

USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP)

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021
Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

No. USDA-NRCS-NHQ-UAIP-21-NOFO0001110

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

KEY DATES – this section has been modified to remove link to the webinar and to update information regarding frequently asked questions.

SECTIONS A, C, D, AND E - All references to "agriculture in urban areas, suburbs, or urban clusters" or any similar reference thereto has been removed.

SECTION D.3. Content and Form of Application Submission – this section has been modified with the correct numbering of headings for the Project Narrative.

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP)

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-UAIP-21-NOFO0001110

Assistance Listing Number (formerly Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)): 10.935, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

Notice of Funding Opportunity Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) requests applications for the Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program for fiscal year (FY) 2021. There are two types of UAIP Grants types which are entitled (1) Planning Projects and (2) Implementation Projects. The primary goal of UAIP is to assist eligible entities with projects that support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production. NRCS anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2021 will be approximately $4 million.

For new users of Grants.gov, see Section D.1. for information about steps required before submitting an application via Grants.gov.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 30, 2021. For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts. Questions regarding this notice of funding opportunity (NFO) may be submitted until July 14, 2021. Responses to questions posed will be posted on Grants.gov

approximately two weeks before the application due date.

The "Frequently Asked Questions" document will be updated approximately two weeks prior to the application due date and posted to Grants.gov.

The agency anticipates making final selections by August 31, 2021 and expects to execute awards by September 30, 2021.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amount

(1) **Planning Projects (PP)**: The estimated funding floor for PP is $50,000 and the funding ceiling is $200,000.

(2) **Implementation Projects (IP):** The estimated funding floor for IP is $50,000 and the funding ceiling is $300,000.

The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. These numbers refer to the total agreement amount, not any specific budget period.

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this NFO is Federal financial assistance. "Grants 101" training is highly recommended for those seeking knowledge about Federal financial assistance. The training is free and available to the public at https://www.cfo.gov/grants-training/. It consists of five modules covering each of the following topics: 1) laws, regulations, and guidance; 2) financial assistance mechanisms; 3) uniform guidance administrative requirements; 4) cost principles; and 5) risk management and single audit. Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) agencies also apply Federal financial assistance regulations to certain nonassistance awards (e.g., nonassistance cooperative agreements).

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The authorizing statute for this opportunity is The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Title XII, Part C, Section 12302, Public Law 115-334.

The purpose of this NFO is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including—

- community gardens and farms;
- rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production, and green walls;
- indoor farms, greenhouses, and high-tech vertical technology farms;
- hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farm facilities; and
- other innovations in agricultural production, such as agroforestry and food forests, as determined by the Secretary.

Project Type Descriptions

1. **Planning Projects (PP)—**The purpose of PP is to support the development of projects that will either initiate, build upon, or expand the efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in communities where access to fresh foods are limited or unavailable. PPs may be, but are not limited, to accomplish one or any number of the following—
    - Develop recommendations for implementing community gardens and farms that can include urban agroforestry practices, food forests, or orchards, that respond to community needs as it relates to how food is grown, distributed, and marketed in target area(s);
    - Facilitate agriculture assessments and identify opportunities that connect community needs with the benefits of agriculture such as food access, nutrition education, conservation, innovation, and economic development;
    - Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies to help offset start-up costs for new and beginning farmers;
    - Provide support for municipal planning that consider policies to meet the growing needs of and zoning for community gardens and farms, urban agroforestry, orchards, rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production, green walls, indoor farms, greenhouses, high-tech vertical technology farms, and hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farm facilities; or
    - Assist schools that seek to increase knowledge of food and agricultural disciplines such as nutrition, crop and biology science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to develop and implement programs that create future leaders, farmers, gardeners, and entrepreneurs in agriculture and innovative production.

2. **Implementation Projects (IP)—**The purpose of IP is to accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve multiple

farmers or gardeners. IPs are to improve access to local food in the targetarea(s). IPs may be designed to—

- Facilitate the development of entrepreneurial projects by offering needed resources, such as job training, land, equipment, mentoring, and other business development assistance to new and beginning farmers;
- Increase food production in small urban and indoor spaces with emerging technologies such as vertical farming, hydroponics, aquaponics, rooftop farms, urban agroforestry etc.;
- Operate community gardens or nonprofit farms to educate a community on food systems, nutrition, environmental impacts, urban agroforestry, food forests, sustainable agriculture, and agricultural production and/or to offer hands-on training in farming or gardening;
- Meet specific State, local, or community food and agricultural needs by assisting municipalities, food producers, community organizations, and schools with policies for community gardens and farms that address food access, soil health, emerging technologies, and agricultural business; or
- Provide schools with resources to incorporate and emphasize the importance of growing and consuming nutritious food as well as training students for careers in agriculture.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding

a. Estimated Funding

The anticipated total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is $4,000,000.

b. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be between 1 and 3 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of October 1, 2021.

c. Number of Awards

There is no commitment by NRCS to make a specific number of awards.

