



Meat and Poultry Processing Infrastructure Grant Program

Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: [USDA-AMS-TM-XXXXX-G-21-0001](#)

Publication Date: [March 25, 2022](#)

Application Due Date: [11:59 PM Eastern Time on Tuesday, May 24, 2022](#)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Meat and Poultry Processing Infrastructure Grant Program (Infrastructure Grants)

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-XXXXX-G-21-0001

Announcement Type: Initial

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.180

Dates: Applications must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time **Tuesday, May 24, 2022**, through www.Grants.gov. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Meat and Poultry Processing Infrastructure Grant Program (Infrastructure Grants). The Infrastructure Grants assist small meat and poultry slaughter and processing facilities with costs to improve and expand their current processing facilities. This will promote competition and provide more and better options to producers by increasing meat and poultry processing capacity. All applicants are required to operate under Federal Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection or state equivalent inspection or have plans to do so. Facilities operating under State inspection or facilities currently only conducting operations exempt from Federal inspection are eligible.

Approximately \$75 million, **less administrative funding**, will be available to fund Infrastructure Grant projects under this solicitation. Congressional budget action may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

Awards range from \$50,000 to \$2 million for equipment only grants, or up to \$3 million for combined equipment and construction grants (e.g., building expansion or upgrades). Infrastructure Grants require a **50 percent cash match**.

Eligible applicants for the Infrastructure Grants include an individual, sole proprietor business or other business entity (regardless of legal structure) engaged or proposing to engage in meat and poultry processing, including Tribes and Tribal Entities, for-profit entities, non-profit entities, and State or local government entities. Private entities must be independently owned and operated, and all entities must be domestically owned. Additionally, applicants' meat and poultry processing facilities must be physically located and operated in the United States (U.S.) or its territories. Applicants that are nationally dominant in beef, pork, chicken, or turkey processing are ineligible; for the purpose of this RFA, nationally dominant is characterized as holding a market share greater than or equal to the entity that holds the fourth largest share of the market for any of the listed species.

This announcement provides additional eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an award.

AMS encourages applications that benefit smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, historically underserved producers, veteran producers, and/or historically underserved communities. For projects intending to support these entities, applicants should engage and involve those beneficiaries when developing projects and applications.

AMS also offers technical assistance to applicants through its Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity - Technical Assistance Program (MPPTA).

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application must include the following the documents included in the checklist located below. Failure to submit all required documents will result in your application being deemed ineligible for the grant program.

Document	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424 (required)	Period of Performance is 09/30/2022 to 09/29/2025
<input type="checkbox"/> XXXXX Project Narrative Form	Overview of the proposed project
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424A (required)	Budget Document (Non-Construction projects)
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424B (required)	Assurances for Non-Construction Projects
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424D (required for construction projects)	<u>Only for Projects with Construction Costs</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Narrative (required)	GOI or CIS Grant Purpose and Project Details
<input type="checkbox"/> NEPA Assurances (required for construction projects)	Environmental Review <u>Only for Projects with Construction Costs</u>
Active Registrations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant of Inspection (GOI)	Certification Date: (Put N/A if not applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> State Inspection in a state participating in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program (CIS)	Certification Date: (Put N/A if not applicable) State:
<input type="checkbox"/> SAM.GOV	Registration Active: Exp. Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (as shown in SAM.GOV)	Do not register as individual.
<input type="checkbox"/> EIN (as shown in SAM.GOV)	

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1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Meat and Poultry Processing Infrastructure Grants (Infrastructure Grants) are authorized by Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) ([Pub. L. No. 117–2](#)), which funds “loans and grants and other assistance to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.”

1.2 PURPOSE

Infrastructure Grants are part of the broader [Biden-Harris Administration \\$1 billion investment](#) to help expand independent processing capacity. Given that the meat and poultry processing sector is particularly vulnerable to disruption, increasing capacity and promoting competition in this sector is a high priority for USDA. Based on public input, USDA identified an urgent need to: expand and diversify meat and poultry processing capacity; increase producer income; provide producers an opportunity to have ownership in processing facilities; create stable, well-paying jobs in rural regions; raise the bar on worker health, safety, training, and wages for meatpacking jobs; spur collaboration among producers and workers; prompt state, tribal, and private co-investment; and provide consumers with more choices.

