USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bison Production and Marketing Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2025 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-BPMGP-G-25-XXXX

Publication Date: January, XX, 2025

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Month XX, 20XX

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Bison Production and Marketing Grant Program

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-BPMGP-G-25-XXXX

Announcement Type: Initial

Assistance Listing Number: 10.192

Dates: Applications must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Month XX, 2025, through 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) 2025 Bison Production and Marketing Grant Program (BPMGP). The BPMGP is designed to strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of bison and bison products in the United States through business and resource development, and the advancement of innovative solutions or approaches to support the long-term growth of the bison sector. The program will be implemented through the award of one or more grants to entities who will make subawards to implement the goals of the program.

Approximately $2,000,000 is available through this solicitation. AMS will competitively award grants to one or more entities whose mission is consistent with the purpose of the grant program and who meet all program requirements. Applicants should demonstrate their capacity to provide subawards over a broad relevant geographic coverage area. All applications will be assessed through initial qualification, technical merit, and administrative reviews (See *Section 6.0*). AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the three-year performance period from time of award. AMS will prioritize grants to national non-profits and federally chartered Tribal organizations that have expertise in bison production or marketing.

This announcement provides information regarding eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, and the forms and instructions needed to apply for an award.

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

USDA promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities. AMS encourages applicants to consider including goals and activities related to mitigating or adapting to climate change in their project's design and implementation.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

AMS requests that applicants read the entire RFA prior to submitting their application to ensure they understand the program's requirements. The application checklist below lists the required and conditionally required documents for an application package.

BPMGP requires that **all application packages** include the following:

☐ Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (Grants.gov)
☐ Form SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (Grants.gov)
☐ Form SF-424b - Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
☐ Project Abstract (Grants.gov)
☐ Signed Letter(s) of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations (PDF or MS Word Attachment)

If applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

☐ Signed Letter(s) Stating Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure (PDF or MS Word – Attachment)
• Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (PDF Attachment)

TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

• To do business with the Federal Government and to submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must
  o Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
  o Be registered in SAM.gov, the Government's primary registrant database;
  o Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
  o Maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.
• Register in Grants.gov and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE**. AMS encourages you to submit your application at least two weeks before the application deadline to ensure all certifications are met.
• The applicant organization registration process may take **more than four weeks** to complete. You must complete the organization registration to allow enough time to meet the required application submission deadlines. Please refer to *Section 5.3.1 How to Register to Apply* for more information on this process.
• Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all instructions.
• Thoroughly review the AMS General Terms and Conditions to understand important requirements and responsibilities for managing federal grant funds under this program.
• Apply to the correct grant program in Grants.gov using the correct Assistance Listing Number 10.192 and Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-BPMGP-G-25-XXXX".
• Ensure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with Grants.gov software at grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.
• Limit Application File Size/ File Name Characters (50 or less).
• Avoid Special Characters in File Names ($, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
• 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".
• Input the correct UEI number on the SF-424 form cover page.
• Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
  https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview.html
  https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs.htm

TIMING TO OBTAIN AND SUBMIT GRANTS.GOV REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Required Action	Timing to Obtain/Submit
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through Grants.Gov	DATE, 2025 – 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Obtaining Your Organization's UEI Number (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Establishing an Active SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 2 weeks

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1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Bison Production and Marketing Grant Program (BPMGP) is authorized under Division B, Title VII, section 764 of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024](#) (Public Law 118—42).

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of BPMGP is to support projects that strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of bison and bison products in the United States, including the improvement of business and resource development and the development of innovative approaches to solve long-term needs.

High quality applications will propose practical solutions for succinctly described needs and problems in the bison industry and address those problems over a broad relevant geographic coverage area. Applicants should seek to deliver measurable benefits for bison producers, encourage partnerships among bison industry organizations and tribes, and reduce duplication of effort among participating organizations.

1.3 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AMS will issue one or more grant award to one or more eligible entities with expertise in bison production or marketing. AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide a grant award to successful applicant(s). AMS will prioritize grants to national non-profits and federally chartered Tribal organizations that have expertise in bison production or marketing.

The selected recipient(s) will provide consultation and expertise necessary to advance the purpose and activities of the program, including to distribute and track subawards to support the bison sector.