2. Type of Award

a. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award a grant agreement pursuant to this opportunity.

b. Procurement Contracts

The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this NFO.

c. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible under this NFO. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

Furthermore, the agency does not expect to offer renewal or supplementation to awards resulting from this funding opportunity.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted, or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.206(d)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types:

- Native American tribal governments (federally recognized);
- Native American tribal governments (other than federally recognized);*
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), other than institutions of higher education;
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education;
- A unit of local government; and
- Any school that serves any of the grades kindergarten through grade 12.

*State designated Indian Tribes fall in this category (i.e., select “Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments when completing the SF-424 block 9)).

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline will result in the application being excluded from consideration.

2. Other

Applicants for PP and IP awards are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements.

Applicants meeting the following four criteria will be given higher consideration:

a. Experience in the area of:

   i. agriculture and/or innovative production for three years or more; and
   ii. serving communities where access to fresh foods are limited or unavailable, such aslisted in the USDA ERS - Food Access Research Atlas

b. Demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;

c. Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results; and

d. Collaborate with one or more partner organizations working in the project target area(s).

Any award made pursuant to this NFO will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as "partnerships" or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the "partner" parties. In all but exceptional cases, it must be reflected in the award as an awardee/sub-awardee relationship.

An applicant organization may not submit more than one application. If more than one is received, only the first submission will be considered.

Projects awarded pursuant to this NFO will be grant agreements. These agreements are not Farm Bill incentive contracts, therefore the awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation in Chapter 58 of 16 U.S.C. However, any agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a project awarded under this NFO must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Part 12 and 7 CFR Part 1400 and have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed award period.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity. There is no competitive advantage to applicants who voluntarily provide a match.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Information for New Users of Grants.gov

a. Overview

While a Grants.gov account is not required to download an NFO and related documents, it is required to submit an application. If your organization has never submitted an application via Grants.gov, be aware that there are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can submit an application. **Completing those steps takes a significant amount of time.**

For information about the Grants.gov pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html.

b. Register to Apply through Grants.gov
Carefully review the registration steps and gather information requested prior to beginning the registration process to avoid last-minute searches for required information. For assistance with the registration process, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Organizations must complete all steps to register (steps i. through v. below). Complete organization instructions are included on Grants.gov here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html.

Although creating a Grants.gov account online can take only minutes, DUNS and SAM registrations may take several weeks. Therefore, organizations should begin the process early to ensure they have sufficient time to complete registration and meet required application submission deadlines.

Individuals are not subject to the DUNS or SAM requirement and may begin with step iii., Create a Grants.gov Account, listed below. (**Note**: Individuals are not eligible for all opportunities.)

c. Steps to Register:

i. *Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier/DUNS Number:* All entities applying for funding must have a DataUniversal Numbering System (DUNS) Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS Number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the Standard Form (SF)-424, “Application for Federal Assistance.” For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS Number, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

Refer to Section 3.h. of this opportunity for information regarding the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

ii. *Register with SAM:* All organizations must register with System for Award Management (SAM) in order to apply online through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Part of the SAM registration process includes designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC). **The EBiz POC plays an integral part in the organization’s Grants.gov registration and application process.** The individual in that role must authorize all other roles in Grants.gov. For more detailed instructions for

registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

iii. *Create a Grants.gov Account:* From the Grants.gov webpage (https://www.grants.gov/), click "Register" in the top right-hand corner and follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html

iv. *Add an Organization Applicant Profile to a Grants.gov Account:* A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all of your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the DUNS Number for the organization in the UEI (Unique Entity Identifier) field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html

v. *EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:* After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, you must establish roles for individuals in the organization. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role is critical; it gives an individual permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. Without this role, the organization cannot submit any applications. The request for role assignment will be routed to the organization's EBiz POC for approval.