The Infrastructure Grants provide more and better processing options to small meat and poultry processors. Specifically, funding will fund minor facility expansion and upgrading projects such as:

- Processing line upgrades;
- Increasing cold storage space;
- Upgrading processing equipment
- Improving slaughter and humane handling infrastructure (such as holding pens, knock boxes);
- Initiating or upgrading waste management and wastewater solutions;
- Labeling machine purchase; or
- Composting equipment investments.

USDA is particularly interested in supporting projects that are in the late stage of development, technically feasible, financially viable, and have already identified other sources of funding (e.g., Federal, State, tribal, local funding, or private funding).

The Infrastructure Grants are administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in coordination with the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS). AMS implements all grants management aspects of the program, while FSIS provides subject matter expertise regarding project activities. AMS also offers technical assistance to applicants through its Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity - Technical Assistance Program (MPPTA).

1.3 AWARD CONDITIONS

Applicants must be planning to or have already obtained an FSIS Federal Grant of Inspection or be seeking to operate under the Cooperative State Inspection (CIS) program. As such, applicants not

currently under such inspection should understand the regulatory requirements for receiving a Federal Grant of Inspection or operating under the CIS program. Applicants unsure of these regulatory requirements should contact the [FSIS district office](#) where their business is located or refer questions regarding regulatory requirements to operate under the CIS program to [their state's CIS program representative](#).

1.4 **3.1** ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Infrastructure Grant applicants may request funds for equipment only, or equipment and minor construction. Construction funding may support minor projects such as expanding or upgrading facilities. However, construction of a new, non-established facility is unallowable.

Example uses for Infrastructure Grant funding include, but are not limited to:

- Modernizing processing and manufacturing equipment (including cutting equipment, mixers, grinders, sausage stuffers, smokers, curing equipment, pipes, motors, pumps, and valves);
- Meeting packaging and labeling compliance requirements under applicable law (including sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment);
- Expanding processing capacity in the applicant's market to accommodate additional species, increased volumes, or otherwise;
- Modernizing or expanding an existing facility (including expansion and modifications to existing buildings and/or construction of new buildings at existing facilities, construction of holding pens, construction of wastewater management structures, etc.);
- Improving the facility and to carry out other planning activities, necessary for obtaining a Federal Grant of Inspection (GOI) or becoming eligible for inspection under the CIS Program.
- Developing, customizing, and installing equipment, devices, and technology that automates processing functions to improve worker conditions and safety;
- Meeting occupational and other safety requirements under applicable law;
- Developing, customizing, and installing climate-smart equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality, and/or meets one or more of USDA's climate action goals;
- Ensuring compliance with packaging and labeling requirements under applicable law (including sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment);
- Ensuring compliance with occupational and other safety requirements under applicable law;
- Modernizing equipment or facilities to ensure food safety;
- Paying for voluntary grading services to offer value-added processed products;
- Accounting for costs associated with becoming an inspected facility (including Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation, employee training or technical assistance related to inspection, etc.); and
- Workforce recruitment, training, apprenticeships, and retention to ensure expansion projects will be adequately staffed and crewed and offer opportunities to workers.

1.5 **ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING**

Grant recipients may not use funds to:

- **Purchase or lease land.**

- Construct/build a new facility that is not already established.
- Duplicate activities of a project that has received a Federal award from another Federal award program.
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding.

1.6 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

AMS is responsible for ensuring that funded activities comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), related applicable agency regulations and instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and any additional applicable state, local, or tribal laws. USDA requires a NEPA compliance review prior to awarding grant funds. AMS may request additional information to complete the environmental review.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide a Federal award to successful applicants.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in section [5.0 Application Review Information](#).

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Approximately \$100 million, less administrative expenses, is available to fund projects in fiscal year 2023. Congressional budget action may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

Applicants requesting funding for only equipment may request up to \$2 million. Applicants requesting funding for equipment and minor construction (e.g., building expansion or upgrades) may request up to \$3 million.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the required timeframe. It is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled period of performance end date. However, AMS encourages applicants to take the full duration to allow ample time to complete projects. The applicant must indicate the start and end dates on the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance" in block 17.

