



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Voluntary Public Access- Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

No. USDA-NRCS-NHQ-VPA-26-NOFO001448

Table of Contents

A.	BASIC INFORMATION	2
1.	Federal Awarding Agency Name	2
2.	Announcement Type.....	2
3.	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number	2
4.	Assistance Listing.....	2
5.	Funding Details	2
6.	Key Dates	2
7.	Executive Summary.....	2
8.	Contact Information	3
B.	ELIGIBILITY	3
1.	Eligible Applicants.....	3
2.	Other Eligibility Considerations	3
3.	Cost Sharing	5
C.	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.....	5
D.	APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT	7
1.	Pre-Applications and Letters of Intent.....	7
2.	Content and Form of Application Submission	7
E.	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE.....	12
F.	APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	13
1.	Review and Selection Process	13
2.	Merit/Technical Criteria	13
3.	Administrative Review and Risk Criteria	15
G.	FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES.....	15
H.	POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS (ADMINISTRATIVE & NATIONAL POLICY)	15
I.	OTHER INFORMATION.....	16
1.	Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).....	16
2.	Government Obligation	17
3.	Award Counterparts.....	17

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Federal Awarding Agency Name

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Title: Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program competition for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2026

2. Announcement Type

Initial Announcement

3. Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number

USDA-NRCS–NHQ-VPA-26-NOFO001448

4. Assistance Listing

This opportunity is included under 10.093 searchable at: <https://sam.gov/content/home>.

5. Funding Details

The amount of Federal funding expected to be available for award(s) is \$52 million. However, the agency retains the discretion to award a larger or lesser amount.

The agency expects to make between 23 and 30 award(s).

The agency expects the amount of each award to range from \$100,000 to \$3 million.

Applicants should propose projects between 1 and 3 years in duration. Plan projects based on an estimated project start date of September 30, 2026.

6. Key Dates

Application deadline: Submit via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 8, 2026.

7. Executive Summary

NRCS is announcing the availability of up to \$52 million in Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) funding through [One Big Beautiful Bill Act \(OBBBA\), Public Law 119-21](#) to create or enhance state and Tribal government programs that encourage owners and operators of privately held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation. VPA-HIP is a competitive grant program and only state and tribal governments may apply. Projects may be up to 3 years in duration. The maximum amount for a single award is \$3 million. Up to 25% of the funding for each award may be used to provide incentives to improve wildlife habitat on enrolled public access program lands. For new users of Grants.gov, see Section D of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for information about steps required before submitting an application through Grants.gov.

8. Contact Information

Grants.gov issues - Contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

For all other questions, email FPAC-BC Grants and Agreements Division (GAD):

Email: Tessa.garcia@usda.gov

Subject line of email: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-VPA-26-NOFO001448

Name: Tessa Garcia, Grants Management Specialist, FPAC Business Center (FPAC-BC)

The agency will not address questions about a potential applicant's eligibility nor the merits of a specific proposal.

To protect the integrity of the competitive process, applicants must not contact agency program staff with questions; contact GAD staff as directed above.

Subscribe to receive correspondence issued by GAD. Topics may highlight award-management issues, announce implementation of new policies or procedures, provide guides and tools for applying for awards, etc. To subscribe, visit https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAFARMERS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USDA_FARMERS_4170

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

The following entity types are eligible to apply:

- a. Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized), or
- b. State governments

The following applicants are considered ineligible:

- Foreign organizations and foreign public entities;
- "Partnerships" or other similar groupings, and
- Individuals

2. Other Eligibility Considerations

Any award made pursuant to this NOFO will be made to a single entity.

Each State or Tribal Government may submit only one application for VPA-HIP. An applicant organization may not submit more than one application for different projects or for different approaches. In the case of applications submitted as revisions or corrections to a previously submitted application under this NOFO, the agency will consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline.

Application Eligibility Considerations:

- Applications must meet submission requirements in section E.

- For new users of Grants.gov, see section E.2. of this document for information about steps required before submitting an application via Grants.gov.
- An applicant organization may not submit more than one application for different projects or proposing different approaches. If the agency determines more than one version or substantially the same application has been submitted, the agency will only consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline for purposes of the competition.