Once approved, the AOR can submit an application online. For more detailed instructions about creating an EBiz POC authorized profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html

d. *Electronic Signature*. When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role. **This step (step c.v. above) is often missed and it is crucial for validand timely submissions.**

e. Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace. An applicant can start an application in Workspace and return to work on it later

within Workspace.

f. Apply for an Opportunity. Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

i. Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

ii. Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the status of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

- Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

  NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html

- Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

- Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer (i.e., prepopulate) to the other forms.

iii. Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted 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.

iv. Track a Workspace Submission: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application

page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

v. For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html

2. Electronic Application Package

Applicants interested in submitting an application in response to this NFO must submit it via Grants.gov; the agency will not accept applications submitted via email or any other method. Applicants are urged to submit early to the Grants.gov system.

For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

Address to Request Application Package
All information necessary to apply for this opportunity is included in the Grants.gov opportunity announcement.

3. Content and Form of Application Submission

The agency may choose not to consider applications that fail to comply with the required content, format, and page limits, or those that are incomplete.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the documents in items a. through h. below.

a. **Project Narrative—**Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the provided Project Narrative Template when submitting an application in Grants.gov. Find the Project Narrative Template located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

Each page must be numbered and have one-inch margins. The text of the project narrative must be single spaced and typed in a standard typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier) with no smaller than 12-point font. The project narrative must not exceed 15 pages: 10 pages of written text, and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. **This page limitation applies to the project narrative only;** it does not include the Project Abstract Summary (described in Section b, below) which has a separate limit of one page.

For a **Planning Project (PP)**, include headings noted for items **i.** through **v.** below, followed by a narrative that includes a response for each of the points noted for the corresponding item. For an **Implementation Project (IP)**, include headings noted for items **i.** through **vii.** below, followed by a narrative that includes a response for each of the points noted for the corresponding item.

i. **Project Overview and Relationship to Program Objectives**—Present a

statement of need or assessment of the problem. Define the target audienceand end users of this project. Describe how this project will initiate, build upon, or expand related work or programs. Discuss how project activities and outcomes will address the purpose of the PP and IP and how the project will make a difference in the targeted communities.

ii. **The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed**—Describe your approach to determining the critical elementsand needs of the local food economy or food system of the area or community to be served. Document this with data such as demographics,income, and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or community to be served, linking it to UAIP priorities. What is the situation that is causing concern? Why is it happening?

iii. **The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project**—List the partner(s), organization(s) and community(ies) and key personnel to be involved in carrying out the proposed project and how they will be involved. Include a description of the relevant experience of each, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement with UAIP priorities, as well as success in outreach to the area or community tobe served. The qualifications of key personnel involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership must reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard.

iv. **Project Goals and Intended Outcomes**—Concisely state the goal(s) and objectives of the proposed project. Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed.Identify anticipated outcomes and benefits in measurable terms. Outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. Describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people (e.g., residents,students, participants) will benefit. Describe the involvement of stakeholders in developing project objectives and implementing results.

v. **Activities to Achieve the Goals**—Summarize the work to be performed in non-technical terms for each goal and project objective(s). Explain why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application. Include a timeline of activities with milestones and verifiable indicators to demonstrate how progress will be measured and achieved, and methods that will be used to ensure fiscal accountability. The summary should include the relevance of the project to the priorities of UAIP.

vi. **Evaluation**—Include a strong evaluation component. Innovative evaluation strategies are especially encouraged. USDA seeks to determinebest practices, including valuable lessons learned; therefore, proposals areencouraged that include both process evaluations (developing and monitoring indicators of progress towards the objectives) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met).

vii. **Self-Sustainability**—Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. Discuss how a one- time infusion of Federal funds will be enough for the proposed IP to advance UAIP goals and achieve sustainability. Identify actual or potentialfunding sources for continuation of the project after Federal funding has ended.

b. **Project Abstract Summary (1 page-maximum)**
Present a statement of need or assessment of the problem. Define the target audience and end users of this project. Describe your approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system of the area or community to be served. Describe how this project will initiate or build upon or expand related work or programs. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the purpose and priorities of UAIP.

The following documents do not count toward the above stated page limit.

c. **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**. See Instructions for Completing SF-424 located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

d. **SF 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs**. Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 2 should reflect the applicant's matching funds, if any. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF- 424A located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov. Refer to Section D of this opportunity for information regarding indirect costs.

