OMB No. 0581-0240

Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farmers Market Promotion Program

Fiscal Year 2023 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-23-0010

Publication Date: February 14, 2023

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on May 2, 2023

MODIFICATION: This Request for Application (RFA) is an updated version. The modification was on section 5.2.5 Turnkey Project Narrative to correct that the Turnkey Project Narrative Form is 15 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form. Also, the Project Narrative linked to this RFA, to include the equipment line in the Budget Summary table.
Effective date: Updated on 04/05/2023.

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Farmers Market Promotion Program

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-23-0010

Announcement Type: Initial

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 10.175

Dates: Applications must be received before 11:59 pm Eastern Time May 2, 2023, through Grants.gov. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). FMPP's purpose is to support the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer markets to increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. AMS will competitively award grants to eligible applicants for projects that meet the purpose of this grant program.

Approximately $15.4 million is available to fund FMPP applications under this solicitation. FMPP Capacity Building projects range from $50,000 to $250,000, while Community Development Training and Technical Assistance projects range from $100,000 to $500,000. The new Turnkey Marketing and Promotion project type provides a defined set of activities for FMPP marketing and promotion projects that range from $50,000 to $100,000. FMPP is a part of the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). Eligible entities and activities remain the same as in previous years.

In the FY 2022 application cycle, AMS funded 55 (40%) of the 136 applications received.

To be competitive, applications must meet all program standards, be of high quality, and include a 25% match requirement. All applications will undergo review according to merit and customary evaluation procedures. This announcement provides information regarding eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, details on match funding, and the application forms and instructions needed to apply for an award.

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

USDA promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities. AMS encourages applicants to consider including goals and activities related to reducing and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or adapting to the already occurring climate change in their project's design and implementation.

Stakeholder Input: AMS welcomes your comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments in developing the next RFA. Email written stakeholder comments within six

months of the publication date of this RFA to: AMSGrants@usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are commenting on the **Farmers Market Promotion Program RFA**.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS AND CHANGES

- A new streamlined application type, for Turnkey Marketing and Promotion projects has been added. Applicants applying to the Turnkey project type agree to conduct a minimum of 3 specific activities defined by AMS. They cannot add additional activities to the workplan and should use the custom "FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative" for their application package.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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

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

- ☐ Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Form SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Project Abstract (in Grants.gov)
- ☐Project Narrative or Turnkey Project Narrative (PDF Attachment)
  - ☐ Must use required template
  - ☐ Executive Summary supports project goals and objectives and is no more than 250 words
  - ☐ Ensure it does not exceed the page limit specified in Section ***5.2.4*** or ***5.2.5***
  - ☐ Ensure the proposal excludes unallowable costs and activities per Section ***4.4***.
- ☐ Signed Letters Verifying Matching Funds for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource (PDF or MS Word Attachment)
- ☐ Signed Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations (PDF or MS Word Attachment)

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

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

Tips for Applicants

- To do business with the Federal Government and to submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must
    - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
    - Be registered in SAM.gov, the Government's primary registrant database
    - Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
    - Maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.
- Register in Grants.gov and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE**. AMS encourages to submit your application at least two weeks before the application deadline to ensure all certifications are met. Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all instructions. Thoroughly review the AMS General Terms and Conditions to understand allowable and unallowable costs. Apply to the correct grant program in Grants.gov using the correct Assistance listing (formerly Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 10.175 and Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-23-0010".
- Ensure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with Grants.gov software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Size/ File Name Characters (50 or less).
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names ($, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- When uploading attachments, click the "Add Attachments" button (do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader)
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are "accepted".
- Input the correct UEI (formerly DUNS) number on the SF-424 form cover page. Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
  http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html
  https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

TIMING TO OBTAIN AND SUBMIT GRANTS.GOV REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Required Action	*Timing to Obtain/Submit*
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through Grants.Gov	May 02, 2023 – 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Obtaining Your Organization's UEI Number (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Establishing an Active SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 4 weeks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Funding Opportunity Description 7
1.1 Legislative Authority 7
1.2 Purpose 7
1.3 Project Types 8
1.4 Priority Areas 10
2.0 Award Information 10
2.1 Type of Federal Assistance 10
2.2 Type of Applications 10
2.3 Available Funding 10
2.4 Federal Award Period Duration and Size 10
3.0 Eligibility Information 11
3.1 Eligible Applicants 11
3.2 Partners and Collaborators 13
3.3 Limit on Number of Awards 13
4.0 Funding Considerations 15
4.1 Cost Sharing and Matching 15
4.2 Indirect Costs 16
4.3 Subawards 17
4.4 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities 17
4.5 Coordinator Meeting Travel 17
5.0 Application and Submission Information 17
5.1 Electronic Application Package 17
5.2 Content and Form of Application Submission 18
5.3 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements . 24
5.4 Application Submission Requirements 26
5.5 Submission Date and Time 26
5.6 Intergovernmental Review 26
6.0 Application Review Information 26
6.1 Project Evaluation Criteria 26
6.2 Review and Selection Process 28
7.0 Award Administration information 29
7.1 Award Notices 29
7.2 Unsuccessful Applicants 29
7.3 Administrative and National Policy Requirements 29
7.4 Reporting Requirements 29
7.5 Acknowledgement of USDA Support 30
8.0 Agency Contacts 30
8.1 Programmatic Questions 30
8.2 Available Resources 30
8.3 Address 30
8.4 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS 30
9.0 Other Information 30