Awards Eligibility Considerations:

- The agency will make awards only
 - To a single entity,
 - For projects selected following the competitive review process (see section F.2.),
 - For projects that meet any specified cost share requirement (see item 3 of this section), and
 - To entities that:
 - Meet the eligibility criteria (see section B.) by the application deadline (see section A.6.).
 - Are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal awards ([2 CFR 200.206\(d\)](#)).
 - Have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration ([2 CFR part 25](#)).
 - The agency does not determine poses an unacceptable risk related to proper management of a Federal award ([2 CFR 200.206](#)).
- Awards are not Farm Bill incentive contracts and therefore, not limited by the payment limitation in [16 USC Chapter 58](#).

Project Participant/Agricultural Producers Eligibility Considerations:

- Any producer receiving a payment through participation in a funded project must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Parts [12](#) and [1400](#) and have control of the land involved for the period of performance.
- Any producer receiving a payment through participation in a funded project is subject to the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation. In addition, they must have an AGI that does not exceed \$900,000. If provided an award, the Recipient must self-certify and maintain records showing that participating producers receiving payments using Federal funding meet the eligibility and AGI requirements. Section 1704 (a)(3) of the 2018 Farm Bill states the Secretary may waive the AGI limit on a case-by-case basis if the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be

protected as a result of such waiver. Awardees may request waivers once their project commences.

- Section 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985, [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-2](#), prohibits duplicative payments. Accordingly, direct, or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which an individual or legal entity has already received funds or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation program (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Stewardship Program). If provided an award, the recipient must self-certify that payments to producers using Federal funding are not duplicative.

3. Cost Sharing

There is no cost sharing requirement for this opportunity. If cost-share is included in an application, it will not be considered during the competitive review process.

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are [16 U.S.C. 3839bb-5](#) and [7 CFR 1455](#).

VPA-HIP provides funding to state and tribal governments to create or enhance public access programs that encourage owners and operators of privately held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available to the public for wildlife-dependent recreation. Examples of wildlife-dependent recreation include hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

States and tribal governments receiving funding (awardees) must ensure that land enrolled under the public access program has appropriate wildlife habitat that benefits a variety of species and, if needed, support landowners to maintain or enhance appropriate habitat on program lands made accessible to the public. Awardees can use up to 25 percent of VPA-HIP grant funds to provide incentives for wildlife habitat improvement on enrolled program lands. Awardees are required to follow NRCS conservation practice standards for habitat improvement activities. This requirement can be waived if an awardee provides a justification that NRCS deems adequate and appropriate.

The 2018 Farm Bill included a provision requiring NRCS, to the maximum extent practicable, to expend \$3 million of VPA-HIP funding to increase public access on lands covered by U.S.-held wetland easements (enrolled under either the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) or the Wetland Reserve Easement component of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program). NRCS requires all awardees to target VPA-HIP engagement to Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) landowners to encourage participation in the public access program. This requirement can be waived if there are no WRE lands available to participate in the geographic area where the project is taking place.

Priority will be given to applicants that propose the following:

- (1) To maximize participation by offering a program the terms of which are likely to meet with widespread acceptance among landowners;
- (2) To ensure that land enrolled under the State or tribal government program has appropriate wildlife habitat;
- (3) To strengthen wildlife habitat improvement efforts on land enrolled in a conservation reserve enhancement program under section 1231A or on land covered by a wetland reserve easement under section 1265C by providing incentives to increase public hunting and other recreational access on that land;
- (4) To use additional Federal, State, tribal government, or private resources in carrying out the program; and
- (5) To make available to the public the location of land enrolled.

NRCS funding can be used to:

- Provide financial incentives to landowners to participate in a public access program;
- Provide infrastructure or equipment (e.g., property identification signs, gates, cattle guards, fencing, kiosks, etc.) associated with implementation of the public access program;
- Provide incentives to landowners to improve wildlife habitat on lands enrolled in a public access program (no more than 25 percent of a state or tribe's VPA-HIP proposed project budget may be used for wildlife habitat incentives);
- Reimburse awardees for technical assistance costs associated with working to enroll landowners in a public access program or to assist landowners with implementing a habitat improvement project (technical assistance cannot exceed 10 percent of the overall VPA-HIP funding request); and
- Reimburse direct administrative costs associated with implementing the project (examples of direct administrative costs that are potentially eligible for reimbursement include travel, supplies, and program advertising; personnel costs are considered technical assistance and do not fall under administrative costs).

