The Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
Global Programs
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Empowering Ukrainian Agricultural Associations

NOTE: If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, if applicable, and then register immediately in SAM at www.sam.gov. It may take 4 weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration before your registration is active in SAM. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in Section D of this NOFO, subsection, Content and Form of Application Submission.

In addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM, you must also obtain Level 2 eAuthentication to apply for this funding opportunity in ezFedGrants. You must submit an online form requesting access. Normally you will receive an email within 24 hours of your submission, if your request is approved. After this occurs, you will need to schedule an appointment with an LRA. Once you meet with the LRA or obtain Digital Identity Verification, your Level 2 eAuthentication should be granted within 2 to 3 days after that meeting. See Section D of this NOFO for detailed information.

A. Program Description

Program Overview

Background

As Ukraine harmonizes their regulations to EU standards under the Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), Ukraine runs the risk of introducing trade barriers that could negatively impact U.S. agricultural trade and limit global market access. The DCFTA is an integral part of the EU's Association Agreement. Ukraine also lacks adequate institutional knowledge and resources to reform their animal health, plant health, and food safety regulatory systems. If Ukraine fully harmonizes its regulations along EU standards, some U.S. agricultural products would likely lose market access. This situation gives the U.S. an opening to help guide Ukraine through the approximation process, in order to find solutions that are favorable to Ukraine's, and the United States' trade interests, while also voicing USDA's concerns about how some of the EU's non-scientific based SPS requirements may potentially limit Ukraine's competitiveness and access to global markets. These capacity building efforts will also serve to strengthen Ukraine's obligation to meet World Trade Organization (WTO) science-based requirements.

Cross-sectoral decentralization, based on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, began in 2014 to give regional and city governments greater authority to further shape democratic and market-oriented reforms, and improve governance and public administration with input from local business communities. On the national level, new private sector leaders have emerged, heralding

a new Ukrainian economy – one that emphasizes innovation and investment in Ukraine's future. As a result, businesses have begun to recognize the need for collective action with other business associations and professional organizations at the national and regional level.

Within Ukraine, the lack of representation among agricultural associations means that an important voice is lost when legislation is drafted, as only those organizations with pre-existing relationships can advocate on their behalf. The inability of small and medium-sized businesses to express their concerns about the risks and challenges they face on a national level leaves Ukrainian legislators with an incomplete picture of the challenges faced by the agricultural sector. By strengthening the Ukrainian associations, not associated with their incorporated businesses, USDA can help give small and medium-sized enterprises the opportunity to express their concerns with the approximation process, as well as their desire to continue to trade with a wider market.

The project's approach equips government officials and the business community with complementary tools to promote and implement science based and internationally recognized standards. The project's longer-term goal is to institutionalize feedback mechanisms among Ukraine's agricultural sector and regional and national governments. By enabling the agricultural community to better influence Ukrainian legislators, we ensure that Ukrainian businesses can make clear the impact of legislation on all aspects of Ukrainian agricultural trade, and secure Ukraine's ability to maintain their trade relationship with the United States.

Objectives

- To identify Ukrainian agricultural associations with high potential for growth and impact, specifically in regard to collective action;
- To improve the technical capacity of leading agricultural associations in Ukraine;
- To develop Ukrainian association capacity to monitor and comment on draft legislation to ensure Ukraine's alignment with WTO science-based standards;
- To engage with U.S., and regional associations within the same sector;
- To enhance Ukrainian agricultural association influence and access in both regional and national administrations.

Issued By

Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Programs, Trade & Regulatory Capacity Building

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CDFA) Number and Title

10.960 Technical Agricultural Assistance

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title

Empowering Ukrainian Agricultural Associations

NOFO Number

USDA-FAS- 10960-0700-10.-21-0005

Authorizing Authority for Program

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, PL 95-113, as amended, 7 USC §§ 3291(a)(3)

Appropriation Authority for Program

Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 (PL 116-159)

Announcement Type

New Award

A. Federal Award Information

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the NOFO:	Up to $150,000 (Subject to availability of funding)
Projected number of Awards:	1
Period of Performance:	18 months
Projected Period of Performance Start Date:	January 15, 2021
Projected Period of Performance End Date:	July 15, 2022
Pre-Award Costs:	N/A
Cost Share or Match Requirements:	None/Not Required

Funding Instrument:
Cooperative Agreement

The funding instrument for this award is a Cooperative Agreement, reflecting a relationship between the United States Government and the recipient where there will be substantial involvement between the Federal agency and recipient when carrying out the activities contemplated in the agreement.