Applicants will provide a proposal for how they would implement the program, including a competitive subaward program and the optional use of some funds for projects to be delivered by the applicant organization directly.

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

1.4 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Applicants will propose eligible activities, to be conducted either through subawards or by the applicant, that accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

- Promote and engage with potential bison producers to increase supply to meet established and growing demand;
- Strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of bison and bison products in the United States through business and resource development and the development of innovative approaches to problems identified by tribes and other industry stakeholders;
- Provide training and education to Tribes and other industry stakeholders;

- Assist all segments of bison management in addressing sustainable production and marketing of bison and bison products;

- Promote marketing of bison and bison products through an organized method that can measure tangible results.

1.4.1 SUBAWARDS FOR PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT BISON PRODUCERS

Awarded entities must use at least 80 percent of their award amount to implement a competitive subaward program to projects that benefit bison producers, as follows:

- There is no minimum subaward amount.
- The maximum subaward amount will not be more than $150,000, and there is a limit of one subaward per entity.
- The period of performance for subawards should be up to 2 years.
- Eligible Entities for subawards are the same as those listed in *Section 3.1* of this RFA.
- A competitive review process must be used to ensure maximum public input and benefit.
- Review processes must include input from an independent review panel of experts or qualified individuals.
- Review panel members must sign conflict of interest waivers and funded entities must ensure the reviews are fair and impartial per USDA regulation 2 CFR § 400.22.
- The proposed subaward package must be submitted to AMS for review before awarding.
- All documentation related to subaward funding decisions must be maintained by the funded entity.

Funded entities will make competitive subawards to eligible entities to advance the proposed goals of the grant, which may include such activities as:

- Business support and consulting, including business plan development for processed bison products, strategic planning assistance, and distribution and supply chain innovation;
- Marketing and branding assistance, including market messaging, packaging innovation, consumer assessments, innovation in emerging market opportunities, and evaluation of regional, national, and international markets;
- Research into bison production, product development, supply chain innovation, marketing, or other priorities identified through consultation and engagement with bison producers and stakeholders;
- Product innovation, including the development of value-added products, innovation in byproduct reprocessing and use maximization, and bison product production training, including in new, rare, or innovative techniques; and
- Development or facilitation of general informational websites, webinars, conferences, trainings, plant tours, and field days.

Purchases of equipment that do not require construction or major ground disturbance activities as defined in 41 CFR 60-1.3 "Construction work" are allowable, as part of a project that fits into the categories above.

1.4.2 APPLICANT-LED PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Applicants may propose to use up to 20 percent of their award amount to deliver the program, including management of subawards, and for projects that are operated directly by the applicant and not its sub-recipients. This could include projects similar to those described in the Subaward section above, or to provide

nonmonetary direct technical assistance to bison businesses (producers, processors, distributors, or others) through either private consultation or widely available distribution. Technical assistance may be provided directly through the recipient organization, through contracting with industry experts, or through research institutions, including cooperative extension services.

Successful applicants will be expected to coordinate with existing USDA resources, including AMS's Meat and Poultry Processing Technical Assistance network and USDA's Office of Tribal Relations.

1.4.3   DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

A project is a set of related tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people. Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a limited duration and a definitive beginning and end. A project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Examples of projects (either subaward projects or applicant-led projects) that may be proposed in response to this announcement include, but are not limited to, researching new grazing or production methods, developing a product expansion and marketing project that invests in shared cold storage and labeling equipment to benefit multiple producers and market their product, providing a training or technical assistance series to recruit new producers to the sector, and marketing bison products through a targeted promotional campaign.

1.4.4   PROJECTS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

In all categories in *Section 1.4* of this RFA, projects NOT eligible for funding include those that:

- Benefit only one agricultural producer, vendor, or individual. Applicants must collaborate with others to benefit the larger community.

- Propose to purchase land for construction of a building or structure.

- Depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.

- Include legal fees and other costs associated with establishing a business or organization.

- Fund construction or infrastructure projects. (see 41 CFR 60-1.3 for definition of "Construction work").

- Exclude or do not equally support producers, vendors, or other relevant entities that are not members or affiliates of the applicant/funded entity or its subrecipients.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1   TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide the Federal award to successful applicant(s).

