

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
Quality Samples Program

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1. Basic Information

1.1 Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, announces this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support the Quality Samples Program (QSP) by issuing new awards. This opportunity is available to U.S. private or government entities to provide funding for projects that provide commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities.

Government entities include Federal, State, and local agencies. Private entities include non-profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and profit-making entities.

1.2 Federal Agency Name

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS)

1.3 Funding Opportunity Title

2027 Quality Samples Program

1.4 Announcement Type

New Announcement

1.5 Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-FAS-QSP-2027

1.6 Assistance Listing Number

10.605 Quality Samples Program

1.7 Funding Details

Total Available Federal Funding: The QSP will provide up to \$2.5 million in FY 2027 funding to support eligible projects. Awards may be granted up to the maximum available program amount, subject to the per project funding limitations detailed in [Section 2.2](#).

Anticipated Number of Awards: 20 awards.

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make additional awards under this NOFO if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made, consistent with agency policy and guidance.

1.8 Key Dates

Deadline for Question Submission: July 31, 2026

Application Submission Deadline: FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all applications. The initial application submission deadline is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), Friday, August 14, 2026. All applications received by the initial application submission deadline will be considered for funding in the initial allocation tranche. Applications will continue to be accepted after the initial application submission deadline and will be considered for funding in the order

received on the following dates as long as funding remains available: Tranche II deadline - December 31, 2026; Tranche III deadline - March 31, 2027; Tranche IV deadline - June 30, 2027. No applications will be accepted after June 30, 2027.

1.9 Agency Contact Information

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Curt Alt

Email Address: curt.alt@usda.gov

Phone Number: (202) 690-4784

Hours of Operation: M-F, 7:30 am - 4:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Applicants

Any United States private or government entity, excluding FAS Posts, with a demonstrated role and interest in exporting U.S. agricultural commodities may apply to the program. Government entities may consist of Federal, State, or local agencies. Private entities can include non-profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and profit-making entities.

All applicants must have an active registration in the U.S. Government System for Award Management (www.sam.gov) before the application submission deadline of the NOFO. Applicants with inactive, expired, pending, or excluded listings will be deemed ineligible. Exceptions, waivers, or extensions will not be considered. More information about SAM.gov registration can be found in [Section 9, Other Information](#).

2.2 Eligibility Threshold Criteria

Eligible Commodities: All agricultural commodities produced entirely in the U.S., except tobacco, are eligible for the program. Products derived from an eligible commodity are also eligible for the program, as long as the products are also produced entirely in the U.S.

Eligible Markets: Applications may target any foreign market not otherwise restricted by U.S. law, regulation, or sanctions.

Eligible Activities: To be eligible for consideration, QSP applications must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Projects must benefit the entire U.S. commodity industry and not a specific company or brand;
2. Projects must develop a new market for a U.S. product, promote a new U.S. product, or promote a new use for a U.S. product rather than promote the substitution of one established U.S. product for another;
3. Commodities provided under a QSP project must be available on a commercial basis and in sufficient supply to meet anticipated demand;
4. The QSP project must either subject the commodity sample to further processing or substantial transformation in the importing country, or the sample must be used in

- technical seminars in the importing country designed to demonstrate the proper preparation or use of the sample in the creation of an end product;
5. Samples provided in a QSP project may not be directly used as part of a retail promotion or supplied directly to consumers. However, the end product (that is, the product resulting from further processing, substantial transformation, or a technical preparation seminar) may be provided to end-use consumers to demonstrate the consumer preference for that end product to importers;
 6. Samples must be in quantities less than a typical commercial sale and limited to the amount sufficient to achieve the project goal (e.g., not more than a full commercial mill run in the destination country); and
 7. QSP projects shall only target foreign importers and audiences who:
 - Have not previously purchased the U.S. commodity that will be supplied under QSP;
 - Are unfamiliar with the variety, quality attributes, or end-use characteristics of the U.S. commodity;
 - Have been unsuccessful in previous attempts to import, process, or market the U.S. commodity (e.g., because of improper specification, blending, formulation, sanitary, or phytosanitary issues);
 - Are interested in testing or demonstrating the benefits of the U.S. commodity; or
 - Need technical assistance in processing or using the U.S. commodity.