Grant funds may only support costs incurred during the period of performance of the award. The period of performance starts when the Financial Assistance Agreement is executed. The maximum period of performance is 36 months depending on complexity of your expansion project. When defining your expansion project, you should consider what expenses you incur after the anticipated award date.

The maximum period of performance for this grant is 36 months. The period of performance should be based upon the complexity of the project. When developing the workplan and budget whether it is for

purchase of equipment, please ensure that adequate time is provided to complete the project. This timeframe will indicate the start and end dates and funding availability for projects.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants may be sole proprietors or other business entities. All entities must be domestically owned, and their meat and poultry processing facilities (existing or planned) must be physically located and operated within the 50 States of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, must engage or propose to engage in meat and poultry processing U.S. or its territories.

Applicants may include, but are not limited to, Tribes, Tribal Entities, for-profit entities, corporations, non-profit entities, producer-owned cooperatives and corporations, certified benefit corporations, and State or local government entities.

Eligible applicants must process or plan to process one or more species subject to the [Federal Meat Inspection Act \(FMIA\)](#) or the [Poultry Product Inspection Act \(PPIA\)](#) and possess or plan to obtain a Federal Grant of Inspection, a grant of inspection under a [Cooperative Interstate Shipment](#) Program, or a tribal or state meat and poultry inspection program with standards at least equal to Federal inspection at the time of application. Plants processing non-amenable species under voluntary Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection are also eligible to apply for funding.

Eligible applicants, including affiliates of the eligible applicant, must not hold a market share greater than or equal to the entity that holds the fourth largest share of that market for any of the following species: beef, pork, chicken, or turkey processing. All applicants must certify whether they hold a market share greater to or equal to the top four processors as applicable in beef, pork, chicken, or turkey processing. If processing or planning to process other eligible species which are not listed above, this certification is not required.

Applicants that engage or propose to engage in further processing may be eligible provided that the project increases demand for animals; increases opportunities for producers to access value-added markets; or improves the viability of an existing processing operation. Additionally, for applicants that engage or plan to engage in further processing, inputs must be the products of primary processing.

A resolution of support is required for projects on tribal lands, from the governing body of the Tribe with jurisdiction over that land, if the applicant is not the Tribe nor an entity owned or operated by that Tribe.

Eligible applicants must be registered in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) at time of application and must actively maintain annual SAM registration from application through the term of an award. Please refer to Section [3.7.1](#) for instructions on how to register your entity in the SAM.

Multiple applications from separate applicant entities with identical or greater than 75 percent common ownership, or from a parent, subsidiary or affiliated organization (with “affiliation” defined by Small

Business Administration regulation 13 CFR 121.103, or successor regulation) are not permitted. Multiple projects owned by the same applicant entity may be combined into one application.

3.2 FACILITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Ineligible meat and poultry processing entities (existing or planned) include but are not limited to facilities that:

- Are for exclusive non-commercial use
- Are custom-exempt or otherwise uninspected with no plans to operate under Federal inspection or tribal or state equivalent.

3.3 COST SHARING AND MATCHING

This funding opportunity requires a cash match from non-Federal sources in an amount equal to or greater than **50 percent** of the total Federal portion of the grant. All applications will be evaluated according to merit and customary evaluation procedures. If a project is selected for funding, any match amount exceeding the respective requirement will be considered voluntary and must be documented and secured at the time of the award.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. We urge applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see Grants.gov's [Apply for Grants webpage](#). This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in section **4.7 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements**. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in this document.

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Assistance Listing number **10.180**, or the Funding Opportunity Number "**USDA-AMS-TM-XXXXX-G-21-0001**."

4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.2.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required: Form SF-424 is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on the SF-424.

Block	Instructions
#1 Type of Submission	Application
#2 Type of Application	New
#4 through #7	Not required
#8c Organizational DUNS	Applicant DUNS# for the organization submitting the

Block	Instructions
	application. See D&B Request a DUNS Number
#8d Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	10.180
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-XXXXX-G-21-0001
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, States affected by project.
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
#16a Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
#16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the project will be implemented in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Start Date: September 30, 2022 End date: September 29, 2025
#18a Estimated Funding - Federal	Total Federal amount requested.
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	See section 4.5 Intergovernmental Review .