2.2   AVAILABLE FUNDING

AMS anticipates approximately $2 million will be available for this program. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

2.3   FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within a three-year performance period from the time of the award. Grant recipients will be required to issue competitively funded subawards within the first year of the program   to be completed by the end of the three-year period of performance.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1   ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must be based in the 50 States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands. AMS will prioritize grants to national non-profits and federally chartered Tribal organizations that have expertise in bison production or marketing.

Eligible applicants include:

- Agricultural Businesses or Cooperatives: Businesses or member-owned entities that provide, hold, deliver, transport, offer, or sell agricultural products or services for member benefit as well as the organization or other businesses that they represent.
- Producer Networks or Associations: Producer group- or member-owned organizations or businesses that provide, offer, or sell agricultural products or services through a common distribution system for the mutual member benefit as well as organizations or other businesses that assist, represent, or serve producers or producer networks.
- Local Governments: Any unit of government within a State, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937 (50 Stat. 888 (Pub. L. No. 75—412)); special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.
- Nonprofit Corporations: Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the organization's or institution's net earnings inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
- Economic Development Corporations: Organizations whose missions are to improve, maintain, develop, and/or market or promote a specific geographic area.
- Tribal Governments: Governing bodies or governmental agencies of any Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in Section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602)) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

- Federally chartered Tribal organizations: Tribal corporations chartered under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (25 U.S.C. § 5124).

3.2   PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

An applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators to conduct their proposed activities.

- A *partnership* is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

If an applicant proposes to work with partners or collaborators, applicants must provide letters of commitment from those partner and collaborators.

4.0 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1   COST SHARING AND MATCHING

This funding opportunity **does not** have a federal cost sharing requirement. (Note: Cost sharing is sometimes referred to as matching funds. No match is required in this program.)

4.2   INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs" - defined at 2 CFR 200.1) are common or joint purpose expenditures that benefit more than one cost objectives of the awardee and any subawards, and not readily assignable or allocable as a direct expense to the federal grant.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), any non-Federal entity (excluding State and Local Government entities and Indian Tribes) that does not have a negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either direct or indirect costs, and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.

Applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC is defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $50,000 per subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award).

If an applicant has a federal negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For assignments of cognizant agencies, see "Cognizant agency for indirect costs" in 2 CFR § 200.1.

4.3   ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in 2 CFR 200.403 and the applicable AMS General Terms and Conditions.

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this document should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under *Section 8.0 Agency Contacts*. The program website will also have information relating to applicant office hours, webinars, and Frequently Asked Questions.

5.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

5.1   ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants MUST apply to this RFA electronically using Grants.gov. No other submission method is accepted. AMS urges applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process, see How to Apply for Grants webpage.

See *Section 5.3* for more information on Grants.gov and where to obtain the required application forms and AMS-specific attachments.

5.2   CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

5.2.1   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 explained in the instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instructions
1 - Type of Submission	Select Application
2 - Type of Application	Select New
4 through 7	Not required
8.c - Organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Enter applicant UEI for the organization submitting the application.
8.d - 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 (Assistance Listing Number)	10.192
12 - Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-BPMGP-G-25-XXXX Ensure you are applying for the correct grant program.
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.

Block	Instructions
16b - Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the projects will be implemented in more than one location.
17 - Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months (3 years) in length. • Enter start date: September 30, 2025, and • Enter end date: September 29, 2028.
18 - Estimated Funding – Federal	Enter the Total Federal award requested.
18b - Estimated Funding – Applicant	Enter the Total Match amount.
19 - Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process.	See section *5.6 Intergovernmental Review*.

5.2.2   SF-424A – BUDGET INFORMATION

Required. The SF-424A is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the form instructions. The following are supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on the SF-424A.

Please fill in **only** sections A and B. **Do not** complete sections C, D, E, and F.