9.1 Definitions 30
9.2 Equal Opportunity Statement 32
9.3 Freedom of Information Act Requests 32
9.4 Paperwork Reduction 32

1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) is authorized by subtitle A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. § 1627c), as amended. LAMP supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products. The primary goals are to:

- Connect and cultivate regional food economies through public-private partnerships;
- Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies for value-added agricultural products and local and regional food system infrastructure;
- Strengthen capacity and regional food system development through community collaboration and expansion of mid-tier value chains;
- Improve income and economic opportunities for producers and food businesses through job creation; and
- Simplify the application and the reporting processes for the grants administered under the Program.

The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP), the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Program and the Regional Food Partnership Program (RFSP) are implemented under LAMP. FMLFPP and RSFP are administered by AMS and VAPG is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service under Rural Development (RD). FMLFPP is administered in two components: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). This RFA is for FMPP.

1.2 PURPOSE

FMPP funds projects that develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. The program focuses on:

- Supporting and promoting domestic direct producer-to-consumer (including direct producer-to-retail, direct producer-to-restaurant, and direct producer-to-institutional marketing) marketing such as farmers markets, roadside stands, agritourism activities, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, or online sales;
- Encouraging the development of value-added agricultural products;
- Developing marketing strategies for producers of local food and value-added products;
- Facilitating regional food chain coordination development;
- Promoting new business opportunities and marketing strategies to reduce on-farm food waste;
- Responding to changing technology needs in direct producer-to-consumer marketing; and
- Covering expenses related to costs incurred in obtaining food safety certification and improvements to food safety practices and equipment.

1.3 PROJECT TYPES

FMPP offers **Capacity Building** (CB), **Community Development Training and Technical Assistance** (CTA), and **Turnkey Marketing and Promotion** project types.

1.3.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building projects are intended to build long-term organizational capacity to develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. CB projects should demonstrate a direct benefit to farm and ranch operations serving local markets (including new, beginning, and underserved farmers and ranchers, veteran producers and/or underserved communities) and maximize the involvement of farmers, ranchers, and community organizations. Projects can include, but are not limited to:

- Developing tools, techniques or practices that can be adopted or replicated by local agriculture markets, including those that provide direct financial support to a network of markets, or other relevant organizations.
- Market analysis and strategic planning for a direct producer-to-consumer market opportunity.
- Local farmer, rancher, or market manager startup training and education. This may include but is not limited to, educating vendors about the eligibility requirements and the process for participating in or applying to accept SNAP, WIC, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program benefits, or other (state or local or nonprofit) benefit programs at farmers markets.
- Farmer's market, roadside stand, CSA, agritourism or online sales activity startup, operation and/or expansion.
- Recruitment, outreach and retention of new, beginning, and underserved farmers and ranchers in support of direct producer-to-consumer markets.
- Recruitment, outreach and retention of new and existing consumers in support of direct producer-to-consumer markets.

1.3.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Community Development Training and Technical Assistance (CTA) projects are intended to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to farm and ranch operations serving local markets to develop, coordinate and expand direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. CTA projects should engage a diverse set of local and regional food stakeholders, including new, beginning, and underserved farmers and ranchers, to illustrate a substantive effect on the local and regional food system. Projects can include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and disseminating tools, techniques, or practices that can be adopted or replicated by local agriculture markets.
- Conducting statewide or regional training for farmers, ranchers, or farmers market managers to help them develop or maintain their own direct producer-to-consumer enterprise.
- Assisting farmers and ranchers in advertising and promoting their locally and regionally produced agricultural products, including value-added products, through training and technical assistance.