FAS will be substantially involved in this project by:

- Coordinating a portfolio of activities in Ukraine, including convening a monthly or bi-weekly update call involving FAS-Kyiv, FAS-DC, implementing partners, and experts;
- Facilitating coordination of other USDA-FAS resources, as needed;
- Providing support to coordinate, plan, and implement technical work involving research, extension, and teaching activities, and participating in the design of activities;
- Engaging in the development and understanding of protocols for agricultural regulations required at the national and regional level.

FAS will not assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the implementation of the activities covered by this Agreement. Consistent with this concept, the dominant role and prime responsibility will reside with the recipient, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the recipient and FAS.

Procurement contracts and sub-awards may be awarded under this cost reimbursable agreement.

B. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Applications may be received from all qualified applicants, including:

For-profit organizations other than small businesses
Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than institution of higher education
Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than institution of higher education
Others (provide clarification for this category in the Other Eligibility Criteria Section) – Ukraine-based organizations (nonprofits, existing associations, chambers of commerce)
Private institutions of higher education
Public & State controlled institutions of higher education

Eligibility Criteria

All applicants must have an active registration in the SAM database at www.sam.gov – pending or expired registrants are not eligible. This requirement must be met by the closing date of the announcement and will not be waived. Please contact the program officer listed if you have questions about this requirement.

Other Submission Requirements and Information

None

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

MOE is not allowable.

Cost Share or Match

There is no cost share or matching requirement.

D. Application and Submission Information

Key Dates and Times

Application Start Date:	November 6, 2020
Application Submission Deadline:	December 11, 2020 at 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	December 31, 2020

Anticipated Award Date: January 15, 2021

Address to Request Application Package

This document contains the entire application package.

Applications will be processed through the ezFedGrants portal at https://grants.fms.usda.gov – prospective applicants are encouraged to register for this portal. Applicants that are unable to access the ezFedGrants portal should contact the program manager for alternative submission instructions. Note that if selected, registration is a requirement of performance.

Content and Form of Application Submission

- All applications must be in Adobe PDF format, accompanied by the following documents in Adobe PDF format. Please ensure that the most current version of each required form is used by following the links provided.
- Standard Form 424, signed by the applicant
- SF LLL, if warranted
- Standard Form 424A. This should be accompanied by a detailed budget worksheet and a detailed budget narrative for the first budget period (NOTE: A budget narrative must be provided). All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations. Definitions of cost items are listed below.

a) **Personnel**: Costs of employee salaries and wages. For each staff person, provide the name (if known), title, time commitment to the project as a percentage of a full-time equivalent (FTE), annual salary, and grant funded salary. Do not include the costs of consultants, subgrants or contractors. Consultants, subgrants and contractors are to be included under "Contractual."

b) **Fringe Benefits**: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate. Provide the method used to calculate the proposed rate amount. If a fringe benefit has been negotiated with, or approved by, a cognizant federal agency, **attach a copy of the negotiated fringe benefit agreement**. If no rate agreement exists, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc. Identify the base for allocating these fringe benefit expenses. (Attach the agreement to the application package.) For foreign entities this may not apply.

c) **Travel**: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (do not include costs of sub-contractor, subgrantees or consultant travel). For each proposed trip, provide the purpose, number of travelers, travel origin and destination, number of days, and a breakdown of costs for airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and

incidentals. The basis for the airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals must be provided, such as past trips, current quotations, Federal Travel Regulations, etc.

d) **Equipment**: Equipment is not an allowable expenditure for this award. Any article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for financial statement purposes, or (b) $5,000.

> **NOTE:** Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, calibration and maintenance services, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.

e) **Supplies**: Supplies are tangible personal property other than that included in the equipment category if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information which supports the amount requested. A computing device is a supply.

f) **Contractual**: Costs of all contracts for services and goods that further the work of the project. Sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that do not perform technical work (i.e., landscapers, trash collectors, etc.) belong under other cost categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, other, etc. Include third party evaluation contracts (if applicable) and contracts with secondary recipient organizations.

Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Identify proposed sub-contractor work and the cost of each sub-contractor. Provide a detailed budget for each sub-contractor that is expected to perform work estimated to be $25,000 or more, or 50% of the total work effort, whichever is less.

- Identify each planned subcontractor and its total proposed budget. Each subcontractor's budget and supporting detail should be included as part of the applicant's budget narrative.
- Provide the following information for each planned subcontract: a brief description of the work to be subcontracted; the number of quotes solicited and received, if applicable; the cost or price analysis performed by the applicant; names and addresses of the subcontractors tentatively selected and the basis for their selection; e.g., unique capabilities (for sole source subcontracts), low bidder, delivery schedule, technical competence; type of contract and estimated cost and fee or profit; and, affiliation with the applicant, if any.

