

Spatial Ecology and Chronic Wasting Disease Dynamics of Wild White-tailed and Mule Deer in Northern Colorado Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center Cooperative Agreement

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-26-0018

Publication Date: August 21, 2026

Application Due Date: August 31, 2026 at 5:00 PM MST

Funding Opportunity:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is announcing the availability of \$413,380 in cooperative agreement funding for research investigating the spatial ecology and chronic wasting disease (CWD) epidemiology of wild deer in Northern Colorado. The amount of funding is based on the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Congressional appropriations language and directions.

Applicants can find information for this funding opportunity in [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by searching this title, the Assistance Listing Number 10.028, or in [ezFedGrants](https://www.ezfedgrants.gov) by searching the funding opportunity number USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-26-0018. Applications must be submitted through [ezFedGrants](https://www.ezfedgrants.gov).

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A. BASIC INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: USDA APHIS

Funding Opportunity Title: Spatial Ecology and CWD Dynamics of Wild White-tailed and Mule Deer in Northern Colorado

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-26-0018

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance/Assistance Listing Number: 10.028

Funding Details: APHIS anticipates awarding \$413,380 in cooperative agreement funding to support the project and address the funding priorities described in [Section C.2](#). The amount of funding is based on the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Congressional appropriations language and directions.

APHIS anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any application or to make a specific number of awards.

Award will be funded via cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by APHIS to assist in the completion of the goals and objectives of the work.

This is a competitive funding opportunity. A team of reviewers will evaluate proposals and recommend proposals for funding based on the merits of the proposal as outlined in [Section F.2](#). Recipients are not pre-determined. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS WS NWRC.

Key Dates: Proposals must be received through [ezFedGrants](#) by August 31, 2026, at 5:00 PM MST. Proposals received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will not be accepted.

The performance period will begin on or before September 30, 2026, and projects must be completed no later than 24 months after the start date. Funding will not be allowed, nor activities approved to occur, outside of the period of performance. There is an allowance for a one-time extension request of the performance period for up to 12 months to complete the project, assuming there is no increase in funding requested. This request must be submitted in accordance with the APHIS [General Terms and Conditions](#) and [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#) in order to be considered. Recipients wishing to continue work or build on projects funded in prior years that are either complete or will be complete by the proposed period of performance may submit proposals to this opportunity. Recipients wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years which are not complete, and have not been extended previously, should submit a no-cost extension or by contacting the APHIS Program Manager rather than submitting a proposal to this opportunity.

Applicants can find information for this funding opportunity in [Grants.gov](#) by searching this title, the Assistance Listing Number 10.028, or in [ezFedGrants](#) by searching the funding opportunity number APHIS- USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-26-0018. Applications must be submitted through [ezFedGrants](#).

B. ELIGIBILITY

B.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following entities are eligible for funding through this opportunity:

- Public and Private Colleges and Universities
- State and tribal governments

NOTES:

Any application with a proposed sub-award must complete an additional Financial Plan for the sub-awarded portion as a part of the proposal package.

Due to strict requirements around the distribution of funds to Federal agencies across fiscal years, sub-awarding this funding (any payment) to Federal agencies may not be included in the APHIS share of the Financial Plan. Recipients may use funds from other sources to pay for services from Federal agencies; if applicable, such expenses should be listed in the recipient share in the Financial Plan.

B.2 OTHER CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

All applicant organizations must have at least two users registered in [ezFedGrants](#), a Grants Administrative Officer and a Signatory Official, to successfully submit a proposal package. We recommend identifying these individuals and confirming they have access prior to submitting a proposal to ensure an efficient application process. This system will be used for all stages of the funding opportunity process, including submitting the proposal package, signing the cooperative agreement, and submitting reports.

Applicants will be checked against the System for Award Management (SAM) to ensure they have not been disbarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency and have an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). See [Section E.2](#) and [F.3](#).

B.3 COST SHARING OR MATCHING

Cost sharing and matching is defined in [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) as a “portion of the project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute).” For additional information on cost share please reference [2 CFR Part 200.306](#).

Although cost sharing is not required for this project, APHIS will take an eligible applicant’s ability to contribute non-Federal funds to carry out such a cooperative agreement into consideration. If there is a tie in rankings, the eligible applicant with the highest cost share contribution will be selected for the award.