- As part of a marketing and promotion project, promoting that a market accepts SNAP or other public benefits (such as WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program) to customers and how customers can use those programs at the market or with individual vendors.
- Establishing or expanding producer-to-consumer networks and organizations on a state, regional, or national level, which includes efforts to develop sourcing channels using direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities with corporate, non-profit, and institutional buyers.
- Providing technical support for small- and mid-sized producers to become compliant with regulatory and buyer specifications and standards to increase their direct market opportunities.

1.3.3 TURNKEY MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Turnkey Marketing and Promotion projects are intended to offer a streamlined approach to some of the most common FMPP grant activities related to the marketing and promotion of local and regional food projects. Applicants applying to the Turnkey Marketing and Promotion track agree to conduct specific activities defined by AMS that support the marketing and promotion of direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Applicants must select a minimum of 3 pre-defined activities listed below.

- Identify and analyze new/improved market opportunities.
- Develop/revise a marketing plan.
- Design/purchase marketing and promotion media.
- Implement a marketing plan.
- Evaluate marketing and promotion activities.

Applicants to the Turnkey project type should not propose any additional activities beyond the above list, doing so may disqualify the application from consideration. Planning, Implementation, and Farm to Institution project types are eligible to apply under the Turnkey track if they focus on marketing and promotion and meet all other Turnkey requirements.

Applicants to the Turnkey project type will apply through a simplified Narrative Form. More information is provided in section ***5.2.5***. Applicants should read the entire RFA before applying.

1.3.4 PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Projects are not eligible for consideration if the proposed activities:

- Are not focused on direct producer-to-consumer marketing.
- Are for agricultural production, including crop production and the purchase of farm equipment, tools, materials, supplies and other related costs (section ***4.4***.)
- Benefit only one agricultural producer, vendor, or individual. Applicants must collaborate with others to benefit the larger community.
- Are to purchase land, or for construction of a building or structure.
- Intend to register, train, and/or educate customers on Food Assistance Programs such as SNAP, WIC, etc. (other than how they can use those benefits at the market)
- Depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.
- Include legal fees and other costs associated with establishing a business or organization.

- Duplicate activities in a project that has received funding from another Federal award program, including the Local Food Promotion Program.

For additional allowable and unallowable activities please refer to the AMS General Terms and Conditions as well as the FMLFPP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing these documents should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under ***8.0 Agency Contacts.***

1.4 PRIORITY AREAS

Priority consideration may be given to projects located in low income/low food access (LI/LA) census tracts as defined below. AMS does not require applicants to conduct projects in priority areas to be eligible to apply or receive grant funds.

To qualify for low income/low food access (LI/LA) priority consideration, the project's implementation address must be in a LI/LA census tract, as defined by the four major map layers on the ERS Food Access Research Atlas. "Implementation address" refers to the street address or census tract location within the targeted community where the applicant plans to conduct or deliver approved project activities.

The applicant must provide its census tract(s) for at least one LI/LA address (priority area). If your organization or business is located in and/or primarily serves at least one LI/LA community, your application will be considered under this priority area.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide the Federal award to successful applicants.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in section ***6.0.***

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

It is anticipated that approximately $15.4 million is available to fund applications in FY 2023. Funding may be contingent on Federal appropriations actions. USDA does not guarantee minimum funding levels or a specific number of awards.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION AND SIZE

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the required timeframe. It is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled performance period end date. However, AMS encourages applicants to take the full grant period to allow ample time to complete projects. The applicant must indicate the start date and end date on Block 17 of the SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance". Required project start dates and completion dates are provided below.

Award size varies by project type. Applicants may not request less than the minimum or more than the maximum amounts. Applicants must justify the requested funding amounts within the appropriate project narrative sections.

Project Type	Duration (Months)	Start Date	Completion Date	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Capacity Building	36	September 30, 2023	September 29, 2026	$50,000	$250,000
Community Development Training and Technical Assistance	36	September 30, 2023	September 29, 2026	$100,000	$500,000
Turnkey Marketing and Promotion	24	September 30, 2023	September 29, 2025	$50,000	$100,000

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All applicants must be domestic entities owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Tribal Governments. Eligible applicants include:

Entity Type	Description
Agricultural Businesses or Cooperatives	Businesses or member-owned entities that provide, hold, deliver, transport, offer, or sell agricultural products or services for member benefit as well as the organization or other business that they represent.
Producer Networks or Association	Producer group- or member-owned organizations or businesses that provide, offer, or sell agricultural products or services through a common distribution system for the mutual member benefit as well as organizations or other businesses that assist, represent, or serve producers or producer networks.