- All required flow down provisions in the award must be included in any subcontract.
- In this section also include subgrantees. Provide information for each planned subgrant. Identify each planned subawardee and its total proposed budget. Include a brief description of the work to be performed.

g) **Other Direct Costs**: Any other items proposed as direct costs that do not fall under the budget categories listed above. Provide an itemized list with costs and state the basis for each proposed item.

h) **Indirect Costs**: Indirect F&A costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Please refer to the information on Unallowable Costs for limitations on Indirect Cost rates.

If indirect costs are included in the budget, include in the budget narrative a description of how the indirect costs were calculated. Include the following information:

- Indirect cost percentages used;
- Indirect cost base;
- How the indirect cost base was calculated;
- How the indirect cost was calculated.

Foreign public entities and foreign organizations may request, and upon approval from FAS use the de minimis rate of 10%, or some other rate in excess of the de minimis rate of 10%, up to 13%, if there is historical evidence that such a rate has been used in the past However, if the foreign entity has a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement it may be used.

Attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If the applicant is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not also be charged as direct costs to the award. If the applicant is requesting a rate which is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

Any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200 States and Local

Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in §200.403 Factors Affecting Allowability of Costs, 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 non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. For more information, see 2 CFR Part 200.414.

- A project narrative, no longer than 2 pages, that includes the following elements:
    1. Key Contacts and Further Information
    2. A timeline for the completion of components of the activity.
    3. Proposed agenda for the workshop(s) to be held, including proposed location(s), date(s), and time(s).
    4. Proposed methodology for identifying participants for workshop(s)

The SF-424 and SF-424A can be completed within the ezFedGrants platform. However, the other required forms must be downloaded from the Forms sections on Grants.gov or will be sent to you upon request to the program officer(s) named in Section G.

Please be aware that OMB Memorandum 18-24: Strategies to Reduce Grant Recipient Reporting Burden has been approved. Various required forms needed to apply for Federal Financial Assistance no longer need to be completed individually at time of application. They are covered in the Financial Assistance Certifications Report.

Effective January 1, 2020, the Financial Assistance Certifications are a common set of certifications and representations required by Federal statutes or regulations in accordance with the grants guidance under Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200.208 Certifications and Representations). Those non-Federal entities who intend to apply for, or are already recipients of Federal grants or agreements, must read and agree to the corresponding certifications and representations. Registrants who reply yes to the questions are required to keep these certifications and representations current, accurate, and complete as part of their entity registration.

FAS will verify in SAM.gov that the proper forms are completed, and if they have not been, you will be contacted and directed to do so. Your award will not be issued until the proper forms are completed within the SAM.gov portal.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

(i) Be registered in SAM (https://www.sam.gov) before submitting its application;

(ii) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and

(iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

FAS is using ezFedGrants, which is an electronic grants management system. Applicant(s) with electronic access are required to submit their applications electronically through the ezFedGrants portal.

Before you can apply, you must have a DUNS number, be registered in SAM, and have access to the ezFedGrants website at https://grants.fms.usda.gov

Applicants are encouraged to register early. The registration process can take approximately four weeks to be completed. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines.

DUNS number. Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at the following website: http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html
The DUNS number must be included in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the Standard Forms (SF)-424 forms submitted as part of this application.

System for Award Management. In addition to having a DUNS number, applicants applying electronically through ezFedGrants must register with SAM. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here:

www.sam.gov

Failure to register with SAM will result in your application being rejected during the submissions process.

ezFedGrants System Access and Electronic Signature

Level 2 eAuthentication. The next step in the registration process is to obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account that will allow access to the ezFedGrants system. Instructions for getting a Level 2 eAuthentication account can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov or by reviewing the ezFedGrants Job Aids at https://nfc.usda.gov/FSS/ClientServices/ezFedGrants/index.php.

If you experience any issues with self-registration or have eAuthentication-related questions, please contact the eAuthenticationHelpDesk for assistance:
By email to eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov

Requesting a role in ezFedGrants. After obtaining eAuthentication, users will need a role in the system. Descriptions of the roles available and instructions on how to request a role can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov or by reviewing the ezFedGrants Job Aids at https://nfc.usda.gov/FSS/ClientServices/ezFedGrants/index.php.

Electronic Signature. Applications submitted through ezFedGrants constitute a submission as electronically signed applications. When you submit the application through ezFedGrants, the name of your Signatory Official on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application.

If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions please email the Helpdesk at ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award.