If applicable, applicants should describe cost-share or in-kind funding for the project. Once the cooperative agreement is accepted and finalized, the cost share becomes legally binding, and the recipient will be required to meet the cost share ratio.

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

C.1 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is a collaborative research effort between awardee and the NWRC CWD Project. The funding opportunity will provide critical resources (e.g., biological samples, GPS data) to support the NWRC CWD Project, which aims to develop innovative tools for the control of CWD. The focus of the research effort is to develop a thorough understanding of wild deer survival in the Northern Colorado region. By monitoring free-ranging mule deer and white-tailed deer, the study will investigate how deer behavior, habitat use, and disease status influence survival and mortality across the landscape.

The project combines GPS tracking, disease surveillance, mortality investigations, and spatial analyses to generate a comprehensive picture of deer population health and CWD ecology. Information collected will help identify factors associated with disease transmission and survival outcomes, while supporting regional efforts to better understand and manage CWD in wild deer populations.

As part of a broader, multi-state research effort coordinated with studies in neighboring states, the project will contribute standardized data that can be integrated across regions to improve understanding of CWD at larger spatial scales. The resulting information will support science-based wildlife management, disease surveillance, and decision-making in Colorado and throughout the western United States.

Eligible applicants are encouraged to develop project proposals that directly support the funding priorities described in C.2 below.

C.2 FUNDING PRIORITIES

The primary purpose of this agreement is to investigate chronic wasting disease (CWD) as a population-limiting factor in Northern Colorado mule deer and white-tailed deer and to better understand the relationship between CWD, other pathogens, and other causes of mortality that limit deer numbers. The activities performed below will also support the development and optimization of live tests for CWD. This work supports the mission of Wildlife Services by providing federal expertise in managing conflicts between people and wildlife. To initiate this project, NWRC will provide financial support for collaborative research with the awardee.

These funds are provided to support the following activities:

- Capturing wild deer, deployment of GPS collars, and antemortem sampling of capture deer for CWD and other pathogens
- Monitoring of deer in the field and responding in a timely manner to mortalities to coordinate with NWRC on postmortem investigations
- Cleaning, organizing, and sharing GPS collar data
- Analyzing samples from live and dead animals
- Conducting spatial analyses using GPS collar data

- Preparing reports, white papers, manuscripts, and presentations for the dissemination of study findings

This study will coordinate with similar studies in neighboring states so that similar designs are used and the data can be analyzed as one large dataset. Specifically, the cooperator will capture, collar, sample, and monitor ~30-40 mule and ~30-40 white-tailed deer from the same population. The cooperator will collect biological samples including tissue biopsies, swabs, blood, feces, and hair at the time of capture following the NWRC CWD Project sampling protocol. Following capture, activities performed by the cooperator include monitoring of GPS collars and responding in a timely manner to mortality events to retrieve collars and carcasses. The cooperator will assist NWRC personnel with necropsy procedures, aid in the coordination of diagnostics, and support laboratory work as needed. All data and metadata will be shared with NWRC and analyses will be performed jointly, with NWRC leading the laboratory work and the cooperator leading the spatial analyses.

Funding for research activities and access to facilities or equipment needed for conducting research activities by the awardee's researcher will be provided directly by this award. Any required protocols (e.g., IACUC, IBC) for conducting the research described herein will be prepared by the awardee. Additional funding required for support beyond the first year will be optional for NWRC and can be provided by amendment to this agreement.

C.3 OTHER FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants should describe the anticipated involvement by APHIS personnel needed to complete the proposed activities in the Work Plan and Financial Plan (excluding personnel to administer or oversee the cooperative agreement). APHIS will collaborate with recipients to successfully complete activities funded via this opportunity. If the proposal requires significant APHIS personnel or equipment resources these must be agreed to before the proposal is submitted.

C.4 COST GUIDANCE

Each applicant must submit a detailed Financial Plan that provides sufficient information to determine the costs for each of the proposed activities and objectives.

Allowable costs must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary to the project. Office of Management and Budget cost principles ([2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](#)) must be used to determine whether a cost can be charged to the project and, if so, the extent to which it can be charged.