Entity Type	Description
CSA Networks or Associations	Formal groups of farms that work collectively to offer consumers regular shares (usually weekly) of locally grown farm products during one or more harvest season(s) often on a subscription or membership basis. This includes organizations or other businesses that assist, serve, or represent CSAs or CSA networks. Customers have access to a selected share or range of farm products offered by the group of farmers based on partial or total advance payment of a subscription or membership fee.
Food Council	Food policy council or food and farm system network that represents multiple organizations that addresses food and farm-related issues and needs within city, county, State, Tribal region, multicounty region, or other regions.
Local Governments	Any unit of government within a State, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937 (50 Stat. 888 (Pub. L. No. 75—412); special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.
Nonprofit Corporations	Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the organization's or institution's net earnings inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
Public Benefit Corporations	Corporations organized to construct or operate a public improvement, the profits from which inure to the benefit of one or more State or to the people therein.
Economic Development Corporations	Organizations whose missions are to improve, maintain, develop, and/or market or promote a specific geographic area.
Regional Farmers Market Authorities	Entities that establish and enforce regional, State, or county policies and jurisdiction over State, regional, or county farmers markets. State agencies are eligible if their State's regulatory statutes identify the specific State agency as a regional farmers market authority.

Entity Type	Description
Tribal Governments	Governing bodies or governmental agencies of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in Section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602)) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

3.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Engagement with partners and collaborators often strengthens FMPP projects. The applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators (section ***5.2.7***) or may engage with them without funding. For instance, a project may have partners or collaborators who have their own funding or who are contributing to the project financially, such as by providing a cash or in-kind match. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators do not need to meet the eligibility requirements provided in section ***3.1***.

- A *partner* is in a relationship involving close cooperation with the applicant and shares responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities.

Regardless of whether there is a financial subcontract or subaward relationship, applicants must show evidence of existing community or industry support and engagement. Applications should demonstrate a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants.

3.3 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF AWARDS

Applicants may submit multiple project proposals to FMPP however applicants are limited to receiving **one** FMPP award. For FMPP, this means that an applicant may be awarded one Capacity Building **OR** one Community Development Training and Technical Assistance **OR** one Turnkey grant, but not any combination of more than one, during this fiscal year. If the applicant is recommended for multiple awards, AMS staff will contact the applicant to discuss the options. Applicants must close out all active FMPP awards to be eligible to receive a new FMPP award. For example, a Capacity Building award recipient must close out that award prior to applying for a Community Development Training and Technical Assistance award. The applicant must submit all required close-out documentation by the application due date listed in section *5.5 Submission Date and Time*. Please refer to the respective General Award Terms and Conditions, available on the "How to Administer the Awards" webpage, for close-out instructions.

3.3.1 FISCAL SPONSORS/AGENTS

Eligible applicants may use fiscal sponsors/agents in their effort to attain and administer a grant award. Such applicants seeking to implement a project may:

- Apply directly to AMS through Grants.gov and request to use funds to establish a contractual relationship with a fiscal sponsor/agent to perform administrative or financial functions on behalf of the applicant; or
- Use a fiscal sponsor/agent to apply for an award on behalf of the implementing organization. By doing so, the sponsor/agent accepts all financial and legal liabilities for that grant recipient's grant award at the time the agreement is signed. Fiscal sponsors/agents would submit the application as the applicant organization, and the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) responsible for all grant decisions and activities, including but not limited to implementation, subcontracts, and reporting to AMS. The AOR would be an employee of the fiscal sponsor/agent. Fiscal sponsors/agents are bound by the same requirements mentioned in this RFA as other applicant organizations, including the limit on applications.

An applicant organization cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to another organization (including a fiscal sponsor/agent).

3.3.2 REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS (RFSP) RECIPIENT APPLICANTS

In accordance with the LAMP legislation, current RFSP grant recipients may apply for an FMPP or LFPP grant on behalf of requesting producers and/or eligible entities (as listed in the RFSP RFA). Active RFSP recipients are eligible to receive more than one FMPP or LFPP project within an award cycle to allow them to apply on behalf of those entities.

Active RFSP recipients applying to FMPP or LFPP on behalf of their eligible partnerships should indicate on the FMLFPP Project Narrative or FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative that they are a current RFSP recipient. They must meet all program requirements and undergo competitive peer review as do all other FMPP or LFPP applicants. Refer to section ***5.2*** for more information.

If selected for funding, active RFSP recipients signing the grant agreement as the AOR on behalf of their producers and eligible entities accept all financial and legal liabilities for that grant recipient's grant award at the time the agreement is signed. In addition, they are responsible for all decisions and project activities related to the grant agreement, and accountable for meeting Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. An applicant organization, including RFSP recipient applicants, cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to another organization (including the producer or eligible entity associated with the active RFSP grant).