Intergovernmental Review

An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicant(s) must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the State's process under Executive Order 12372 (https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html) Name and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget's home page at:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf

Funding Restrictions

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400 or this funding opportunity notice.

Compensation for personal services (whether classified as personnel, contractual services, or any other form) may not exceed the pro-rated equivalent of Step III of the Executive Schedule. For calendar year 2020, this is $181,500 per year; $698.08 per day; or $87.26 per hour. Non-monetized fringe benefits are generally excluded from this ceiling, however, a federally negotiated fringe benefits rate agreement may be required if fringe benefits appear to be unusually high.

FAS agreement funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Agreement funds and non-monetary 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 serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not

receive funds under this award. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

These funds cannot be used for construction purposes, general purpose acquisitions (no particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose), equipment exceeding $5,000 per item, entertainment, capital improvements, thank you gifts, or other expenses not directly related to the project

Management and Administration (M&A) Costs:
M&A costs are not allowable.

Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs.
Indirect F&A costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

In general, USDA Departmental Regulation 2255-001 requires that indirect costs be paid pursuant to a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) that the recipient has in place with a cognizant U.S. Government agency. If the recipient does not have a NICRA, USDA will authorize an indirect cost rate of up to 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs.

Foreign public entities and foreign organizations may request, and upon approval from FAS use the de minimis rate of 10%, or some other rate in excess of the de minimis rate of 10%, up to 13%, if there is historical evidence that such a rate has been used in the past However, if the foreign entity has a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement it may be used.

E. Application Review Information

Application Evaluation Criteria
Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 31 U.S.C. 3321 and 41 U.S.C. 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.

Factor 1: Technical Approach and Feasibility (30 points)

i. The overall program plan and design should be relevant to the specified training objectives outlined in the program objectives section of this NOFO. The program plan should be thorough, well thought out, and expected to achieve the desired post-program deliverables. Site visits and meetings should be meaningful to the content of the program.

ii. The applicant's proposal must describe a realistic, effective and sound approach, including a description of high-quality methods and analytical rigor for achieving the project's requirements.

iii. The applicant's proposal must contain specific outputs, outcomes, and a proposed timeline.

iv. The applicant's proposal must address how they will approach logistical hurdles of planning and implementing activities in Ukraine.

Factor 2: Experience and Expertise (40 points)

i. The Principal Investigator must be able to provide trainers/subject matter experts with the appropriate technical background to provide the desired activities. Subject matter experts identified as trainers must have significant experience in their related field and scope of the specific activity. As these trainings' participants are geared towards agricultural associations, access to trainers who have significant familiarity with association development, collective action, lobbying and increasing political influence. Knowledge of WTO, OIE, IPPC, Codex Alimentarius, SPS enquiry/notification point, experience in managing phytosanitary issues, EU approximation and harmonization, and an ability to convey this experience to interested parties will also be considered. Experience working with Government of Ukraine and/or other Eastern European Nations. The proposal should indicate how the applicant can provide such technical services.

Factor 3: Past Performance (30 points)

i. Evidence of implementation of prior programs with similar objectives, especially developing plant health plans for improved risk-based planning, plant and pest disease control and regional stakeholder engagement.

ii. Evidence of prior work with the Government of Ukraine and/or other Eastern European countries especially providing/facilitating training on approximation processes and overcoming difficulties, crafting association development strategies, developing collective action strategies, drafting SPS measures, WTO notification, and building dialog across the region.

Factor 4: Cost effectiveness (20 points)

i. The agency will consider the "value for money" in its evaluation of the program. This factor does not consider the cost alone, but rather the cost relative to the value for the work to be performed. Note that the agency's available funding may not exceed the amount shown in part B.

Review and Selection Process

In all cases, the Program Manager will conduct an initial responsiveness review of all applications submitted to determine if the submission is complete and followed the rules outlined in this announcement. This review will ensure the following: 1) the application was submitted on time as specified in this announcement **(See Section D. Application**

and Submission Information), 2) the applicant is eligible (**see Section C. Eligibility Information)**, 3) all the required forms and documents are submitted timely as outlined (**See Section D**. **Application and Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission).** If an applicant is determined to be ineligible (see Section C. Eligibility Information) or an application is determined to be non-responsive, FAS will notify the applicant.

In addition, FAS conducts a two-part application review process. If the Agency determines your application to be responsive, the application will be reviewed by a review panel.

1. FAS will assemble reviewers which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers to review the eligible applications. Reviews of submitted applications will be conducted either on site or by remote review.