4.2.2 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required. Applicants are required to prepare and submit a narrative using the [form](#). The form and instructions are available on the [grant website](#). The Project Narrative must be submitted as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted. The Project Narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed twenty (20) 8.5 x 11 pages.

Prior to submitting an application to Grants.gov, make sure that it is in final form (e.g., if you used the "track changes" function, accept all changes before submitting so that the mark-up is not visible upon final submission).

For projects involving constructions, include any design and construction documents. These documents do not count against the 20-page limit.

The supporting documents in the subsequent sections do not count against the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative.

Complete applications must be submitted in Grants.gov and include the following:

1. **Forms as described in Application Checklist on p. 4.**
2. **Environmental Review.** Please review the environmental checklist available on grants.gov to ensure you are providing all relevant environmental documentation so that a NEPA environmental review can be completed. Please contact the Agency to assist in determining what documentation is required to be provided.

3. **Financial viability.** Provide the following to assist the Agency in determining financial viability of the project. Business plan or detailed description of plans, including assurances of adequate supply and demand for throughput levels needed for viability of scope of work planned after these investments.
4. **Source documentation** (including resumes) to support key personnel, construction labor, and operational workforce under scoring criterion.
5. **Applicant certifications.** Applicants must certify in writing to the following as part of a complete application.
 - a. The applicant must identify whether or not the applicant has a known relationship or association with an Agency employee. If there is a known relationship, the applicant must identify each Agency employee with whom the applicant has a known relationship.
 - b. Certification that the applicant is a legal entity in good standing and operating in accordance with the laws of the State(s) or Tribe(s) where the applicant has a place of business.
 - c. Certification that the applicant has not been found, or may be found to be unfit to obtain a grant of Federal or state or tribal equivalent inspection because of convictions, in a Federal or State court, of a felony, or multiple misdemeanors involving the acquisition, handling, or distribution of adulterated or misbranded meat or poultry products or fraud in connection with transactions in food, or other factors.
 - d. Certification that the applicant is not the subject of a pending administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement action.
 - e. Certification that the applicant is or plans to be operating under a current grant of federal or equivalent state or tribal inspection. In addition, if inspection services have been suspended in the past five years, disclose the reasons for the suspension and how the action was resolved.
 - f. Certification by the applicant that any equipment required for the project is available, can be procured and delivered within the proposed project development schedule, and will be installed in conformance with manufacturer's specifications and design requirements. This would not be applicable when equipment is not part of the project.
 - g. Certification by the applicant that the project will be constructed in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, agreements, permits, codes, and standards.
 - h. Certification by the applicant that the applicant is not one of the top four processors of beef, pork, chicken, or turkey processing.
 - i. **Certification by applicant that other funding needed to complete the project as proposed in the application has been secured.**
 - j. Applicant certifies and acknowledges that:
 - i. The Agency will check the Do Not Pay System to verify that the applicant entity: has an active entity registration in the System for Award Management; has not been debarred or suspended; is not listed on Credit Alert Verification Reporting System; is not listed on the Treasury Offset Program; and does not appear on the Social Security Death Records; and
 - ii. The applicant is responsible for resolving any issues that are reported in the Do

Not Pay System. If issues are not resolved by the time the Agency makes program awards, the Agency may proceed to award funds to other eligible applicants.

6. **Design and construction documents.** For projects involving construction, include any design and construction documents. If selected for funding, the Agency will follow the construction planning and performing development regulation at 7 CFR. 4280.125.

Applicants should note that while a letter from a community leader is not required for a complete application, it is required for the application to receive a score in the Community Support section (15 points). You may address letters of support to the contact listed in section 6.2 of this RFA, but they must be submitted in the grants.gov submission to be considered

4.3 SUBMITTED APPLICATION QUALIFICATION

Your application may **not be reviewed/considered for funding** if it is:

- Received by Grants.gov after the submission deadline.
- Submitted via any method other than through [Grants.gov](#).
- Submitted to the wrong grant program.
- Not responsive to the requirements of this RFA (eligibility, incomplete application, not providing all required documents, etc.)