Alternatively, RFSP recipients wanting to solely provide technical assistance or administrative support to producers and/or eligible entities applying to FMLFPP, but not serve as the AOR, may provide that directly with no formalized agreement and the eligible entities or producers may apply directly (noting that the project must benefit more than one producer). They could also choose to pursue the contractual relationship mentioned in section ***3.3.1.***

4.0 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 COST SHARING AND MATCHING

This funding opportunity requires matching funds from non-Federal sources in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to 25 percent of the total Federal portion of the grant. There is no competitive advantage for an applicant to provide a cost share or match that exceeds the required amount. If the project is selected for funding, any exceeding amount will be considered voluntary and must be documented and secured at the time an applicant is recommended for the award.

Cost sharing or the required match must be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Refer to 2 CFR § 200.306 for additional Federal requirements and definitions, including the basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions.

Cash match contributions are generally defined as an actual cash contribution (not the 'value' of someone's time/effort) from the applicant's general revenue/reserves/savings/line of credit, or 3rd-party partner(s), or other non-Federal grants. The applicant must be able to track and show the source of the match funding and that the funding source was dedicated entirely to the grant project and produce records to that effect (for example, taking the cash match in your accounting system, or from your partner, and placing it into a special 'grant project' account).

In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as a match contribution to the project as described in 2 CFR § 200.306(e). These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used toward satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement to which the applicant is a party.

All matching contributions **must be committed or secured** at the time an applicant is recommend for an award. An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured. Additional anticipated matching funds not in place by the time the project commences cannot be counted toward the matching requirement.

Applicants must indicate the total amount of match and how it will specifically align with their requested funding when completing the fiscal plan and resources section of the FMLFPP Project Narrative or FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative. Additionally, applicants must submit signed letters or other documentation verifying the match for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource. Refer to section ***5.2.6 Matching Funds and Letters of Verification*** for more information.

Indirect costs may count toward non-Federal match. Refer to section ***4.2.1*** "Using Indirect Costs for Cost Sharing or Matching" for more information.

Applicants cannot use program income (as defined in 2 CFR § 200.1) or any other Federal funds as a match or cost share.

4.2 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at 2 CFR § 200.1) are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

As stated in 2 CFR § 200.413 and 414, any non-Federal entity that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate, except State and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) that may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in 2 CFR § 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC are defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDCs exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved NICRA with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For assignments of cognizant agencies, see 2 CFR § 200.1.

4.2.1 USING INDIRECT COSTS FOR COST SHARING OR MATCHING

The maximum indirect costs allowed for a project may be included under the Federal portion of the budget or, alternatively, may be offered as an in-kind matching contribution if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget. For example, if a proposed project's maximum allowable indirect costs are $8,000, the applicant may include $8,000 on the Federal portion of the budget or $8,000 as a matching in-kind contribution, but not both.

The applicant may split the indirect cost allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total amount of indirect costs does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowed. Alternatively, the recipient may request any other combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowable. Refer to 2 CFR §200.413 and §200.414 for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

4.3 SUBAWARDS

The applicant is expected to perform the majority of the work portion of the project; however, subawards or subcontracts with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources for the purposes of the proposed project that are not otherwise available within the applicant organization are allowable. Applicants may subaward to smaller organizations to support underserved communities or producers. In all subaward or subcontract scenarios, the primary applicant will maintain the oversight and reporting responsibility as the AOR. See section ***3.3.1 Fiscal Sponsors.*** Using grant funds to competitively "re-grant" funds in mini-grant programs or to activities that are not central to the purpose of the project or for unknown costs is unallowable.

4.4 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

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

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this document should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under ***8.0*** Agency Contacts.

4.5 COORDINATOR MEETING TRAVEL

Recipients are expected to attend AMS sponsored grant management meetings during the project's period of performance. The proposed budget should include travel funds for the Project Coordinator and may include additional key personnel as reasonably determined by the recipient and AMS.

Estimate the cost of travel including flight, hotel, per diem, ground transportation to a major city. For previous year, an example of this estimate can be around $1,500. Location and dates are to be determined with possibility of a virtual conference. If the conference is performed virtually, recipients will be able to reallocate those funds to another allowable item.

5.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

5.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. AMS strongly encourages applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see Grants.gov's Apply for Grants webpage. This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete the required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in section ***5.3.***

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Assistance Listing number "10.175," or the FMPP Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-23-0010".

