

Food for Progress FY 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Questions and Answers

July 7 - July 9, 2025

- 11) **Q. We respectfully seek confirmation that either country [Benin, Ghana] will be accepted for consideration under the “non-priority country” designation (identifier: 000).**

A. Eligible non-priority country applications will be considered for the FY 2025 Food for Progress NOFO. Please refer to the Program Description of the NOFO, page 10.

- 12) **Q. Section 3. Program Description, page 9 states: "USDA/FAS will also accept applications for non-priority countries; however, it will prioritize funding applications for the identified priority countries. USDA/FAS will consider funding a project in a non-priority country, but an application for a non-priority country must include sufficient justification." Can USDA detail how the evaluation process may differ from what is described in Section 6.4, page 29, for applications submitted for non-priority countries?**

We would appreciate any guidance your office can provide regarding review thresholds or documentation expectations specific to non-priority country submissions.

A. Applications to priority and non-priority countries must respond effectively to the 'Content Guidance' starting on page 12 of the NOFO. Applicants should carefully review this section and sub-sections to ensure alignment with USDA priorities of advancing American agricultural interests while also advancing the priorities set forth in the country's national agricultural strategy.

Applications for non-priority countries will be held to the same standards, review process, and documentation as priority countries.

- 13) **Q. The time allotted from NOFO release to the due date is almost 2 weeks less than in past years. To afford applicants adequate time to develop the strongest applications possible to meet USDA's needs and have adequate time to upload submissions, would USDA kindly extend the deadline for submission to Friday, July 11th?**

A. The application submission deadline to the FY2025 Food for Progress NOFO is July 31, 2025, at 5:00 PM EDT.

- 14) **Q. Can USDA share where we should submit these questions as we do not currently see any portal or location to submit those questions.**

A. Applicants may submit questions until 5:00 PM EDT on 07/15/2025 through ppded@usda.gov. USDA/FAS will consider questions submitted by the stated deadline and post responses to questions on a regular and rolling basis on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

- 15) **Q. For applications to non-priority countries, are regional or multi-country applications allowable?**

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A. Yes, regional or multi-country applications will be considered for the FY 2025 Food for Progress NOFO.

16) Q. In recent rounds of Food for Progress funding, USDA/FAS has emphasized food safety and a technical focus area. Is food safety a focus for USDA/FAS in this round as well?

A. USDA/FAS has removed country guidances from the FY 2025 Food for Progress NOFO. Please refer to page. 4, “NEW IN FY 2025” article 7.

17) Q. Is addressing trade deficits and increasing agriculture-related exports from the US to other countries a priority for USDA/FAS in this round of funding? Would a project focused on egg sanitation, shelf stability, and trade expansion meet the program's eligibility criteria?

A. The 'Content Guidance' on page 12 of the NOFO provides guidance and requirements for the NOFO. Applicants should carefully review this section and sub-sections to ensure alignment with USDA priorities of advancing American agricultural interests while also advancing the priorities set forth in the country's national agricultural strategy.

18) Q. Could USDA please clarify if weblink citations are acceptable for source information?

A. Yes, weblinks are acceptable forms of information source.

19) Q. The draft Evaluation Plan removed the section regarding special studies but kept it in the monitoring and evaluation budget on page 19. Could USDA please confirm that special studies are still allowed, and are just not expected to be explained in the proposal?

A. Yes, special studies are still allowed. Several sections of the draft evaluation plan are not required at the proposal stage, including the optional special studies section, and may be added to Awardee's comprehensive evaluation plan submitted post-award. The M&E budget in the proposal should still include all major M&E costs, as described on page 19.

20) Q. In this year's NOFO, the draft Evaluation Plan removed the section regarding a learning agenda. Could USDA please confirm if a learning agenda will still be in the full evaluation plan that awardees submit after the project award?

A. Please note that page 18 of the NOFO states that Applicants are submitting a draft partial evaluation plan, and that once an award is granted, USDA/FAS will require a comprehensive evaluation plan. Yes, it is likely that an Awardee's comprehensive evaluation plan will include a section on how the project's evidence-generation activities contribute to the Food for Progress Program's learning agenda.