Ineligible Activities: QSP funding may only be used for generic activities. For-profit entities may not use QSP funds to conduct private business, promote private self-interests, supplement the costs of normal sales activities, or promote their own products or services beyond specific uses approved by FAS in a given project. Applications that counter national strategies or duplicate activities planned or already underway by U.S. non-profit agricultural commodity or trade associations will not be considered.

Funding Limits: Individual projects that include further processing or substantial transformation of the sample will be limited to \$75,000 of QSP reimbursement per project, while projects comprised only of technical demonstration seminars will be limited to \$15,000 of QSP reimbursement per project.

2.3 Substantial Compliance

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described above. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

To be deemed eligible, applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in [Section 4, Application Contents and Format](#), of this NOFO.

2.4 Evidence of Eligibility

Applicants are responsible for including documentation, if necessary, establishing that they meet the stated eligibility requirements, when it is not immediately obvious. Applicants should not

presume that USDA/FAS is sufficiently familiar with their organization, and USDA/FAS will not make assumptions as to the nature of an applicant's organization.

2.5 Funding Restrictions

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by applicable regulations, including [2 CFR Part 200](#) and [2 CFR Part 400](#). Awards issued pursuant to this NOFO may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, consistent with the statutory authority for the award.

For example, agreement funds and other support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from acting as an agent of the applicant in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Also, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

2.6 Multiple Applications

Applicants may submit more than one application, and the number of projects per participant will not be limited.

2.7 Cost Share/Match Requirement

Cost share is required for all applicants except for Federal government entities. Apart from Federal government entities, all other applications must include a recipient cost share element equal to at least 10 percent of the requested funds. Cost share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions to the project. Applications that do not meet this requirement will not be considered.

3. Program Description

The QSP is designed to encourage the development and expansion of export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities by assisting U.S. entities in providing commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities.

3.1 Authorizing Statutes and Regulations

Section 5(f) of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, [15 USC 714c\(f\)](#).

3.2 Type of Assistance Instrument

USDA/FAS anticipates that Grant Agreements will be funded pursuant to this funding opportunity.

In this type of agreement, the recipient is expected to implement the project autonomously with little programmatic involvement from USDA/FAS. However, USDA/FAS maintains an oversight role, and the recipient must ensure that USDA/FAS is kept apprised of progress under the project.

3.3 Program Specific Unallowable Costs

Recipients funded under this announcement may seek reimbursement from FAS for the sample purchase price and for the cost of transporting the samples domestically to the port of export and then to the first foreign port or point of entry. No other expenses, including indirect costs and the transportation costs from the first foreign port or point of entry to the final destination, will be reimbursed through the program. FAS will also not reimburse the costs incidental to purchasing and transporting samples, such as: inspection or documentation fees, certificates of any kind, tariffs, demurrage, etc. Exports made under the QSP are subject to the cargo preference requirements of [46 USC 55305](#). To comply with these requirements, at least 50 percent of the cargo shipped, and for which reimbursement is claimed under this agreement, shall be shipped on U.S. flag vessels. Information on U.S. flag vessels can be found at <https://www.maritime.dot.gov>. The QSP does not allow air cargo shipments of commodity samples.

QSP participants will be responsible for procuring (or arranging for the procurement of) the commodity samples, exporting the samples, and providing the on-site technical assistance necessary to facilitate successful use of the samples by importers. Although providing technical assistance is required for all projects, the costs of providing such technical assistance are not reimbursable under the program. Financial assistance will only be made available on a reimbursement basis; cash advances are not allowed. FAS will also not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to the approval of an application.