If a state or tribe provides funding to landowners for habitat improvement, landowners must adhere [to NRCS conservation practice standards](#) for these activities. This requirement may be waived by NRCS upon request with a justification by a state or tribe.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

1. Pre-Applications and Letters of Intent

This NOFO does not require pre-applications or letters of intent; do not submit a pre-application or a letter of intent.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Notes:

- Form instructions and any available templates are provided in the [FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide](#) available in the Related Documents tab of the Grants.gov Application Package on Grants.gov. Instructions provided in this NOFO will reference guidance as appropriate in the [FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide](#).
- To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the documents identified below.

Document	Instructions
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	see section V.2.*
Project Narrative Attachment Form	see section V.3.*
Project Abstract	see section V.4.*
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	see section V.5.*
Budget Narrative Attachment Form	see section V.6.*
Other Attachments Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and Pending Support • GADSUM9, Applicant Contact(s) Information • NICRA, as applicable 	see section V.7.* see section V.7.1* see section V.7.2* see section V.7.3.*
Attachments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subawards, as applicable • Conflict of Interest, as applicable 	see section V.8.* see section V.8.1* see section V.8.2* see applicable section below
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	see section VI.9.*
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	see section VI.10.*
*Applicable section of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide	

a. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

See section V.2. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

b. Project Narrative Attachment Form

- The following instructions are in addition to those included in section V.3. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.
- The Project Narrative is subject to the attachment requirements noted in section III.2.1 of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.
- The project narrative must not exceed 18 pages. This page limitation applies to the project narrative only.

Each project should include a cover page that lays out a very summarized picture of the project. The cover page should be no more than one page. Proposals without a cover page will not be accepted. Include:

- The applicant entity name,
- A contact for the project and his or her email address and phone number (NRCS will use the contact identified as the primary applicant contact),
- The duration of the project in years,
- The amount of Federal funding requested,
- An estimated number of producers that will be involved,
- The geographic location (i.e., the region or area of the state or tribal land impacted by the program).
- A 2-3 sentence project description
- Highlight the main anticipated benefits of the project

On another page, limited to one page, provide a concise project summary (in nontechnical language) that captures the project purpose, the anticipated project outcomes and key deliverables, and the predicted impact through voluntary public access to wildlife and wildlife-dependent recreation.

The project narrative must not exceed 18 pages. This page limitation applies to the project narrative only. Each page must be numbered and have 1-inch margins. The text of the project narrative must be single spaced and typed in a standard typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier) with no smaller than 12-point font.

Please create your project narrative using the following sections in the order listed below and provide the requested information in each section.

I. Project goal and objectives

Describe the project's overall purpose and the main objectives that will support this purpose in being achieved.

II. Project background

Provide background information that describes any previous work that has been done on the initiative or any drivers that have led the project team to pursue the project goal.

III. Project design and methods

Describe how VPA-HIP funding will be used to encourage public access to private farm, ranch, and forest lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes. Indicate if VPA-HIP funds will create a new program or enhance an existing program. When an applicant is requesting funding to complement an existing state or tribal program, provide a description of the existing program and include the total amount of program funding, the number of acres and landowners enrolled, and the purposes of the program.

Describe how the state or tribe will ensure that the land enrolled in the public access program has sufficient wildlife habitat to support the recreational activities facilitated by the program.

If applicable, describe how up to 25 percent of the funding requested will be used for wildlife habitat improvement or enhancement activities by landowners. If known, describe the habitat improvement or enhancement activities and list the associated NRCS conservation practice standards. If applicable, describe unique engagement activities focused on landowners enrolled in Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), and describe how public access areas overlap with existing conservation initiatives or efforts including WRE. Describe how targeted engagement will be carried out and how the public will be made aware of the location of the land enrolled in the public access program.

IV. Project evaluation

Describe the methodology or procedures used to evaluate the success of the project.

V. Project Deliverables and products

Provide a list and description of the project deliverables. This would include all tangible outcomes expected from the project including any marketing materials or instructional information for landowners or websites developed to support the initiative.

