

K-Food Grant Program: FAQ

Welcome to the K-Food Grant Program, a special initiative from SHIA and the Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington (KCSC) designed to celebrate and promote Korean cuisine and culture! We're thrilled you're interested in applying. This FAQ page is here to answer your questions and provide clear guidance on the grant process. While some of this information is also in the application materials, we've organized it here for your convenience. Please review it carefully.

Eligibility and Application

Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants must be between 15 and 50 years old, have a meaningful connection to Korean heritage, culture, or community, and either reside, work, study, or conduct business in the DMV (DC, Maryland, Virginia) area. This includes, but isn't limited to:

- Individuals of Korean ancestry (self or family).
- Those adopted into a Korean family or raised with Korean cultural influence.
- Individuals actively engaged with Korean American communities through education, volunteering, or cultural work.
- Anyone showing a deep interest in Korean cuisine and a commitment to promoting it through creative storytelling, even without Korean ancestry.

Do I need to be Korean or Korean American to apply?

No. While this grant aims to uplift Korean cuisine and culture, applicants of all backgrounds are welcome if they can demonstrate a sincere commitment and connection to Korean culinary traditions or community engagement. However, all applicants must either reside, work, study, or conduct business in the DMV area.

What types of projects are you looking for?

We're seeking creative initiatives that elevate lesser-known or traditional aspects of Korean food. Projects can focus on regional specialties, cultural storytelling, modern reinterpretations, or historically rooted recipes. All projects should aim to positively impact the DMV (DC, Maryland, Virginia) area.

Can I apply as a team or group?

Yes, team applications are permitted. However, the grant amount of \$4,000 remains the same and will not increase for group submissions.

Is there a limit to how many people can be on a team? Can an institution apply?

There is no strict limit on team size. However, applicants must clearly define their team structure and individual roles.

Institutions such as nonprofits or schools may apply through a representative project team. In this case, the team must consist of specific individuals who will lead and execute the project. The application should reflect the team members, not the full institution.

What if I've never received a grant before?

That's perfectly fine—and welcome! We hope this grant can be your first opportunity to explore and share your creativity.

Does the project have to be conducted in English only, or can I work in Korean?

Projects may include Korean elements, but all application materials and public-facing presentations must be in English to ensure broader accessibility.

What do I need to submit in the application?

You need to submit:

- A written application, including your personal information, a 750-word project proposal, a budget breakdown, and a timeline via [this online application](#).
- A video application (optional but strongly encouraged).

Is the video application required?

No, it's optional. However, it's a great opportunity to visually showcase your creativity and passion.

When is the application deadline?

The application window is open from July 31 to September 30, 2025, at 11:59 PM EDT. No late submissions will be accepted.

Selection and Grant Process

Who will review the applications and make the final selection?

A selection committee from SHIA will review all applications. Finalists may be invited to a virtual interview before the recipients are selected.

How will applications be evaluated?

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- **Elevation of K-Food:** The depth and uniqueness of your project's connection to Korean cuisine.
- **Creativity:** The originality and innovation of your approach.
- **Long-term community impact:** How your project will benefit the DMV area.
- **Feasibility:** The practicality of your project plan and budget.

What happens if I'm selected?

If selected, you'll participate in a structured four-month project period (November 2025 – February 2026), with scheduled check-ins and a final presentation at the 2026 KCSC Gala. You'll also receive support to help execute your proposed timeline.

Are there any mandatory meetings or sessions during the four-month project period?

Yes, you're required to attend at least three virtual sessions:

- Welcome Session (Kick-off)
- Mid-Project Check-In
- Final Review and Gala Prep (Webinar)

You'll also participate in the KCSC Gala on April 6, 2026.

What is the expected time commitment for check-in sessions?

Selected participants will be expected to attend at least three virtual check-in sessions throughout the grant period. Each session will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes, unless otherwise noted.

Tell me more about the Gala. What do I need to do?