Allowable uses of cooperative agreement funds include, but are not limited to, activities, equipment, supplies, and services needed to complete approved program activities that support the funding priorities and considerations described in [Section C.2](#). This may include:

- *Equipment.* The Federal definition of equipment defined in [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) is tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than 1 year and a per unit value of \$10,000 or more unless the applicant's definition of equipment is more restrictive.
- *Information technology systems.* The term "information technology," defined in [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) includes, but is not limited to, computers, and ancillary equipment, software, and firmware. This

also includes any equipment, interconnected system(s), or subsystem(s) of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information.

- *Outreach materials.* Whenever possible, existing publications or audiovisuals, referred to as outreach materials, should be used. A draft of any publications or audiovisuals produced with cooperative agreement funds for public use must be reviewed and approved by APHIS, the Office of the Deputy Administrator, and the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs. A determination will be made if the USDA logo may be used and if APHIS' participation in the project may be acknowledged. Please allow a minimum of 4 weeks for review and approval of materials (brochures, pamphlets, flyers, posters, etc.). **NOTE:** Approval must be obtained prior to printing.
- *Personnel.* APHIS will allow costs for salaries and wages provided the total compensation to individual employees is reasonable for the work performed, conforms to the established policy of the organization, and is consistently applied to Government and non-government activities.
- *Travel.* Funds may be requested for field work, training, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel costs associated with the proposed work. If the recipient does not have a written travel policy or if the recipient is not a state agency, Federal per diem rates should be used in the calculation of travel costs.

Project funds must be obligated by the recipient during the performance period identified in the Award Face Sheet. Reimbursement of costs outside of the performance period identified in the Award Face Sheet will not be reimbursed.

Funds **may NOT be used** for the following:

- Unmanned aircraft aka drones
- Land acquisition
- Compensation for Federal Employees
- Travel of Federal Employees
- Federal subawards (any payment to Federal entities) unless paid from the recipient share
- Construction and/or major rehabilitation of buildings
- Bonuses or commissions
- Fundraising
- Meeting, conference, symposia, or workshop honoraria, which is payment to individuals or guests other than for documented professional services
- Vehicle purchases or leases
- Positions funded by other Federal cooperative agreements or grants
- International travel
- Projects or activities associated with APHIS-State-Industry cooperative program activities already funded via USDA APHIS annual cooperative agreements
- Promotional, outreach, or giveaway items such as calendars, rulers, pens, pencils, squishy balls, cups, refreshments, etc.

Applicants must submit a copy of their fully executed current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), negotiated with their cognizant Federal Agency, when indirect costs are included in the budget, unless they are using the de minimis indirect cost rate option where no documentation is required. If the applicant receives less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding during a single fiscal year and is an eligible State or local government, please provide a copy of the

Indirect Cost Rate Negotiation exemption letter from your cognizant Federal Agency in place of the NICRA. Indirect costs for any sub-award must also be disclosed.

- **Higher education institutions and non-profit organizations’ assessment of indirect costs are limited to not more than 10% of total direct costs or the application of their approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, whichever is less.**

Nothing in this section prevents an eligible applicant from using funds received to enter into sub-agreements with another eligible applicant, university, or non-profit entity or to reimburse a Tribe, State or local agency for services rendered.

C.5 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Pursuant to [7 USC § 2279 \(g\) and, notwithstanding Chapter 63 of Title 31](#), APHIS is authorized to use cooperative agreements to reflect a relationship with a State or other recipient to carry out programs to protect the nation's animal and plant resources or to carry out educational programs or special studies to improve the safety of the nation's food supply.

Under the Act of March 2, 1931, ([46 Stat. 1468-69; 7 USC §§ 8351-8352](#), as amended), and the Act of December 22, 1987 ([Public Law No. 100-202, §101\(k\), 101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 USC § 8353](#)), the Secretary of Agriculture may conduct a program of wildlife services with respect to injurious animal species and take any action the Secretary considers necessary in conducting the program. Additionally, the Secretary of Agriculture, except for urban rodent control, is authorized to conduct activities to control nuisance mammals and birds and those mammal and bird species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases. [7 USC § 8353](#). In carrying out a program of Wildlife Service’s involving injurious and/or nuisance animal species or involving mammal and bird species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases, the Secretary is authorized to enter into agreements with States, local jurisdictions, individuals, public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

The proposal package must include the following with the exceptions noted below:

- ☐ SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- ☐ SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” that matches the submitted Budget Narrative (optional)– Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- ☐ [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (for Federal Assistance **greater** than \$100,000)
- ☐ [SF-LLL](#), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000 **when there are activities to disclose**)
- ☐ Waiver or approval response letter from the State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) if the applicant is in a state that is required to comply with Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, if applicable (See [Section E.5](#) for additional information)
- ☐ Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or exemption letter, if indirect costs are claimed
- ☐ Work Plan template

- Financial Plan template
 - Applicants must submit a Financial Plan that clearly identifies the costs associated with the proposed activities for **each objective**. When preparing a Financial Plan, applicants must comply with the cost guidance and funding restrictions described in [Section C.4](#). Any application with a proposed sub-award over \$10,000 **must** complete an additional Financial Plan for the sub-awarded portion as a part of the proposal package.
- If applicable, letters of collaboration from additional contributors listed in the Work Plan

Please note, ezFedGrants attachments are limited to PDF files only (no digital signature or fillable PDFs) and the total size of ALL attachments cannot exceed 20MB.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

E.1 ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE

All application materials are available through this announcement, through grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-individual-family, and through [ezFedGrants](#).

If assistance is needed with locating application materials, please reach out to NWRC.Agreements@usda.gov, at least **72 hours** prior to the application deadline.

E.2 UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

All applicants are required to register in SAM prior to submitting a proposal for this funding opportunity, provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in the application, and maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during the application process and award period of performance ([2 CFR Part 200.206](#)). This does not apply if the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under [2 CFR 25.110\(b\)](#) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under [2 CFR 25.110\(d\)](#). To register, go to the [SAM website](#).

During the SAM registration process, it is **mandatory** to complete the Financial Assistance Certification Report to receive federal financial assistance. Please allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the SAM registration. Registration is free. Frequently Asked Questions, user guides, demonstration videos, etc. can be found at the [SAM website](#), under the “[SAM.gov | Help](#)” tab.

E.3 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Only electronic submissions of proposals through [ezFedGrants](#) will be accepted. The [ezFedGrants](#) system requires registration, during the registration process you will select a password that will be required to log in to the system. Hard copy proposals and submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will not be accepted. APHIS complies with [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

Applicants experiencing technical difficulties should reach out to ezFedGrants.helpdesk@usda.gov or NWRC.Agreements@usda.gov at least 72 hours prior to the application deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

E.4 SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

All proposals must be completed and received electronically through [ezFedGrants](#) no later than August 31, 2026, **5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time**. The electronic date and time stamp from [ezFedGrants](#) will be used to determine whether proposals were received before the deadline. Proposals received after this deadline will **not** be reviewed or considered for funding. Submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will **not** be accepted.

We understand unanticipated issues can arise; therefore, we urge applicants to submit their application package early to allow time to address any complications. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please reach out to ezFedGrants.helpdesk@usda.gov or NWRC.Agreements@usda.gov. Any proposal package with missing or significantly incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.

E.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

The Intergovernmental Review Process is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

Names and addresses of States' Single Point of Contact (SPOC) are listed on the [APHIS website](#). Please reach out to your State's SPOC for additional information on your specific State requirements.

For those applicants that have this process in their State, submit your application to the SPOC simultaneously to submitting to APHIS. If possible, please upload a waiver or approval response letter from the SPOC with your proposal package in [ezFedGrants](#) to fulfill this requirement. Awards will not be finalized until a copy of the SPOC waiver or approval letter is provided for applicable states. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a rejection of your application.

E.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Project funds are available only during the approved period of performance. Recipients must commit all funds within the first 12 months from the Award Face Sheet start date. If needed, an additional one-year no-cost extension may be approved, allowing up to 24 months total to commit funds. Costs incurred outside the period of performance are not reimbursable

Construction is not an allowable activity.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

F.1 REVIEW CRITERIA

Applicants must comply with the requirements contained in the [2 CFR Part 200](#) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. They must also comply with the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#), [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#), the approved work plan, and the approved financial plan.

APHIS will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals during the review process. Applicants should consider these criteria when preparing the proposal package. **NOTE:** Proposed activities must align with current Federal, State, and Tribal regulations.

Administrative Criteria

Proposal packages must meet these initial screening criteria to be considered for further review. Proposals that do not meet these criteria may not be considered.