See [AMS' Late and/or Nonresponsive Applications Policy](#) for more information.

4.4 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. AMS encourages you to submit your application at least two weeks prior to the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

Only applications submitted and validated by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **Tuesday, May 24, 2022**, on [Grants.gov](#) will be accepted. [See AMS' Late and/or Nonresponsive Applications Policy](#).

4.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.

4.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.6.1 SUBAWARD RESTRICTION

The applicant is expected to perform a major portion of the project; however, subawards or subcontracts with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources for the purposes of the proposed project that are not otherwise available within the applicant organization are allowable. Using grant funds to competitively “re-grant” funds in mini-grant programs or to activities that are not central to the purpose of the project or for unknown costs are unallowable.

4.6.2 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [Program-Specific Terms and Conditions](#).

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this section should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under [7.0 Agency Contacts](#).

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- Pay costs or allow for current market value of property and equipment as eligible total project costs that only support existing processing capacity or product offerings for a facility.
- Pay costs that have been or will be reimbursed by a third party.
- Pay costs incurred prior to the date the Financial Assistance Agreement is executed.
- Pay costs that support or oppose union organizing.
- Pay costs associated with conducting research and development.
- Support an application (project) that has a proposed period of performance longer than 36 months.
- Support an application (project) that has a grant request exceeding \$3 million or exceeding 25% of amount of the total Federal portion of the grant, whichever is less.

4.7 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.7.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- 1) *Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):* All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Unique Entity Identifier from [SAM.gov](#). Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS/UEI" on the SF-424 form. Entities that register as an individual will not be eligible for grant funding.
- 2) *Register with SAM:* In addition to having a UEI number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**
- 3) *Create a Grants.gov Account:* The next step in the registration process is to [create an account with Grants.gov](#). Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a

representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the Authorized Organization Role.

- 4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles:* After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and [authorize the appropriate roles](#), which may include the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.
- 5) *Track Role Status:* After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you [to track your status](#).
- 6) *Electronic Signature:* When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

4.7.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

Applicants may use the Grants.gov Workspace, a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, an applicant creates individual instances of a workspace.

- 1) *Create a Workspace:* This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace:* Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
 - a. *Adobe Reader:* If you decide not to apply by filling out the webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local storage device, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader. NOTE: You may need to visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software. There is no cost for Adobe Reader Software.
 - b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First:* The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace:* Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in section [4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission](#) are included.

- 4) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer to if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the individuals mentioned in section [7.0 Agency Contacts](#).

4.7.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in section [4.4 Submission Date and Time](#). Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When AMS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

AMS will not accept application packages by fax, email or postal mail. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS. See [AMS' Late and/or Nonresponsive Applications Policy](#).

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting your application Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

4.7.4 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all instructions provided by AMS.
- Thoroughly review the [AMS Terms and Conditions](#) and [Program-Specific Terms and Conditions](#) to understand allowable and unallowable costs.

- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Size/File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader)
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct DUNS number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application will be reviewed competitively using the following criteria and scoring:

Alignment and Intent **25 Points**

- 1) The extent to which the application provides a clear and concise description of the specific objectives, including the proposed project impact and implementation strategy.
- 2) The extent to which the project addresses and articulates the steps the applicant will take to enhance the infrastructure of their meat or poultry processing facility.

Technical Merit **25 Points**

- 1) The extent to which the application presents a clear, well-conceived, complete, and suitable overall work plan to advance improvement/expansion.
- 2) The extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project objectives during the award project period.

Achievability **15 Points**

- 1) The extent to which the proposed activities are relevant for the scale and scope of the project including:
 - a. How each activity contributes to achieving the outcome, with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each activity; and
 - b. The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to or restrict progress toward the applicable activities, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.
- 2) The extent to which the applicant provides a comprehensive plan for collecting data and monitoring processes are clearly explained.

Expertise and Technical Management **25 Points**

- 1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates the applicant/organization’s capability and experience to manage the project.