You'll be invited to present your completed K-Food Grant project at the KCSC Gala, a major annual event that brings together over 500 community members, partners, donors, and leaders. As a selected grant recipient, you'll have approximately 10 to 15 minutes to share your project through a live presentation, video summary, or another creative storytelling format that best captures your journey and outcomes. A coordinator from KCSC will support you throughout the preparation process, helping you plan your materials, organize logistics, and rehearse, so you can confidently showcase your work to a broad and supportive audience.

Project Execution and Funding

Is the funding considered a cash prize or personal award?

No, the funding is not a personal prize or award. It is intended solely for the execution of the proposed project and must be used in accordance with the approved budget. The grant may not be used for personal expenses or individual compensation.

Will I receive mentorship or support throughout the project period?

This is an independent project. While we provide logistical guidance and scheduled check-ins, there is no structured mentorship component.

Can I use the grant funds for equipment, travel, or marketing costs?

Yes, but only if the costs are directly tied to your K-Food project. Your budget should clearly justify how each item supports the project's goals. All expenses must be documented with receipts.

Can I combine this grant with other funding I've received to carry out a larger-scale project?

No. At this time, we ask that projects remain independent and solely funded by the SHIA x KCSC K-Food Grant to maintain clarity of purpose and evaluation.

Can I change my project topic or direction after the grant period begins?

No. Approved projects must remain consistent with the original proposal submitted during the application process. While minor adjustments to the budget may be allowed (e.g., reallocating small amounts to cover actual costs), any major changes to the project's direction, goals, or overall scope are not permitted. This ensures participants remain committed, focused, and accountable to the vision they initially presented.

Am I allowed to mention Chef Edward Lee's name as part of my project promotion?

No. This grant initiative is not affiliated with Chef Edward Lee. All promotional content should highlight your own creativity and acknowledge SHIA and KCSC as supporters of the program.

Can I include my participation in this grant program on my resume or portfolio?

Yes, but only after you are officially selected and the project is completed in April 2026.

How will I receive the grant funding if selected?

Grant funds will be distributed as a two-time award by the KCSC team. Detailed instructions will be shared during the welcome session.

Project Completion and Public Sharing

What happens if I am unable to complete the project or need to withdraw midway?

Life happens. If you withdraw or fail to complete the project, the grant funds must be returned, and the opportunity will be offered to someone on the waitlist.

Is there a penalty if I discontinue the project after receiving the grant?

Yes, you will be expected to return the grant funding.

How should I submit my final project at the end of the grant period?

Submission methods will be discussed during the welcome session. This may include a digital file submission, documentation of outcomes, or a presentation at the Gala.

Will my project be shared publicly (e.g., social media, press, gala)?

YES! We want to celebrate your creativity, so dream big and think far! We will promote your creativity through social media, press coverage, and the KCSC Gala.

Contact Us

Can you provide more information about KCSC?

Certainly! The Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington (KCSC) is a trusted nonprofit organization that has been serving Korean American and immigrant communities in the DC Metro area since 1974. KCSC offers a wide range of services, including health programs, social services, family support, victim advocacy, and young leadership development. This grant program is a collaborative initiative between SHIA and KCSC, designed to celebrate Korean cultural heritage and foster next-generation leadership through the power of Korean cuisine.

Can you provide more information about SHIA?

Yes! SHIA Restaurant, by Chef Edward Lee in Washington D.C., is a nonprofit, modern Korean fine dining restaurant redefining the industry. We offer an exceptional fine dining experience with a weekly tasting menu featuring the finest Hansik ingredients. Beyond the plate, we're deeply focused on sustainability, next-generation education, and elevating Korean cuisine. Our name, SHIA (씨앗 - 'seed'), symbolizes our role in planting transformative change beyond the kitchen.



By dining with us or supporting our nonprofit initiatives, you help cultivate the seeds of change for the future.

Where can I ask more questions?

For best results, we recommend emailing both contacts with your questions:

Org	Name	Types of Questions	Email
SHIA	Monica Kang	Partnership, Program, Sessions	monica@shiarestaurant.org
KCSC	Hyun Sun Park	Webinars, Logistics, Progress	hspark@kcscgw.org