1. Proposals must be received by the deadline. Proposals received after the established deadline will not be reviewed or considered.
2. Proposals must be submitted by an eligible applicant.
3. Proposals must address the project activities described in [Section C.2](#).
4. All required documents and forms listed in [Section D](#) must be included in the proposal package and comply with the submission instructions described in [Section D](#). Any proposal package with missing or significantly incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.
5. Proposals must be consistent with allowed use of funds guidance. Proposals that do not align with the cost guidance described in [Section C.4](#) of this announcement will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.
6. Timeline must be reasonable to complete objectives within 12 months, or 24 months, which includes a 1-year no-cost extension. If the proposal is designed to run for more than 12 months, it will be rejected.
7. The principal investigator must clearly demonstrate evidence of necessary expertise to conduct the proposed project. Demonstrated evidence of expertise may include relevant peer-reviewed publications and/or technical reports.

Evaluation Criteria

The weight of each criterion's impact to the score is listed below.

1. **Requirements in the announcement. (20% of the weighted score)** This criterion assesses the extent to which the applicant and proposal meet the minimum eligibility requirements, including addressing the research activities described in [Section C.2](#). Submissions that do not meet these criteria cannot be considered for funding.
2. **Performance parameters (around 14% of the weighted score)**
 - a. **Performance period.** The proposed objectives must be accomplished within the period of performance. The performance period must begin on or before September 30, 2026, and should end no later than 12 months after the start date, or 24 months, which includes a 1-year no cost extension. The project schedule must define a reasonable amount of time to complete all proposed objectives within this performance period.
 - b. **Potential problems.** The proposal should describe factors that may negatively impact the project and provide solutions to reduce risk as well as any potential problems that may negatively impact the successful accomplishment of the proposed objectives. This would

include any situations that may delay project outcomes/deliverables, such as competing time commitments of collaborators or stakeholders who are critical to project completion. The proposal should also describe possible solutions to reduce or eliminate these risks.

3. **Qualifications/Skills (around 33% of the weighted score).** The Project Manager or Principal Investigator must have the qualifications and skills to successfully produce the outcomes/deliverables. This criterion considers the extent to which the key persons who will oversee and/or carry out the methods or activities have the qualifications, skills, abilities, and experience to successfully achieve the objectives, conduct the proposed research, and produce the successful outcomes/deliverables outlined by NWRC and including biological samples and GPS data to support the NWRC CWD Project. In particular, the awardee's Project Manager or Principal Investigator should have expertise in wildlife ecology, with a focus on animal movement. The Project Manager or Principal Investigator should also have expertise in the capture, marking, and monitoring of wild ungulates and the collection of biological samples.
4. **Cost effectiveness (around 33% of the weighted score)**
 - a. **Justification.** The proposal must provide specific and detailed justification to fully understand how each budget item supports the proposed activities (Necessary Costs). The proposal should include a budget that is logical, well organized, and complete. All costs should be explained in detail for the reviewer to understand how each budget item is necessary to complete the proposed activities.
 - b. **Reasonable cost.** The proposed costs must be reasonable to complete the proposed objectives. For this opportunity, a cost is reasonable if it does not exceed costs that would be incurred under normal circumstances. Costs included in the proposal should be generally recognized as ordinary to complete the proposed activities.
 - c. **Cost saving measures.** The proposal may include cost-saving measures to complete the proposed objectives. An applicant's ability and willingness to have in-person meetings with HDU personnel throughout the course of the project at no additional cost to APHIS will be taken into consideration in evaluating this criterion. APHIS will also take an applicant's ability to contribute non-Federal funds into consideration (cost-sharing). The proposal may also include cost-saving measures using existing resources or partnerships (in-kind contributions). For example, an applicant may include the practical use of existing personnel, vehicles, computers, venues, supplies, and other items to complete proposed activities. Cost share will be evaluated in this criterion and will make up less than five percent of the total score.

F.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

There is a single application deadline followed by the simultaneous review of all applications. APHIS will review proposals within 90 days of the application deadline and applicants will be notified by email of award status.

APHIS has final authority in determining which projects are funded for this initiative. A project may be selected for partial funding of specific objectives or activities within a proposed Work Plan, based on reviewer recommendations.

If multiple applications requesting funding are received, APHIS may recommend providing funds at a decreased level to increase the impact of awards across a larger number of proposals. APHIS may adjust an indemnity or purchase amount if a need is identified after proposal submission; likewise, an award may be amended to adjust an indemnity or purchase amount.

Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria in [Section B.1](#) will be subject to administrative review by an APHIS Grants Specialist for compliance with the requirements in [Section F.1](#). Proposals meeting the administrative requirements will be evaluated by reviewers based on the merit of the proposal. APHIS is responsible for reviewing proposals against the evaluation criteria found in [Section F.1](#). The review panel will consist of internal and external subject-matter experts from various departments and agencies, and from academia as appropriate. High quality proposals are those that strongly support the funding priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in this funding opportunity.

Reviewers will have no association with projects they are reviewing to avoid potential conflicts of interest. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a reviewer shall recuse themselves as appropriate.

F.3 RISK REVIEW

Based on the award amount proposed under this NOFO, which is above the simplified acquisition threshold of \$350,000, and as required by [2 CFR Part 200.206](#) as part of the selection and review process APHIS will conduct a risk assessment for each applicant.

APHIS will verify all applicants are in SAM to ensure they have not been disbarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency. APHIS may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements. Single audits, A-133, will be reviewed as applicable along with review of Common Forms submitted to [SciENCv](#) for employees working on the award.

If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time APHIS is ready to make a Federal award, APHIS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

If the anticipated Federal share exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold during the award period of performance, APHIS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#) before issuing the award. An applicant, if desired, may review and comment on any information about their organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#).

Before making final funding decisions, as required by [2 CFR Part 200.206](#), APHIS will consider any comments provided by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#).

G. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants will receive an email notification stating whether their application has been selected for award. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance on the project or to expend the funds. Either the APHIS Grants Specialist or the APHIS Program Manager may informally contact the applicant with application/Federal award status details.

Applicants selected for funding will receive an Award Face Sheet which will be routed to the applicant's Signatory Official(s) via [ezFedGrants](#). The Award Face Sheet will provide pertinent instructions and information including but not limited to the information described in [2 CFR Part 200.211](#) and reference to the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#). The Signatory Official must provide an E-Signature in [ezFedGrants](#) for the Award Face Sheet unless an alternate Federal award signature process is provided to the applicant by APHIS. This Award Face Sheet fully signed by the applicant's Signatory Official and the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer, which can be obtained electronically in [ezFedGrants](#), is the only document that officially obligates funds and authorizes the project to begin.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

APHIS will administer awarded cooperative agreements, collaborate with project recipients to provide advice, receive and review project documents, offer comments and suggestions, track project performance, and communicate as necessary to ensure progress in accomplishing the project, identifying obstacles, and resolving concerns. All [USDA and APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#) will be followed.

Recipients will track performance and expenditures, provide progress reports and project deliverables in accordance with the project Work Plan, and communicate with APHIS staff to assess and evaluate progress.

H.1 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Additional requirements that apply to successful applicants can be found at [2 CFR Subtitle B, Chapter IV](#). Successful applicants also must comply with the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#), [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#), the approved project Work Plan, and the approved project Financial Plan.

Successful applicants, and any contracts issued under the award, must ensure that all required geospatial data complies with USDA Department Regulation [DR-3465-001](#) and the Geospatial Metadata Standards outlined in [DM 3465-001](#).

Before accepting an award, applicants should thoroughly review all award documents for instructions on administration and applicable terms and conditions. By signing the Notice of Award, the recipient agrees to all conditions in this funding opportunity and any Special Terms and Conditions included in the Notice of Award.

For applicants that may need assistance with import or agent permits or meeting other regulatory requirements, APHIS will provide direct assistance and support to execute approved projects.

Drones or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) must be acquired in alignment with the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024 ([H.R. 2670](#)) and the [Blue UAS Cleared List](#).

Applicants are prohibited from purchasing of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 ([Pub. L. No. 115—232](#)) ([2 CFR Part 200.216](#)).

H.2 REPORTING

The recipient's Project Coordinator will provide an annual performance reports on program activities and annual Federal Financial Reports, SF-425s through [ezFedGrants](#) as specified in the Award Face Sheet and in accordance with the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#).

The final report must include a summary (less than 500 words) of the outcomes and any lessons learned. APHIS may publish the summary on the APHIS webpage. Submission of photos or videos, where appropriate, is encouraged for use in our outreach and educational efforts.