4. Application Contents and Format

4.1 Complete Application Package

QSP applications must be entered in the Unified Export Strategy (UES) system and contain the following information:

1. Organizational information, including:
 - a. Organization name, address, Chief Executive Officer (or designee), and Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN);
 - b. A Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov;
 - c. Type of organization;
 - d. Name, telephone number, and email address of the primary contact person;
 - e. A description of the organization and its membership;
 - f. A description of the organization's prior export promotion experience; and
 - g. A description of the organization's ability to implement the required trade/technical assistance component.
2. Market information, including:
 - a. An assessment of the market;
 - b. A long-term strategy in the market; and
 - c. Trade data for the years 2022 through 2033.
3. Project information, including:
 - a. A project title (that includes the commodity);
 - b. The amount of funding requested;
 - c. The beginning and end dates for the proposed project;
 - d. A brief description of the specific market development trade constraint or opportunity to be addressed by the project;

- e. A description of the activities planned to address the constraint or opportunity, including how the sample will be used in the end-use performance trial, the attributes of the sample to be demonstrated and its end-use benefit, and details of the trade/technical servicing component (including who will provide and fund this component);
- f. A description of the sample to be provided (i.e., commodity, quantity, quality, type, and grade), including a justification for why a sample with such characteristics is needed (this justification should explain why the project would not be effective with a smaller sample);
- g. An itemized list of all estimated costs associated with the project for which reimbursement will be sought. Detailed cost calculations and justifications for each budget line item must be provided in the application, and all line items should be described in sufficient detail to enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project;
- h. The importer's role in the project regarding handling and processing the commodity sample;
- i. Performance measures for quantifying progress and demonstrating results. All QSP projects must include the following standard performance measures: (1) the number of people/organizations/companies trained, (2) the percent of trainees that have a better understanding of the commodity qualities and uses, and (3) the number of people requesting additional information about the commodity by the date of the final report. In addition to the required standard performance measures, applications may contain custom measures. Any custom performance measures should be developed so that they are aligned, clear, quantifiable, and include an identified methodology; and
- j. Information indicating all cost share and funding sources and the amounts to be contributed by each entity in support of the proposed project. This may include the organization that submitted the application, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Contributed resources may include cash, goods, or services.

4.2 Electronic Signatures

Consistent with the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN Act), USDA/FAS uses and accepts electronic signatures for application and award documents.

USDA/FAS will neither solicit nor send physical copies of documents.

4.3 Proprietary Information

Applicants should generally refrain from including the details of proprietary information in applications. In cases where, in the applicant's judgement, the inclusion of proprietary information is essential to application review and scoring, the applicant should clearly indicate information it wishes to designate as proprietary.

4.4 Other Application Information

Successful applicants must submit the following information after USDA/FAS notification of our intent to make a Federal award, but prior to a Federal award, if the applicant request for funding or the intended award amount is over \$100,000:

- [Grants.gov Lobbying Form](#)
- [Standard Form SF-LLL](#), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable to the applicant

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

5.1 Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO contains all information required to submit a complete application package.

5.2 Unique Entity ID and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant must:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- (ii) Provide a valid unique entity ID in its application; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal agency.

5.3 Submission Instructions

QSP applications must be submitted to USDA/FAS through the web-based UES system. The UES system is accessible at <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/ues2>. All required information and any supplemental documents must be included in the UES application. FAS will not review documents, attachments, exhibits, etc. provided outside of the UES, and applications submitted outside of the UES will not be considered. Applicants needing help or access to the UES should email the UES team at uesadmin@usda.gov for assistance.

USDA-managed computer systems require applicants to have an identity-proofed account through the [login.gov](#) platform, and in some cases may require at least two persons. Identity-proofing and subsequent registration with any USDA-managed computer system may take several days, and applicants who do not already have system access should begin the registration process immediately, even if they are unsure they will apply to this funding opportunity.

5.4 Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all applications. The initial application submission deadline is 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Friday, August 14, 2026. All applications received by the initial application submission deadline will be considered for funding in the initial allocation tranche. Applications will continue to be accepted after the initial application submission deadline and will be considered for funding in the order received on the following dates as long as funding remains available: Tranche II deadline - December 31, 2026; Tranche III deadline - March 31, 2027; Tranche IV deadline - June 30, 2027. No applications will be accepted after June 30, 2027.