Section A – Budget Summary

Box	Instructions
1.a – Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter "BPMGP – Federal"
1.b – Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter "10.192"
1.e – Federal	Enter the amount of Federal funding requested for the project
1.f – Non-Federal	Enter the **total** cost share contribution amount provided for the project

Section B – Budget Categories

Box	Instructions
6.a – 6.j – Object Class Categories	In Column 1, enter the amount of Federal funds requested for each Object Class Category. Do **not** include cost share funding. For example, if you are requesting $2,000 in Federal funds for "Travel", enter 2000 in Column 1, box 6.c

5.2.3 PROJECT ABSTRACT SUMMARY

Required. The Project Abstract Summary form will be used as the public-facing description of any projects which receive an award, including publication on the AMS website. The Project Abstract Summary must include:

1. Project purpose
2. Proposed activities
3. Deliverables and expected outcomes
4. Intended beneficiary(ies): Who will benefit from your proposed project beyond your application?
5. Identify any subrecipients/key partners/collaborators that will be a part of or support your proposed project.

5.2.4 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required. Applicants MUST submit a Project Narrative that includes the six sections below. Applicants should also reference the Application Scoring Criteria in *Section 6.1* below when writing their Project Narrative.

The Project Narrative should be submitted in PDF or MS Word format and must be typed, single-spaced, and in an 11-point font, not to exceed twenty (20) 8.5 x 11 pages. Applicants must attach the Project Narrative to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" button under SF-424 item #15.

Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

(1) Executive Summary

Include a summary of 250 words or less. The summary will be used as the public-facing description of any projects which receive an award, including publication on the AMS website. This summary should include a description of your organization and its history, a concise outline of the project's purpose, activities to be performed, including subawards, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiaries, and any other pertinent information.

(2) Alignment and Intent

(i) Clearly state the purpose of the project. Describe the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address in relation to the purpose and goals outlined in *Section 1.2* of this RFA. Include data and/or estimates that describe the extent of the issue, problem, or need.

(ii) List the objectives of the project. The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) mentioned in *Section (2)(i)*.

(iii) Provide a description of the benefits that are intended to be achieved as a result of engaging in the activities associated with this project, including the number of affected producers or processors.

(iv) Describe experience managing a program with subrecipients and provide a detailed plan that includes a competitive application solicitation process, and description of their application review, award, oversight, and reporting plans.

(v) Describe capacity and plans to offer subaward assistance, oversight, and monitoring over a broad, relevant geographic coverage area.

(vi) If applicable, outline the project's strategy to engage smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, historically underserved producers, veteran producers, and/or underserved communities.

(3) Technical Merit

(i) Provide a Work Plan that includes planned activities and a timeline to complete each of those activities.

The Work Plan should describe: 1) how and where the activities will take place; 2) the resources required to complete the activities; and 3) the person(s) responsible for completing the activity, including collaborative arrangements or subcontractors.

(ii) If your proposed project includes providing training and/or technical assistance, describe participant recruitment strategies, the subject matter (curriculum), and methods for delivery. If the proposed project builds on work previously funded by a federal program, describe how the activities described in this application are additive and not duplicative.

(4) Achievability

(i) Provide at least one distinct, quantifiable, measurable project outcome and associated indicator. If the outcome measures are long-term and occur after the project's completion, identify an intermediate outcome that occurs before, and is expected to help lead to the fulfillment of long-term outcomes. The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture has a model for helping develop program outcomes, which may be useful: Logic Model Planning Process.

(ii) For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

(iii) Provide a dissemination plan to share the project's results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may be interested in the project's results or implementing a similar project.

(5) Expertise and Partners

(i) List key staff, including personnel and external project partners and collaborators that comprise the Project Team, their roles, and their relevant experience.

(ii) Provide a description of your organization's and partners' capacity to serve the proposed geographic service area.

(iii) If your proposed project is planning to make subawards, describe how you will ensure an open and fair process for these grant opportunities. Provide a description of your application solicitation and proposal review processes, conflict-of-interest policies, and plans for grant administration, oversight and monitoring activities. If applicant or proposed partners are membership organizations, describe how you will serve eligible entities that are not members.

(iv) Describe your experience and the management processes that will be used to ensure proper accounting and reporting for the use of Federal funds.

(v) Provide a resume or summary for key participants that would implement the program.

(6) Budget

Applications must include a Budget Narrative and spreadsheet (sample below).