5.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

5.2.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required. Form SF-424 is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or explained in the instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instructions
1 - Type of Submission	Select Application
2 - Type of Application	Select New
4 through 7	Not required
8.c - Organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Enter applicant UEI for the organization submitting the application.
8.d - Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code
10 - Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
11 - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (Assistance Listing Number)	10.175
12 - Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-23-0010 Ensure you are applying for the correct grant program.
13 - Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
14 - Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, states affected by project
15 - Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
16a - Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
16b - Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the projects will be implemented in more than one location.

17 - Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	**Capacity Building** - Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months in length. Planning projects normally begin September 30, 2023, and end no later than September 29, 2026. **Community Development Training and Technical Assistance** – Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months (3 years) in length. Implementation projects normally begin September 30, 2023 and end no later than September 29, 2026. **Turnkey Projects** - Your performance period cannot be more than 2 years in length. Turnkey projects normally begin September 30, 2023 and end no later than September 29, 2025.
18 - Estimated Funding – Federal	Total Federal award requested.
18b - Estimated Funding – Applicant	Not applicable.
19 - Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process.	See section ***5.6 Intergovernmental Review***.

5.2.2 SF-424A – BUDGET INFORMATION FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

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

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

Section A – Budget Summary Section A – Budget Summary

Box	Instructions
1.a – Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter "FMPP – Federal"
1.b – Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter "10.175"
1.e – Federal	Enter the amount of Federal funding requested for the project
1.f – Non-Federal	Enter the **total** match contribution amount provided for the project

Section B – Budget Categories

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

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Box	Instructions
8.a – Grant Program	Should auto-populate from Section A, Box 1.a
8.b – 8.d	Enter the match amount being provided from each source (Applicant, State, or Other) for the project.

5.2.3 PROJECT ABSTRACT SUMMARY

Required. The Project Abstract Summary form will be used as the award description for the overarching Federal award. This is required for all project types and is separate from the FMLFPP Project Narrative or FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative. The Project Abstract Summary box must include:

- Project purpose
- Activities to be performed
- Deliverables and expected outcomes
- Intended beneficiary(ies): Who will benefit from this beyond the applicant organization?
- Subrecipient, key partner, and collaborator activities. Identify the key partners, collaborators and subrecipients you know will be part of the work are and how their engagement will support the program goals.

5.2.4 PROJECT NARRATIVE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Required. All applicants for project types OTHER THAN the Turnkey Projects are required to prepare and submit a narrative using the FMLFPP Project Narrative form. The form and instructions are available on the "How do I Apply for an LFPP Grant" webpage. The Project Narrative must clearly describe the objectives and goals, types of activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The FMLFPP Project Narrative Guide can assist applicants in filling out the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and must not exceed fifteen (15) 8.5 x 11 pages (excluding existing Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Project

Narrative form is 18 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 33 pages (18 pages + 15 pages)**. DO NOT modify the FMLFPP Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified.

Applicants must submit the FMLFPP Project Narrative form as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" on the application package.

Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes or mark-up edits and comments are visible.

The supporting documents listed in Sections 5.2.6 through 5.2.9 do not count toward the 15-page limit.

5.2.5 TURNKEY PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required for all Turnkey Marketing and Promotion projects. Applicants are required to prepare and submit a narrative using the FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative form. The form and instructions are available on the "How do I Apply for an FMPP Grant" webpage. The Turnkey Project Narrative includes all of the work plan activities that may be included in grant project. The Turnkey Project Narrative must clearly describe the activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The FMLFPP Project Narrative Guide can assist applicants in filling out the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and **must not exceed five (5) 8.5 x 11 pages** (excluding existing Turnkey Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Turnkey Project Narrative form is 15 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 20 pages (15 pages + 5 pages)**. DO NOT modify the FMLFPP Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified.

Applicants must submit the FMLFPP Turnkey Project Narrative form as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" on the application package.

Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes or mark-up edits and comments are visible.

The supporting documents listed in Sections 5.2.6 through 5.2.9 do not count toward the 5-page limit.

5.2.6 MATCHING FUNDS AND LETTERS OF VERIFICATION

Required. Each application must include or be accompanied by written verification of match commitments from any party, including the applicant, who will contribute cash or in-kind matching from non-Federal resources to the project.

Submit one match verification letter for EACH cash or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization.

AMS highly encourages you to use the Suggested Match Verification Template Letter on the grant program's website. If you do not use this template or if you are an applicant submitting a match, your match verification document must minimally include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- Cash Commitment per year (if applicable) and Total Cash Match
- In-kind Contribution per year (if applicable) and Total In-kind Match. Break down items into categories as applicable:
    - Salaries (employee name, title, duties, pay rate/hr., amount matched per year)
    - Items/Activities (fair market value per unit, how value determined, and amount matched per year)
- Explanation of how each type of match will correspond to the budget or be used by the Applicant
- Signature of Matching Organization Representative with typed name and title

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

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

5.2.7 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Required. Applicants must provide letters of commitment (in MS Word or PDF) from all project partners and collaborators. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in section ***3.2 Partners and Collaborators***. The letter must state the partner or collaborator agrees to the project management plan presented in the Project Narrative. Emails will not be accepted.