VI. Project Outcomes and Benefits

Provide a list and description of the project outcomes, including number of acres and number of landowners anticipated to enroll using VPA HIP funding (including WRP/WRE lands), the recreational opportunities offered to the public, and the wildlife habitat improvements facilitated using VPA-HIP funding (if applicable).

VII. Project timeline

Provide a bulleted list of project actions, milestones, and deliverables.

VIII. Project management

Describe how the project will be organized and managed, including a description of project partner involvement. Include a description of how communication will be structured within the project team to ensure effective project management. List key personnel and describe their qualifications, experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project.

IX. Assessment of environmental impacts

If implementation of the proposal is anticipated to have physical, chemical, or biological impacts on the environment, please describe the impacts and their extent. The description of the potential environmental impacts must address both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. The length of the description should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the natural environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively. When possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as the number of acres of wetlands impacted, etc. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other resources protected by law, regulation, executive order, and agency policy. NRCS may choose not to approve funding for projects that may result in unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.

c. Project Abstract

See section V.4. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

d. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

See section V.5. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

e. Budget Narrative

- The following instructions are in addition to those included in section V.6. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.

- The Budget Narrative is subject to the attachment requirements noted in section III.2.1 of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.
- Indirect costs are allowable.
- Cost sharing – Refer to section B.3. of this NOFO to determine applicability. If applicable, include details following budget narrative instructions (see section V.6. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide).

f. Other Attachments

- See section V.7. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.
- Current and Pending Support- See section V.7.1 of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for link to available template and instructions.
- GADSUM9, Applicant Contact(s) Information – See section V.7.2 of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for link to available template and instructions.
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) – See section V.7.3 of the FPAC BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

g. Attachments

- See section V.8. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide.
- Subawards – if the organization intends to have subawards, see section V.8.1 of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.
- Letters of Support - Do not submit letters of support; they are not required.
- Conflicts of Interest – see section j. of this part for further information.

h. Grants.gov Lobbying Form

See section V.9. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

i. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

See section V.10. of the FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

j. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

[2 CFR 400.2](#) states that applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in, or a tangible personal benefit from, an applicant

considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Indian tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of the relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving a related organization.

Applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to the USDA awarding agency or pass-through entity. Include the name of the individual, the name of the entity with which the individual has a conflict, the nature of the financial or other interest, the value of the interest, and a description of how the interest relates to the application. Upload disclosures under Other Attachments (listed separately under Optional Forms) in Grants.gov. **If no conflict exists, no submission is required.**

k. Post Submission and Post Award Documentation

During the administrative review process (refer to section F.3. of this NOFO), it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs, revised documents).

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE

1. Grants.gov Applications

- Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov.
- Grants.gov is a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities.
- All forms to prepare and submit an application are available through the funding opportunity on Grants.gov.

2. Grants.gov Requirements and General Guidance

Grants.gov has requirements (e.g., registration and software) that **must be met** ahead of being able to submit an application using Grants.gov. Refer to section II.1. of the [FPAC-BC Grants.gov Application Guide](#).

- Applications must be received by Grants.gov by 11:59.59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on 06/08/2026; an application is considered late at 12:00 am ET and will be rejected.
- If the Apply button in the opportunity is not active (greyed out), [see Unlock the Mystery of the Gray “Apply” Button: Four Scenarios. – Grants.gov Community Blog \(wordpress.com\)](#) for possible scenarios.

- Grants.gov automatically records proof of submission by way of an electronic date/time stamp when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov.
- Grants.gov will send an email to the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) submitting an application when:
 - An error prevents the transmission of the application,
 - An application is successfully received by Grants.gov, and
 - The agency retrieves and downloads the application from Grants.gov and download of submissions.
- For trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

The following applications will be accepted for the competitive review process:

- Received by the established deadline.
- Meet eligibility criteria.
- Contains the applicable documents identified in section D.2.
- Compliant with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, non-compliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria may be eliminated from competition.

A merit/technical review will be conducted by a technical review board. Proposals that pass the initial screening will undergo a technical review carried out by a panel consisting of Federal employees.