Sample Budget Spreadsheet

Budget Line Item	Year 1	Year 2	Cumulative	Optional Notes
Personnel	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	
Fringe Benefits				
Travel				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Contracts/Subawards				
Other				
Indirect Costs				
Totals				

Note that individual subaward budgets are not expected at the submission, however, successful applicants will be required to provide a plan detailing each subaward project, associated outcomes, and applicable expenses before subawards can be issued.

The Budget Narrative must break down and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. If applicable, indicate in your budget narrative and budget table whether the project expects to generate program income through user, service and/or membership fees. Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the project and under the conditions of the award. See section 8 of the AMS General Terms and Conditions for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.

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

5.2.5   LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNERS AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Required: Applicants MUST provide letters of commitment from project partners and collaborators. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in *Section 3.2 Partners and Collaborators*. Emails will not be accepted.AMS encourages applicants to use the Suggested Partner Organization Template Letter on the grant program's application website. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Commitment must, at a minimum, include the following:

- Project Applicant

- Project Title

- A short introduction describing the partnering organization's mission and how it is applicable to this program

- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting

- The period of the partnership

- Roles of the participating individuals, as applicable, and individual time commitments

- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application.

Submit Letters of Commitment on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT**. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

Letter(s) must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15.

PLEASE NOTE: This funding opportunity does not require Congressional letters of support, and such letters do not carry additional weight during the evaluation process.

5.3   APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

5.3.1   HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY

Applicants MUST have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), an active SAM.gov account, and a Grants.gov account to submit an application. AMS recommends that applicants start the registration process in these systems immediately to allow enough time to meet application submission deadlines. Registration in these systems collectively may take **more than four weeks** to complete. The steps below provide details on how to complete each registration.

Individual applicants eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://apply07.grants.gov/help/html/help/Register/OrganizationRegistration.htm.

1. Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): Entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI from SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational UEI" on the SF-424. Getting a UEI requires validation steps in SAM.gov. Applicants are encouraged to start this process as early as possible, and, if applicable, this includes providing guidance to subapplicants on getting their own UEI.

2. Register with the System for Award Management (SAM): In addition to having a UEI number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Current SAM.gov registrants have already been assigned their UEI and can view it within SAM.gov. 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. Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.**

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 UEI 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 (AOR).

a. Watch the video on how to Register in Grants.gov and create an institutional profile. Applicants are required to use Login.gov to sign into Grants.gov. See the Grants.gov help article for more information on logging in with Login.gov credentials. The Grants.gov validation process also includes a check for an active SAM.gov registration. Applicants without a current SAM.gov registration will be rejected.

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, including the 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 who 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 required for valid and timely submissions.**

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

Complete your entire application before attempting to submit it through grants.gov. However, you should set-up or update your Grants.gov account *prior to beginning your application*.

Applicants can apply using Grants.gov Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), 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, and 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's name, address, and UEI 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.

Submit via 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 5.2* are included.

Track via a Workspace: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (USDA-AMS-TM-BPMGP-G-25-XXXX) 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 (except federal holidays) 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 if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, use the contact information described in *Section 8.0 Agency Contacts*.

5.4   APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

AMS will not consider any applications received after the deadline, any applications submitted by fax, email, or postal mail and any applications not responsive to the programmatic and administrative requirements of this RFA. See AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.

Ensure that all components 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 one week before the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

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.

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. Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

5.5   SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants must submit applications electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Month XX, 2025. AMS cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding. See AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.

5.6   INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

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

6.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

6.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

Alignment and Intent... **25 Points**

1) The application provides a clear and concise description of the specific issue, problem, or need addressed by the project and its objective.
2) The project addresses an important barrier, challenge, or opportunity, and aligns with the bison program legislative program goals to strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of bison and bison products in the United States, including through business, and resource development, and through the advancement of innovative approaches to solve long-term needs.
3) Applicant demonstrates experience managing a program with subrecipients and provides a detailed plan that includes a competitive application solicitation process, and description of their application review, award, oversight, and reporting plans.
4) Applicant demonstrates the capacity and provides a plan to offer subaward assistance, oversight, and monitoring over a broad, relevant geographic coverage area.
5) The application identifies the intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries, and how they will benefit. The application demonstrates a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants in program activities. For projects intending to serve smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, historically underserved producers, veteran producers, and/or underserved communities, application describes how they have or will engage and involve those beneficiaries when developing projects and applications.