5.5 Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. USDA implemented the Executive Order in [2 CFR 415.5](#). USDA/FAS may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that USDA/FAS selects for funding under this

announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement. For more information about USDA's implementation for Intergovernmental Review, please [click here](#).

6. Application Review Information

USDA/FAS will, subject to the availability of funds, approve those applications that it considers to best meet the objectives outlined in this announcement.

6.1 Eligibility Threshold Review

Eligibility Threshold Review (Phase 1): In Phase 1 of the review, USDA/FAS will conduct an eligibility threshold review of all applications submitted to determine that:

- The applicant is eligible, as defined in [Section 2, Eligibility](#); and
- The application was submitted by the application submission deadline as specified in [Section 5, Submission Requirements](#); and
- The applicant submitted a complete application, including all required forms and documents, as defined in [Section 4.1, Complete Application Package](#).

Applications determined to be ineligible will receive no further consideration and will not be considered for funding. If an application is determined to be ineligible, USDA/FAS will notify the applicant, usually within 15 business days of the application submission deadline. An applicant that feels such a determination was made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim, by email to the program officer(s) listed in [Section 1.9, Agency Contact Information](#), within 3 business days of notification.

Applications that are deemed eligible and complete will be passed on to USDA/FAS' Cooperator Programs Division (CoPD) for the Phase 2 review.

6.2 Review Criteria

Agency Review (Phase 2): Applications deemed eligible from Phase 1 will be evaluated by the appropriate Commodity Branch in CoPD. The Commodity Branches will review each eligible application and will score and recommend approval for each application using the following criteria, with each criterion weighted equally at 10 points each:

1. Whether or not appropriate trade data for the years 2022-2033 are provided;
2. Whether the benefits of the project would accrue to the entire industry;
3. The appropriateness of the proposed sample size for the project;
4. The ability of the organization to provide experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the project;
5. The extent to which the application demonstrates that the U.S. commodity is generally competitive in the targeted market;
6. The potential for expanding commercial sales in the proposed market;
7. The nature of the specific market constraint or opportunity identified and how well it is addressed by the application;
8. The extent to which the importer's contribution in terms of handling and processing enhances the potential outcome of the project;

9. The amount of reimbursement requested and the organization's willingness to contribute resources towards the project, including cash, goods, and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties; and
10. How well the proposed technical assistance component ensures that performance trials will effectively demonstrate the intended end-use benefit.

6.3 Review and Selection Process

Development of Funding Recommendations (Phase 3): In this phase of the review, the applications will be ranked highest to lowest by score, and the available funding will be allocated to the applications in order until all applications are funded or until the available funding is exhausted. Applications that receive a score of less than 70 points will not be considered for funding. In addition to the scores, comments received from the reviewers will be considered when developing the funding recommendations. FAS may, when appropriate, solicit and consider feedback from overseas Posts and other U.S. government subject area experts when conducting the reviews for applications.

Final Review and Allocation Decision Making (Phase 4): A summary of all applications and the recommended funding levels for each will be provided to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Global Programs for the purpose of finalizing the funding recommendations. Once finalized, the recommendations will be presented to the FAS Administrator for final deliberation, determination, and approval. FAS leadership (including the Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrator, and Administrator) may elect to review and adjust the funding recommendations based on factors including, but not limited to: agency priorities, priority markets, program impact, the record of performance of the organization in managing past market development funds, and the organization's likelihood of success.

6.4 Risk Review

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by [2 CFR 200.206](#), [31 USC 3321](#) and [41 USC 2313](#) to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$350,000, the Federal agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov ([41 USC 2313](#)).

- An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.
- Before making decisions in the risk review required by [2 CFR 200.206](#), the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

7. Award Notices

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application/award by email. Notification to successful applicants is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional until an award document has been signed by authorized officials of USDA/FAS and the recipient.