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- 21) Q. Can USDA please confirm if applicants can utilize FFPr Standard Indicator #2: Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies that promote improved climate risk reduction and/or natural resources management with USDA assistance?**

A. The Food for Progress program discontinued the use of FFPr Standard Indicator #2 in past years because that indicator aligns with a disaggregate under FFPr Standard Indicator #3, "Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance," and was therefore duplicative. Applicants should use standard indicator #3 in their proposals, if relevant to proposed activities.

- 22) Q. NOFO section 4.1(b) (p. 12) lists the applicant's most recent Single Audit as part of the budget submission and Appendix A (p. 39) lists the Single Audit as part of the Organizational Capacity and Staffing section, but the Single Audit is not listed in the detailed breakdown of Org Capacity and Staffing requirements in NOFO section 4.2(d) (pp. 15-16) or the breakdown of the budget requirements in NOFO section 4.2(g) (pp. 22-23). Can USDA confirm whether the Single Audit must be submitted, and if so, which section of the proposal should it be submitted with?**

A. Yes, the most recent Single Audit should be submitted as an independent attachment in FAIS.

- 23) Q. NOFO section 4.1(b) (page 12) and Appendix A (page 38) indicate that applicants must submit the Grants.gov Lobbying Form. However, NOFO section 4.5 (page 23) indicates that the Grants.gov Lobbying Form should instead be submitted after an applicant receives notice of intent to make an award. Can USDA confirm whether the Grants.gov Lobbying Form is required as part of the proposal?**

A. The Lobbying Form as well as the Standard Form SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities are only required when applicable, after an Applicant receives notice of an award. Therefore, they shouldn't be included in the application. The NOFO has been updated accordingly to clarify this.

- 24) Q. Can USDA please confirm that Applicants may include an Acronym List as an attachment to the Cover Sheet, which will not count against the page limit?**

A. Yes, Applicants may include an Acronym List, which will not count against the page limit.

- 25) Q. There are four priority countries, but NOFO section 1.7 indicates that 6-10 awards are anticipated. Does USDA anticipate issuing multiple awards per priority country? Or does USDA expect to issue an award in one or more non-priority countries?**

A. It is possible that USDA/FAS will issue multiple awards within a single country.

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26) Q. Can USDA clarify whether the anticipated range of each award (\$5-35M) in NOFO section 1.7 refers to the total federal award amounts or the operating budget amounts?

A. The anticipated award amount refers to an individual award amount (i.e. total Federal award).

27) Q. In prior years, USDA has provided an anticipated operating budget amount for each priority country. Can USDA provide this operating budget estimate for each country?

A. Guidance for individual countries will not be provided in the FY 2025 Food for Progress Program NOFO.

28) Q. Is it necessary to monetize agricultural products donated by the United States among those already available (based on page 57 of the NOFO)?

A. Yes, it is mandatory to monetize agricultural products provided by USDA/FAS listed on page 57 of the NOFO. Please carefully review the 'Commodity Management' section on page 19-22 of the NOFO.

29) Q. I have difficulty in accessing the full announcement electronically for Food for Progress Program Notice of Funding Opportunity Fiscal Year 2025.

A. The FY 2025 Food for Progress Program NOFO is available on grants.gov. Please download all relevant documents under the 'Related Documents' tab. Alternatively, email ppded@usda.gov to request for the full NOFO package.

30) Q. We are seeking your assistance if we are eligible.

A. For eligibility details, please refer to the 'Eligibility' section on page 7-8 of FY 2025 NOFO. Also see 7 CFR 1499.2 for definitions.

31) Q. We are unsure whether we meet all the required criteria, particularly regarding organizational capacity.

A. Please refer to the Content Guidance section of the NOFO, page 16-17.

32) Q. Could USDA please clarify if this call is for funding proposals or as it reads in the call, there are no awards available and that the grant purpose is 'project ideas'?

A. The FY 2025 NOFO is a request for funding proposals. For additional details, please refer to the Basic Information section on page 5, under 1.7 Funding Details for the NOFO.

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33) Q. Can a single Food for Progress application include program activities in two countries, Kenya and Colombia, with tailored implementation and partners in each?

A. Yes, the application would be considered as a single project and must adhere to all requirements detailed in the Food for Progress FY 2025 NOFO, including efficient and effective project implementation, administration, and management. Please refer to page 14-15.