The technical panel will evaluate each proposal against the criteria in Section V.A. of this notice and then rank all proposals to make recommendations for funding to NRCS leadership. NRCS State Conservationists will also review relevant proposals for duplication of existing efforts, ethical concerns, and overall recommendation. The approving official will make the final award decisions.

Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC-BC, Grants and Agreements Division (GAD). The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief.

2. Merit/Technical Criteria (100 Points)

Goals, Objectives, and Approach (40 points)

- The applicant describes the establishment or the expansion of a public access program that is likely to be successful and met with widespread landowner acceptance.

- The applicant describes a reasonable approach to ensuring that land enrolled under the state or tribal government program has appropriate wildlife habitat.
- The project offers effective incentives so landowners are interested in the program.
- The public access program includes land enrolled in a conservation reserve enhancement program under section 1231A or land covered by a wetland reserve easement under section 1265C.
- The project identifies clear, measurable, and achievable goals, objectives and outcomes.

Project Benefits (30 Points)

- The project is effectively designed to have impactful benefits from the encouragement of public access to private farm and ranch land for hunting and fishing and other recreational purposes.
- The project was designed to maximize participation and will meet widespread acceptance from landowners.
- The applicant describes a robust engagement plan that communicates to the public the availability of public access and wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities associated with the proposed project.

Project Management (30 Points)

- There is a clear management plan on how project activities will be accomplished, including clear and reasonable timeline and milestones.
- The applicant has a track record of implementing public access or similar programs and the capacity to implement a successful public access program.
- Project staff has the necessary capacity, as well as the technical and administrative expertise, to help landowners achieve project benefits, including improving wildlife habitat.
- The budget is adequately explained and justified, and expenses are allowable.

The agency intends to select an award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to select without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request that applicants revise their applications to correct identified deficiencies or omissions. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised application by a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the award decision via letter.

3. Administrative Review and Risk Criteria

The following are criteria that may be reviewed/verified prior to making an award.

- Ensure applicant meets eligibility criteria,
- Application was submitted via Grants.gov by the established deadline
- Risk review of applicant (see [2 CFR 200.206](#))
 - Check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred
 - Review and consider information included in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see [41 USC 2313](#) and 2 CFR 200.206(a) applies to applications to be supported with a total Federal share greater than \$350,000)
 - Assess financial stability of applicant
 - Determine if applicant has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track federal funds
 - Review history of Federal financial assistance award performance
- Proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and necessary.

Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with [2 CFR 200.208](#).

G. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

Successful Project Notification: The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually issues the Federal award. **The selection notification does not authorize the applicant to begin performance.** If the applicant chooses to begin project activities, it does so at its own risk; the risk that costs may not be reimbursed.

Notice of Award: The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) contains information identified in [2 CFR 200.211](#) and is signed by the authorized agency official; it is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized official for signature.

Unsuccessful Project Notification: The agency will provide notice to unsuccessful applicants via an email to the individual listed as the Program Director. This notification will occur following the processing of successful applications.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS (ADMINISTRATIVE & NATIONAL POLICY)

All project funds will be used in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200](#) and the General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website: <https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html>. The award terms and conditions includes, but is not limited to:

- Unallowable costs;
- National policy requirements;
 - If projects performed pursuant to this opportunity are subject to any of the following, the agency must work with the awardees on related matters before commencement of activities.
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
 - Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Build America, Buy America for Construction;
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 compliance requirements;
- Reporting requirements
 - Addresses financial and performance requirements and the reporting frequency, means of submission.
 - Reporting of matters related to recipient integrity and performance, as defined in regulation ([7 CFR 1455](#)).
 - Reporting subaward and executive compensation information.
- 2 CFR 180 - [2 CFR 180.335](#) and [180.350](#), [includes reporting requirements regarding debarment and suspension](#) audit requirements, and
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:
 - Solving the most pressing challenges they face,
 - Protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security,
 - Supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers,
 - Expanding and developing domestic markets,
 - Training the next generation of agriculturalists, and
 - Fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

I. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, [Executive Order](#)

[12600](#) and USDA FOIA regulation [7 CFR Part 1](#), Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

2. Government Obligation

The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

3. Award Counterparts

Any award made pursuant to this NOFO may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination 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, 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, audiotope, 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.