- 2) The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and the individuals (name and title) who comprise the Project Team.
- 3) Clear commitment from the applicant/organization to assume responsibility to support and continue project activities and/or maintain expanded operations once the grant period ends.

Fiscal Plan, Financial Viability, and Resources..... 10 Points

- 1) The extent to which the application Budget Narrative/Justification provides a clear, detailed description for each budget line item, and:
 - a. The budget is consistent and well justified with the size and scope of the project activities.
 - b. All budget items are directly linked to activities included in the application.
 - c. The budget relates logically to the Project Narrative describing the project.
- 2) The extent to which the applicant describes how their processing establishment will achieve financial viability, technical feasibility, and readiness.
- 3) Narrative and/or data to demonstrate product demand and reliability of supply for financial feasibility (including consideration of competing facilities)

Market Impact & Opportunities..... 20 points

- 1) The extent to which the applicant plans to procure animals and provide producer opportunities relative to the existing processing establishments in their area, including project design that uses ownership models that support worker, producer, or consumer needs.
- 2) The extent to which the application articulates price transparency, producer profitability, and value-added production as well as commitments from producers, or consumers, end users, and potential buyers.
- 3) Whether the operation is a cooperative business model or otherwise shares profits or ownership with consumers, producers, or workers, if applicable.

Community Impact & Support..... 15 points

- 1) The extent to which the applicant describes the community impact and support of their proposed project as well as any strategies to generate additional community support. Labor/Workforce/Personnel The applicant must submit at least one letter of support from state, local, or tribal leadership, or zero points will be awarded under this criterion. Qualifying leaders may include but are not limited to state government officials, local government officials, and tribal government officials. Additional letters of support from relevant local and regional stakeholders may include but are not limited to economic development organizations, associations of agricultural producers, labor unions, institutions of higher education, and state, local, and tribal governments.

Discretionary Points: During Administrative Agency Review, discretionary points may be assigned by USDA for projects to maximize diversity among awards on the basis of geography (including those located in underserved communities), operation size, species, ownership, and business model.

5.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Qualification Screening

Each application is initially reviewed for overall completeness, as well as compliance with eligibility and program requirements as set forth in this RFA. If an application does not meet these requirements, it is removed from consideration. [Please see section *Error: Reference source not found* and *AMS's Late and/or Non-Responsive Applications Policy* for more information.](#)

Step 2: Technical Review

Each application that passes initial screening (Step 1) is evaluated by a panel of independent reviewers. [AMS makes every attempt to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise.](#) Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned proposals. The review panels evaluate their assigned proposals using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers confer with other team members to derive a consensus score. The consensus review serves as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Step 3: Administrative Review

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top rankings and recommendations. In addition to the rank and scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic diversity, and USDA priorities. AMS staff will work with top-ranked applicants to negotiate any revisions as necessary. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies using the guidance provided by [2 CFR § 200.206](#).

6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. Grant Agreements consist of a 1-page Agreement Face Sheet (AMS-33) that will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The Notice of Award and AMS-33 will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.211](#) and a reference to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [Program-Specific Terms and Conditions](#).

6.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by AMS via email as soon as possible after the grant awards are announced. AMS will email unsuccessful applicants anonymous review panel consensus comments regarding their proposals as feedback.

6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement, all AMS recipients must abide by the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#), which reference applicable [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

Additional requirements that apply to recipients selected for this program can be found in the Grants and Agreements regulations of the Department of Agriculture codified in 2 CFR parts 180, 200, 400, 415, 417, 418, 421; 2 CFR parts 25 and 170; and 48 CFR 31.2, and successor regulations to these parts.

All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation (see 2 CFR part 170). The recipient must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see 2 CFR 170.200(b), unless exempt under 2 CFR 170.110(b)).

All grants made under this RFA are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as required by the USDA (7 CFR part 15, subpart A) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

6.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

Applicants are advised that the use of grant funding through this grant is subject to 2 CFR 200.313 (Equipment), which relates to disposition of property and the prohibition of the encumbrance of property without agency approval.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

7.1 PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

After closely reviewing this RFA in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact [\[insert email address\]](#).