Award documents will be transmitted by email to the individuals or offices who submitted them, or to those persons or offices that USDA/FAS believes, to the best of its information, are proper. The applicant is recommended to ensure that the agency is provided with the correct point(s) of contact.

8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

8.1 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants are required to comply with the applicable General Terms and Conditions, which can be found at https://fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions. The applicant is presumed to have read, understood, and accepted these terms when accepting a USDA/FAS award. Applicants with questions about the applicable terms should contact the program officer(s) listed in [Section 1.9, Agency Contact Information](#).

Before accepting an award, the applicant should carefully read all award documents for instructions on administering the award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

8.2 Reporting

A written evaluation report (Final Report) covering the program performance and financial status for each approved project must be submitted via the UES within 90 days of the expiration or termination of each participant's QSP agreement. Final reports should address all performance measures that were presented in the application, plus the required standard performance measures. The reports must also provide an accounting of all project expenditures by cost category and any contributions made to the project by the Recipient and all other participating entities. Unusual deviations from activity budget amounts or failure to meet performance measures should be noted and explained. Interim progress reports may be submitted but are not required. All reports must be submitted in the UES.

For awards in which the total lifetime value exceeds \$500,000, additional reporting may be required as described in [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).

Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

Applicants must ensure that they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements established at [2 CFR 170](#), should they be selected for funding.

Closeout

Within 90 days after the agreement completion date, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, FAS will confirm that the Recipient has provided all of the required reports and will review the reports for completeness and content. Once the required reports are approved, FAS will prepare a closeout letter that advises the Recipient that the period of performance has closed, notes that any remaining funds will be de-obligated, and addresses any additional closeout requirements.

8.3 Monitoring

USDA/FAS, through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, USDA/FAS will review recipients' files related to the program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, recipients must permit USDA/FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review assistance agreement-related records and to interview the organization's staff and other knowledgeable persons regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to agency requests for information relating to the program.

8.4 Conflict of Interest

The applicant's Conflict of Interest (COI) Point of Contact as defined in USDA/FAS Conflict of Interest Policy must notify the USDA/FAS contact identified in [Section 1.9, Agency Contact Information](#), of this NOFO of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for USDA/FAS financial assistance awards within 10 calendar days of becoming aware of the conflict of interest. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include, but are not limited to, situations in which a USDA/FAS employee reviewed and commented on or drafted all or part of an applicant's application. Note that USDA/FAS does not generally consider receiving information from an USDA/FAS employee limited to whether the applicant or the applicant's proposed project is eligible to compete for funding to confer an unfair competitive advantage. In addition, assistance agreements made under this solicitation will include a term and condition notifying recipients of their COI disclosure obligations and responsibilities under the award including the need to have systems in place to address, resolve and disclose COIs to USDA/FAS.

8.5 Mandatory Disclosures

As required by [2 CFR 200.113](#), non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.339](#) including suspension and debarment.

9. Other Information

9.1 Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed. Recipients may request a no-cost extension to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period and must include a justification for why the extension is necessary and how

the extension would effectively support the program's purpose. Requests for extensions are subject to review and approval by FAS.

9.2 No Awards

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make no awards under this competition.

9.3 SAM.gov Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this NOFO must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using login.gov¹ to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes several steps and validations and is not complete until the registration is shown as Active. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining a UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm ET.

9.4 Faith-Based Organizations

(i) Faith-based organizations may apply for an award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at, and subject to the protections and requirements of, [7 CFR part 16](#) and any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements, including [42 U.S.C. 2000bb](#) et seq. USDA/FAS will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

(ii) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the Government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

¹ Login.gov is a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts, visit <http://login.gov/help>.

(iii) A faith-based organization may not use direct Federal financial assistance from USDA/FAS to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except when consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and any other applicable requirements. An organization receiving Federal financial assistance also may not, in providing services funded by USDA/FAS, or in their outreach activities related to such services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.