2. Technical reviewers will review each eligible application against the evaluation criteria. The reviewers will ensure that the organization is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative. The reviewers will assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified above. Evaluation Criteria: the evaluation criteria must be directly related to key aspects of the project. The criteria must be measurable with an associated point range. It is a best practice, but not required, that the entire review criteria score range should be out of 100. From the scoring process, a recommendation list or letter will be composed and sent to the FAS Administrator, or his designee.

3. An application may be selected for a post-review quality control and possible rescoring if it received significantly diverging scores and comments from reviewers.

4. The second part of the application review process includes an internal review panel consisting of FAS staff, and the FAS Administrator or his designee, reviewing the recommendation list or letter which will display the highest ranked applications. From this list this internal review panel will make final funding recommendations. The internal review panel may take applications out of rank order in consideration of strategic program priorities, which are identified below:

    a. Geographical distribution
    b. incorporation of minority serving institutions
    c. past experience

5. FAS will perform an additional review of the applicant organization which may include reviewing any and/or its key personnel. This review will include reviewing audit reports, publicly available materials and/or government databases and may have a bearing on award outcome. FAS may request additional materials from the applicant as part of this review, including:
    - The summary letter from the applicant's most recent audit report; and
    - Documentation of previous grant award completion that includes the name of the grantor, amount awarded, and whether the grant recipient sufficiently completed the requirements of the grant award (e.g., a final close-out report, certification of grant award completion, etc.)

6. After the technical review and before making final funding decisions, FAS may contact the highest ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a sub-awardee, FAS may request to speak with all parties included in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination has taken place prior to making an award.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest.
Technical and cost proposals submitted under this funding opportunity will be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. FAS may use one or more support contractors in the logistical processing of proposals. However, funding recommendations and final award decisions are solely the responsibility of FAS personnel.

FAS screens all technical reviewers for potential conflicts of interest. To determine possible conflicts of interest, FAS requires potential reviewers to complete and sign conflicts of interest and nondisclosure forms. FAS will keep the names of submitting institutions and individuals as well as the substance of the applications confidential except to reviewers and FAS staff involved in the award process. FAS will destroy any unsuccessful applications after three years following the funding decision.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Notice of Award

Notice of award will be given to the institution via email. This email is not an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award signed by the grants officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document through electronic means. It should also indicate if there are any pass-through obligations that successful applicants are required to meet upon receiving award funds, including specific timeline requirements.

Administrative Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with Terms and Conditions as applicable, found at https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp

The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award, the Recipient should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant 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.

Reporting

Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR), as known as the SF-425, must be submitted for each quarter ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31. Reporting must be filed by 30 days after the end of the reporting period and within 90 days of the end of the agreement. The required form is available online at:
https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149786

Program Performance Reporting Requirements

Performance Progress Reporting is required annually, within 90 days after the end of the reporting period, and a final report within 90 days of the end of the agreement and should include details the activities undertaken, and progress made during the reporting period

Monitoring

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, FAS will review grant recipients' files related to the grant-funded program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review grant-related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their grant program.

Close Out Reporting Requirements.

Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

Acceptance of final reports by the agency constitutes a closeout of the award with no further notice or obligation to either party. This acceptance will indicate the period of performance has expired, and any remaining funds will be deobligated. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted, as described in 2 CFR 200.333

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down or reimbursed but remain as unliquidated on recipient financial records.

G. Awarding Agency Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

Prospective applicants with questions are encouraged to reach out via email to the following contacts.

The designated agency point of contact for this agreement is:
Eric Brownstein (eric.brownstein@usda.gov)
202-649-3872

Monday-Friday 8am-5pm EST

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC
20250

Inquiries will be returned within 48 hours. All questions must be received no later than 48 hours prior to submission deadline, except the point of contact will confirm receipt of proposals upon request.

H. Additional Information

1. Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed. Applicants may request a no-cost extension in order to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to approval.

2. Prior Approval of Pre-Award Costs

The Recipient shall not request reimbursement, incur costs or obligate funds for any purpose pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the approved Budget Period/Performance Period.

3. Budget Revisions

a. Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this Award require prior written approval.

b. The Recipient shall obtain prior written approval for any budget revision that would result in the need for additional resources/funds.

c. The Recipient is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval.

4. Post-award program income

In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, as part of their request for guidance and/or approval. The Program Manager will review approval requests for program income on a case-by-case basis; approval is not automatic. Consistent with the policy and processes outlined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, pertinent guidance and options, as determined by the type of recipient and circumstances involved, may be approved by the Grant Officer. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note in the remarks section of the face page concerning guidance and/or options pertaining to the recipient's approved recipient's approved request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.