Standard adjustments to NFTs resulting from regulatory changes, packaging changes or ingredient changes are not eligible for funding.
- **New product development and/or improvement of a current product** to diversify your product offering and/or improve a current product to enter new markets and increase sales and revenue within the program year.

## INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

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These include but are not limited to:

- Cannabis products;
- Administrative costs and general overhead;
- Buildings and building modifications;
- Equipment purchase or rental;
- HST;
- In-kind contributions;
- Operating expenses and existing staff salaries;
- Services provided by non-Perennia consultants;
- Tools;
- Applicant travel; and
- Implementation of action items from the approved plans is not eligible for assistance. (For example: your food safety plan may identify areas and/or items in a facility that require attention, such as hands-free hand-washing units and proper floor surfacing for a provincially inspected facility. The program will not cover the cost of purchasing or installing these items.)

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Prior to applying, you MUST contact Technical Advice at [info@perennia.ca](mailto:info@perennia.ca) to discuss the work you want done**

### To apply for the Food Ventures Funding Program:

1. Submit a complete application at [perennia.ca/foodventures](https://perennia.ca/foodventures) by October 31, 2026.
2. Eligible costs will be recognized within the Activity Period stated in the table below. The work must be started and all invoices issued within this period.

| Application Intake                | Activity Period                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| August 1, 2026 – October 31, 2026 | April 1, 2026 – January 31, 2027 |

### Notes on the application process:

- While Perennia may reach out to applicants with an incomplete application, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the information is complete when submitted.
- If you have questions about your application, please contact [foodventures@perennia.ca](mailto:foodventures@perennia.ca)
- Complete applications are reviewed in the order they are received. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Once funding has been fully allocated, the program may close early for that fiscal year.
- If an application is complete, reviewed and approved, successful applicants will receive a letter of approval that identifies the eligible project activities, program funding offered and the terms and conditions under which program funding is approved. All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision related to their application.
- If approved, a Perennia specialist will reach out to further define the work required and prepare a quote for your approval. Once the quote is signed and the required down payment is received, work can begin. A credit check may be required.
- Eligible business income may be verified by asking for the most recent Statement of Business Activities (T2125B or Schedule 125 - Non-Farming revenue: detailing sales by GIFL revenue code) or invoices showing sales. Eligible farms commodity income may be verified by asking for the most recent Statement of Farming Activities (T2042, T1273 or Schedule 125 - Farm Revenue: detailing sales by commodity revenue code) or invoices showing sales.

*Approval of applications is not guaranteed and is subject to availability of program funding. The total amount of program funding awarded to each applicant, or to associated applicants, may be limited at the discretion of Perennia to ensure opportunities for additional applicants to access program funding.*

## 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 the Food Ventures Program 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 objectives.

## EVALUATION AND AUDIT

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

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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

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

By mail:

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

By email: [foodventures@perennia.ca](mailto:foodventures@perennia.ca)

By fax: 902-678-7266

For more information or to apply please see [www.perennia.ca/foodventures](http://www.perennia.ca/foodventures)