Technical Merit...**25 Points**

1) The application presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable methodology for fulfilling the goals and objectives, including providing subawards supporting the bison industry.
2) The application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project (including subaward administration) during the award performance period.

Achievability...**15 Points**

1) The provided outcomes and indicators are feasible for the scale and scope of the project including:
   - How indicator numbers were derived with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator; and
   - The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.
2) The applicant provides a comprehensive plan to disseminate the results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties.

Expertise and Partners...**25 Points**

1) The proposed project represents the qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborations to accomplish the project's goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:

- Commitment from the key staff demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;
- The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and the individuals (name and title) who comprise the Project Team;
- The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project; and

2) Applicant demonstrates capacity to provide subawards in a proposed broad relevant geographic service area.

3) The application demonstrates ability to draw on existing Bison industry resources, including activities conducted by Bison promotion entities, research capacity, academic and industry expertise, and Bison businesses.

4) The application describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, both internally for the applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.

5) The application describes a high-quality record of administering Federally funded programs and that the applicant has the capacity and control systems necessary to administer the subawards.

Fiscal Plan and Resources ....**10 Points**

1) The application Budget Narrative/ Justification provides a clear, detailed description for each budget line item and is consistent with the size and scope of the project.

2) The budget and justification relate logically to the Project Narrative describing the project.

3) The application provides evidence that critical resources and infrastructure that are necessary for the initiation and completion of the proposed project are currently in place.

4) The application demonstrates that sufficient staff, administrative support, and other resources to be assigned to fulfill the program's objectives.

6.2   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 AMS' Late Applications, Denials Late and/or Appeals Procedure for more information.

Step 2: Technical Review

Each application that passes initial screening (Step 1) is evaluated by a panel of independent peer 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 peer review panels evaluate their assigned proposals using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers score applications and then confer with other panel members. The scoring and discussion serve as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Step 3: Administrative Review

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top scores and recommendations. In addition to the scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic coverage, and program purpose, as described in *Section 1.2.* AMS will prioritize grants to national non-profits and federally chartered Tribal organizations that have expertise in bison production or marketing. AMS staff will work with top-scored 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(b).

During Administrative Review, additional documentation may be required, including a completed AMS Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.

1.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award (NOA) to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. The NOA will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The NOA will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in 2 CFR § 200.211 and reference to the AMS General Terms and Conditions.

1.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Applicants who do not pass initial qualification screening will be notified by email during Stage 1 of the review and selection process (please see *Section 6.2*). Applicants that pass initial screening but are not selected for an award will be notified by email as soon as possible after the awards are announced. Those unsuccessful applicants may request review panel consensus comments regarding their proposals.

1.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The Notice of Award requires all AMS grant recipients to abide by the AMS General Terms and Conditions, which reference applicable *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

1.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the AMS General Terms and Conditions. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

1.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USDA SUPPORT

Proper acknowledgement of your USDA-AMS funding in published solicitations (e.g., for state competitions), presentations, press releases, and other communications is critical for the success of our agency's programs. Grantees must meet the acknowledgement requirements outlined in the updated AMS General Terms and Conditions.

2.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

2.1   PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

After reviewing this RFA in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact the program staff by e-mail with questions about the grant program at AMSGrants@usda.gov.

For additional information, please visit the BPMGP Website:
https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/BPMGP.

2.2   ADDRESS

Bison Production and Marketing Grant Program

USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Room 1510 South Building, Stop 0264

Washington, DC 20250-0269

2.3   GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's Applicant Support. Applicants may also call the 24/7 (except federal holidays) toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which the applicant and Grants.gov can refer if the issue is not immediately resolved.

Grants.gov Registration: https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional training resources, including video tutorials.

3.0 OTHER INFORMATION

3.1   EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and 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.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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

3.2   FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) (FOIA) 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 2055-S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0201, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: [AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.](mailto:AMS.FOIA@usda.gov)

3.3   PAPERWORK REDUCTION

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. 3501](#)), 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 0581-0240. 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.