34) Q. What is the minimum or recommended percentage of the Food for Progress budget that must be allocated to procuring U.S. agricultural commodities or related U.S.-origin products (e.g., dairy and beef semen)? We could not find specific guidance in the RFA.

A. Food for Progress does not have a recommended percentage to procure U.S. agricultural commodities or related U.S. origin products for program activities that would be expended with the Food for Progress operational budget.

Please refer to the [USDA Monetization Handbook](#) on FAIS on specific information on managing the monetization of commodities, page 19-21 of the NOFO.

35) Q. Are there specific countries, programmatic themes, or partners you recommend aligning with?

A. The NOFO lists four priority countries. Please see page 5 of the NOFO. The Content Guidance section on page 12 of the NOFO provides guidance and requirements for the NOFO. Applicants should carefully review this section and sub-sections to ensure alignment with USDA priorities of advancing American agricultural interests while also advancing the priorities set forth in the country's national agricultural strategy. USDA/FAS does not provide recommendations regarding partner alignment by an Applicant.

36) Q. In section 4.2 under “cost-efficiency and prevention of fraud and abuse” in the FFPr FY25 NOFO it states, “use of resources should ensure that at least 70% of the funding is used directly on program activities.” Does this mean 70% of the “project operating budget” as defined on page 4 of the FFPr FY25 NOFO?

A. The ratio only applies to the direct cost of the project operating budget, i.e., 70% or more should be allocated to program activities and 30% or less to support administrative costs.

37) Q. Does the 70% include program activities AND the related ICR on program activities? Or is the ICR under each activity considered administration? Example: If Activity 1 direct costs equal \$1M and the ICR on Activity 1 is \$150,000, would the full \$1,150,000 be considered "program activities" or is \$1,000,000 considered "program activities" and \$150,000 considered administration?

A. No. The 70% minimum does not include ICR.

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- 38) **Q. If ICR is considered administration costs (as opposed to "program activities"), can ICR for subrecipients be included as program activity costs?**

A. Indirect Costs are broken down by both Administration and Activities. See pages 41 Appendix B - Budget Summary and 42 Appendix C - Budget Narrative of the NOFO.

- 39) **Q. Section 4.2 Content Guidance, page 12, states that "use of resources should ensure that at least 70% of the funding is used directly on program activities." Can USDA confirm that this is the CCC and Monetization Administration section of the Project Operating Budget Summary (Salaries/Personnel through Other)?**

NOFO Section 4.2 (p. 12) states, "Use of resources should ensure that at least 70% of the funding is used directly on program activities." Can USDA specify how this percentage is calculated? For example, is it referring to the 70% minimum targeted rate of return (cost recovery) on monetization, or does it mean that the Total Administration and ICR on Administration items in Attachment C-1 should be less than 30% of the total operating budget?

A. The 70% minimum threshold cost ratio should only consider direct cost and exclude cost share.

- 40) **Q. We believe the solicitation indicates [we] should use our federally negotiated indirect cost rates. Is this correct?**

A. Yes, applicants should submit their most recently approved NICRA. For additional NICRA details see page 23 of the NOFO under section 4 of the budget guidance.

- 41) **Q. We want to check that USDA FAS does not restrict indirect costs to a maximum 30% of Total Federal Funds as USDA NIFA does.**

A. USDA/FAS has not established an indirect maximum. A Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a cognizant U.S. Government agency will be honored, except when prohibited by statute. Organizations that do not currently have a NICRA may elect to charge a de minimis rate of up to 15 percent of modified total direct costs. For additional NICRA details see page 23 of the NOFO under section 4 of the budget guidance.

- 42) **Q. On page 15 of the NOFO, under the description of d. Organizational Capacity and Staffing, USDA/FAS says "The staffing plan should include a brief description of all long-term staff positions and required levels of expertise. The Applicant should present a highly skilled, yet streamlined team that can achieve maximum efficiency and productivity and be as cost effective as possible." Does USDA/FAS require Applicants to submit the names identified of long-term staff members, or rather a description of the identified positions?**

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A. No, USDA/FAS does not require Applicants to submit the names identified for long-term staff members. Please refer to page 15-16 of the NOFO.