For additional information, please visit the [Program Website: \[insert website\]](#)

7.2 TEAM LEAD AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

Name: [Eric Bozoian](#)

E-Mail: Eric.Bozoian@usda.gov

7.3 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

AMS provides resources and information on its [website](#) that may be helpful to applicants, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and required application forms. AMS staff is available to provide timely technical assistance by contacting [\[insert email address\]](#).

FSIS District Offices Points of Contacts: [Office of Field Operations \(OFO\) | Food Safety and Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

FSIS Small Plant Help Desk: [Small Plant Help Desk | Food Safety and Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

7.4 ADDRESS

Meat and Poultry Processing Infrastructure Grants

USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Stop 0264

7.5 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#).

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions will apply:

Meat. Species amenable to USDA inspection including cattle, sheep, swine, goats, Siluriformes (catfish), and equine. Also, nonamenable species eligible for voluntary inspection including exotic species as described in 9 CFR part 352 and rabbit as described in 9 CFR part 354.

Poultry. Species amenable to USDA inspection including chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, ratites, squabs (young pigeons). Also, nonamenable species subject to voluntary inspection, including migratory waterfowl and game birds as described in 9 CFR part 362.

Amenable Species:

- a) Livestock products amenable to the FMIA are prepared from cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules and other equines, and fish of the order Siluriformes. However, the slaughter of horses and other equines is effectively prohibited by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Pub. L. 116-260.
- b) Poultry products amendable to the PPIA are prepared from any domesticated bird, including chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, ratites, or squabs, whether live or dead.

Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Compliance. The USDA program that allows state-inspected plants to operate as federally-inspected facilities, under specific conditions, and ship their product in interstate commerce and may provide the opportunity to export the product to foreign countries, provided the CIS participating State has entered into a supplemental agreement that addresses the export of CIS inspected products.

Domestically owned. An entity organized in the United States under the law of the State, the states, or under Tribal jurisdiction where the entity operates, and a majority of the entity is owned by members meeting the citizenship test.

Facility. A single meat or poultry processing plant designed, built, equipped, etc., for Primary and/or Further Processing of Meat or Poultry.

Further processing. Smoking, cooking, canning, curing, refining, or rendering in an official establishment of product previously prepared in official establishments, as defined in 9 CFR 301.2.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). A management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption of the finished product.

Independently Owned and Operated. Not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct, etc. and not subject to another's authority or jurisdiction.

Processing. Slaughter and further processing as defined in 9 CFR 301.2

Tribal Entities. Tribal Entities is expansive and includes all entities falling under the eligible legal structures, including but not limited to: tribal owned corporations, intertribal non-profits and associations, Alaska Native Corporations, Native entities within the State of Alaska recognized by and eligible to receive services from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native Hawaiian organizations including Homestead Associations, State recognized tribes/non-profits, and individually-owned Native American entities.

Tribe. Tribe means the term as defined in the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-454; 108 Stat. 4791, 4792).

8.2 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil
Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

8.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) and the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)), as implemented by USDA's regulations ([7 CFR § 1, Subpart A](#)), govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 1671-S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0273, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

8.4 PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. § 3501 et seq](#)), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0324. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

8.5 EXECUTIVE ORDER (EO) 13175 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

On January 27, 2022, USDA hosted a tribal consultation and listening session focused on Creating a Tribal Action Plan for Fairer Meat, Poultry and Seafood Processing. The consultation and listening session was conducted virtually and hosted by USDA's Office of Tribal Relations and the Office of the General Counsel. Consulting officials from USDA Rural Development and the Market and Regulatory Programs participated to hear concerns and input from elected tribal leaders, their proxies and tribal organizations. There was robust participation and dialogue. Tribes shared plans, strategies and concerns regarding regional intertribal collaboration, small, community scaled processing, limiting environmental impacts, mobile meat processing, and, processing bison, seafood and other traditional sources of meat proteins, among other commentary. To the extent allowable and practicable that input was taken into consideration in the drafting of this request for applications. Additionally, the comments and perspectives shared through the consultation and listening session will be taken into consideration in future funding opportunities and rulemaking.