AMS highly encourages you to use the Suggested Partner Organization Template Letter on the grant program's website. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Commitment must minimally include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization's mission and its interest in LFPP development
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- Roles of the participating individuals, as applicable, and any individual time commitment
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: LFPP does not require Congressional letters of support and such letters do not carry any weight during the evaluation process.

5.2.8 EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed project. Applicants are required to submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission. The letter must indicate the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project.

AMS highly encourages you to use the Suggested Evidence Of Critical Resources And Infrastructure Template Letter on the LFPP application website. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Evidence of Critical Infrastructure must minimally include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A statement about committing/approving/granting permission, etc. of the critical resource or infrastructure to the project for the time period
- A description of the approved use of the critical resource or infrastructure approved for the project, any costs associated with its use, and any qualifying circumstances for its use.

Submit Letters of Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **"**EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE". The evidence must accompany the proposal at the time of the application submission.

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

5.2.9 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a NICRA. Refer to section ***4.2*** Indirect Costs for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

5.3 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

5.3.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The applicant **organization registration** process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing enough time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html.

1) *Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number*: All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational UEI" on the SF-424 form. Getting a UEI number requires validation steps in SAM.gov. Applicants are encouraged to start this process as early as possible.

2) *Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)*: In addition to having a UEI number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the (SAM). Current SAM.gov registrants have already been assigned a UEI and can view it within SAM.gov. All organizations must register with SAM to apply online in Grants.gov. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an *active* SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**

3) *Create a Grants.gov Account*: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the Authorized Organization Role (AOR).

4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles*: After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, including the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

5) *Track Role Status*: After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you to track your status.

6) *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

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

Applicants may use the Grants.gov Workspace, a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, an applicant creates individual instances of a workspace.

Create a Workspace: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out the webforms, you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local storage device, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

   NOTE: You may need to visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software. There is no cost for Adobe Reader Software.

b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.

c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

Submit via a Workspace: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in section ***5.2***.

Track via a Workspace: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional training resources, including video tutorials. Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, use the contact information described in ***section 8.0***.

5.4 APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

AMS will not consider any applications received after the deadline, any applications submitted by fax, email, or postal mail and any applications not responsive to the requirements of this RFA (eligibility, incomplete application, missing required attachments documents, etc.). See AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.

Ensure that all components are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. AMS encourages you

to submit your application at least two weeks before the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections: Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting their application to Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

5.5 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants must submit applications electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 2, 2023. AMS cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding. See AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.

5.6 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.6.0 Application Review Information

6.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

6.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each Planning, Implementation, or Farm to Institution application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements (see section ***5.2)*** will be reviewed and scored competitively using the criteria listed below.

Each Turnkey application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements (see section ***5.2***) will be reviewed and scored competitively on each of the criteria below EXCEPT alignment and intent.

Technical Merit, Achievability, Expertise and Partners, Fiscal Plan and Resources will all carry equal weight, or 25 points each.

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

1) The extent to which the application provides a clear and concise description of the specific issue, problem, or need addressed by the project, and the objectives for, the project.
2) The extent to which the project helps develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food businesses (including those that are not direct producer-to-consumer markets) that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products and an agricultural local and regional food system infrastructure.

3) The extent to which the applicant identifies and engages the intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries and how they will benefit. The application demonstrates a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants in partnership activities.

4) The application describes the project's proposed geographic focus area and why it is the most appropriate place to conduct project activities.

5) The application complies with all written instructions and requirements described within the RFA and Project Narrative Template.

Technical Merit ..... **25 Points**

1) The extent to which the application presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable work plan for fulfilling the goals and objectives of the proposed project.

2) The extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project during the award project period.

3) If the project and/or entity was previously funded, the extent to which the previous lessons learned are incorporated into the proposed project.

Achievability ..... **15 Points**

1) The extent to which the outcomes and indicator(s) are appropriate for the scale and scope of the project, including:

a. How indicator numbers were derived with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator; and

b. The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to or restrict progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.

2) The extent to which the proposed project can be easily adapted to other regions, communities, or agricultural systems.

3) The extent to which the applicant provides a comprehensive plan to distribute the project's results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties.