Any requests for an extension of time to submit reports must be made in writing to the APHIS Program Manager. Extensions of time to submit reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the discretion of the APHIS Program Manager. If allowed, approval will be provided by the APHIS Program Manager in writing.

H.3 PROJECT EVALUATION

The recipient's performance will be evaluated by reviewing both performance and financial reports. This evaluation will determine whether the recipient met the project standards and achieved the proposed results and benefits.

1. Adherence to project schedule and budget;
2. Delivery of results that meet the cooperative agreement performance standards and achieve the stated outcomes; and,
3. Periodic discussion of project progress with the APHIS Program Manager.

I. OTHER INFORMATION

USDA is not required to make any award under this announcement or to revise future announcements. Only the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer can commit the Government to spending funds, and such obligations must be made in writing by authorized officials and issued under the approved USDA APHIS cooperative agreement format.

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no agency may conduct or request information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The applicable OMB control number for this collection is **0503-0028**. Completing this collection is estimated to require an average of **4 hours** per response, including reviewing instructions, searching data sources, gathering necessary information, and preparing the submission. Comments on this burden estimate or any aspect of the collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, may be submitted as directed to APHIS.PRA@usda.gov.

APPENDIX 1: PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND TIPS

Proposal Checklist

The package proposal must include the following with the exceptions noted below:

- ☐ SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- ☐ SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” that matches the submitted Financial Plan – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- ☐ [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000)
- ☐ [SF-LLL](#), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000 when there are activities to disclose)
- ☐ Waiver or approval response letter from the State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) if the applicant is in a state that is required to comply with Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, if applicable (See [Section E.5](#) for additional information)
- ☐ Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or exemption letter, if indirect costs are claimed
- ☐ Project Narrative Attachment Form ([Project Narrative Attachment Form](#))
- ☐ Budget Narrative [Budget Narrative Attachment Form](#) (optional) Letters of collaboration from additional contributors listed in the Work Plan
- ☐ ***Please note, ezFedGrants attachments are limited to PDF files only (no digital signature or fillable PDFs) and the total size of all attachments cannot exceed 20MB.***

Tips for Applicants

- **DO** submit proposals early – **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE PROPOSAL DEADLINE.**
- **DO** remember that the reviewer’s job is to ensure Government funds are well spent, with those proposals selected for funding providing the highest likelihood of meeting the project goals.
- **DO** take some time to think out your proposal. A proposal that is well written and easy to follow will be well received by the review panel.
- **DO** clearly and concisely define the need or problem that this proposal is addressing. Be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound.
- **DO** align your proposal with the priorities in the opportunity announcement.
- **DO** provide sufficient detail for a reviewer to be convinced that you have thought out the process well, and understand the resources needed to complete the proposed objectives and activities.
- **DO** be sure to include all APHIS resources your proposal will need to successfully complete the work.
- **DO** ask questions. We want to help you submit the best proposal possible.

New Applicant Information

The applicant will be required to complete the application process by following the instructions below.

Register in SAM and Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number

[SAM](#) Website

- Applicants must register and complete the Financial Assistance Certification Report in SAM.
- A UEI number will automatically be assigned when a new entity is registered in SAM. If your organization is already registered in SAM, you have already been automatically assigned a UEI number and no additional actions are needed.

Apply for an eAuthentication Account

eAuthentication Website

- Applicants will be required to have a USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account to register for [ezFedGrants](#). USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. Please note that USDA will only accept eAuthentication accounts from individuals (not organizations) and you will need to verify your identity when creating an account.
- An individual may apply for a USDA eAuthentication account by visiting the [Create an Account page](#). For help with eAuthentication accounts or passwords, please visit the eAuthentication help desk online portal at <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/helpdesk/requesthelp>.

Getting Started in ezFedGrants

ezFedGrants Website

- Applicants will be required to establish an account in [ezFedGrants](#) which requires a USDA level 2 eAuthentication account (see section above for more information on this).
- [ezFedGrants](#) requires each applicant to have a minimum of at least one Grants Administrative Officer and one Signatory Official to successfully submit an application/proposal package. We recommend identifying these individuals and confirming they have access prior to submitting a proposal to ensure an efficient application process.
- To complete an application for a proposal selected for funding, the applicant must access the “Search Opportunities” screen and search for the correct Opportunity Number.
- For help with [ezFedGrants](#), applicants may contact the [ezFedGrants](#) help desk at ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.