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

1)The extent to which the proposed project represents substantial, effective, diverse and strong qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborators to accomplish the project's goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:

a. Commitment from the key partner and/or collaborators demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;

b. The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and names and titles of the individuals who comprise the Project Team; and

c. The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project.

2) The extent to which the application describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.

3) The extent to which the application describes a commitment to collaboration and engagement among partners to ensure high levels of participation or provides a clear and concise plan for how such engagement will occur, particularly including historically underserved entities such as underserved, beginning, and/or limited resource entities.

4) The extent to which the application describes how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project's period of performance (without grant funds).

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

1) The extent to which the application budget narrative or justification provides a clear, detailed, narrative description for each budget line item including:

a. How the budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project; and

b. How the budget relates logically to the narrative describing the project.

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

3) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that its partners' or collaborators' contribution of non-Federal cash resources or in-kind contributions is available and obtainable for the project as evidenced through the submitted Matching Funds and Letters of Verification.

6.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Qualification Screening

Each application is initially reviewed for overall completeness, as well as compliance with eligibility and program requirements as set forth in this RFA. If an application does not meet these requirements, it is

removed from consideration. Please see AMS' Late and/or Nonresponsive Applications Policy for more information.

Step 2: Technical Review

Each application that passes initial screening (Step 1) is evaluated by a panel of independent peer reviewers. AMS makes every attempt to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned proposals. The peer review panels evaluate their assigned proposals using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers score applications and then confer with other panel members. The scoring and discussion serve as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Step 3: Administrative Review

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top rankings and recommendations. In addition to the rank and scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic diversity, and USDA priorities. AMS staff will work with top-ranked applicants to negotiate any revisions as necessary. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies using the guidance provided by 2 CFR § 200.206(c).

7.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

7.1 AWARD NOTICES

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

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

7.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by AMS via email as soon as possible after the awards are announced to inform them of the results. AMS will email unsuccessful applicants the review panel consensus comments regarding their proposals.

7.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the NOA, all AMS recipients must abide by the AMS General Terms and Conditions, which reference applicable *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*.

7.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

7.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USDA SUPPORT

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

8.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

8.1 PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

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

For additional information, please visit the FMPP Website: https://www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp

8.2 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

AMS provides resources and information on its website (www.ams.usda.gov/lfpp) that may be helpful to applicants, including webinars information, FMLFPP FAQ's, descriptions of funded projects, FMLFPP Project Narrative Guide and required application forms. AMS staff is available to provide timely technical assistance.

8.3 ADDRESS

Farmers Market Promotion Program
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 1510-S South Building
Stop 0264
Washington, DC 20250-0264
FMLFPPGrants@usda.gov

8.4 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's Applicant Support.

9.0 OTHER INFORMATION

9.1 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Direct Producer to Consumer Marketing means instances in which producers sell locally or regionally produced agricultural products directly to the consumer (including, farmers markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agritourism activities, online sales, producer-to-retail, producer-to-restaurant and

producer-to-institutional marketing) with minimal involvement of a middle-man such as an intermediary, a wholesaler, a retailer, an agent, a broker, or a reseller in a manner calculated to lower the cost and increase the quality of food to such consumers while providing increased financial returns to the farmers.

Locally and Regionally Produced Food means food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same State, territory, or tribal land.

FMLFPP recognizes that domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, and local and regional food businesses may source or market some of their food products outside of the defined locality or region. These enterprises are encouraged to consider local boundaries for projects based on existing networks, foodsheds, distance to markets for farmers within the selected area, or other relevant factors. AMS may question the reason behind the selected local or regional food system development effort.

Farm to Institution broadly refers to connecting local or regional producers, including farmers and ranchers, processors, and intermediaries selling local and regional foods to establishments where people routinely eat meals outside of home, such as schools and early childcare centers, colleges and universities, hospitals, corporate cafeterias, and government agencies and to vendors that sell to these establishments.

Value-Added Agricultural Product means any agricultural commodity or product that:

- Has undergone a change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam);
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product, (such as organically produced products);
- Is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved product);
- Is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E–85 fuel; or
- Is aggregated and marketed as a locally produced agricultural food product and, as a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

Mid-tier Value Chain means a local or regional supply network that links independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added agricultural product in a manner that:

- Targets and strengthens the profitability and competitiveness of small and medium-size farms and ranches that are structured as a family farm; and

- Obtains agreement from an eligible agricultural producer group, farmer or rancher cooperative, or majority-controlled producer-based business venture that is engaged in the value chain on a marketing strategy.

9.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

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

9.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 () (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (), as implemented by USDA's regulations () govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 2055, Stop 0201, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0201, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

9.4 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.