Construction-Related Projects are to include construction costs in Section B. line 6.g. of the SF-424A. In addition, the applicant must submit an itemized breakdown of that amount in a construction budget with engineering, architectural and/or site work type costs using the form **SF 424C, Budget Information – Construction Programs**. See Instructions for Completing SF-424C located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

e. **Budget Narrative.**
i. In a separate document titled "Budget Narrative," explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A and, if applicable, the SF-424C were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base- line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directlycharged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federalcost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. The pages included as the budget narrative to not count toward the page limit. See the Budget

Narrative Guidance in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

ii. As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. States, local governments, federally-recognized Indian Tribal Governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

iii. All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. (Accepting the 10 percent *de minimis* rate as a condition of award constitutes establishing an approved rate.)
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities. Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employeeof Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application AND the Federal share exceeds $100,000, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

f. **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if applicable). If charging indirect costs (including for cost share), upload the agreement under Other Attachments in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package. See Section 7. for information regarding indirect costs.

g. **Unique Entity Identifier/DUNS and System for Award Management (SAM).** Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR Section 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved

by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR Section 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (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 agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it 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.

Entities must obtain a DUNS and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. A description of each is below. Entities are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

DUNS Number: A Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. Applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform or by calling 1-866-705-5711.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. To register, go to: https://www.sam.gov. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding DUNS or SAM issues.

The Government intends to replace the D-U-N-S® number with a "new, non-proprietary identifier" requested in, and assigned by SAM.gov. This new identifier is being called the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), or the Entity ID. See Planned UEI Updates in Grant Application Forms for UEI updates.

4. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence

Applicants must submit applications via Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on July 30, 2021. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late (an application is considered on time at 11:59.59 p.m. ET, but it is late at 12:00 a.m. ET). Applicants should be mindful that system delays are possible, it is recommended to submit applications ahead of the July 30, 2021 deadline. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered.

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the

form of an email sent to the applicant with the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process; be patient and give the system time to process the application.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any issues. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A for Grants.gov contact information.

For applications successfully transmitted to Grants.gov before the deadline: The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive—

- an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov;
- an email with the official date/time stamp (this stamp is used to determine if the application was received prior to the deadline) and Grants.gov

When the agency successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will also provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the applicant.

5. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

6. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law and, approved in writing by the agency in advance of incurring such costs:

a. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project:
b. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award, including time spent applying for this opportunity;
c. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto;
d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
e. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
f. Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and
g. Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces, the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces, and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.
h. Meals: Meals may be charged to an award only if they are necessary for the performance of the project. For instance, meals (normally only lunch) that

are a necessary part of the costs of meetings and conferences (i.e., required attendance and continuity of a meeting), the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of information, are allowable, as are costs of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category. They are per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established travel policies subject to statutory limitations or in accordance with Federal travel policies.

i. Costs normally charged as indirect costs may not be charged as direct costs without proper justification and agency approval. Proper justification includes documentation that the costs meet the criteria for allowability (see 2 CFR 200.403). Examples of such costs include rent, utilities, depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

j. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work: All costs must be reasonable to be allowable (CFR 200.403), and 2 CFR 200.404 defines a reasonable cost as one if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. Salaries determined not to be reasonable compared to the level of work will be unallowable.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact listed in this NFO.

7. **Indirect costs limitations**:

a. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). In order to qualify for the de minimis rate, the recipient must have never had a NICRA. A State, local, or Tribal Governmental department or agency unit that receives more than $35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

b. Applicants not subject to a statutory limitation, which have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. However, if an applicant with a current NICRA is subject to the statutory limitation, indirect costs must be calculated as follows. First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by the total of all direct costs to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the amount of indirect cost to

include on the budget.

c. Entities that are eligible for the *de minimis* rate who already have a *de minimis* rate agreement must use the rate and base specified in the agreement, which is modified total direct costs (MTDC) as defined by 2 CFR 200.68 and also excluding the amount of each subaward exceeding $25,000. Note that MTDC excludes certain costs from the base to which the rate is applied. A copy of the applicant's de minimis rate agreement must be provided with the application. If a recipient is eligible to use the de minimis rate, but does not have a de minimis rate agreement, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10 percent of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria may be eliminated from competition. In that event, the agency will send notification of elimination to the applicant. The agency intends to select and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to select without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions it identifies. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised applicationby a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Merit/technical reviews will be conducted by a technical review board nominated by the approving official. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

2. Merit/Technical Criteria

a. Evaluation Criteria

The weights and evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this NFO:

i. Consistency with the UAIP's purpose and priorities presented herein (20%);

ii. Quality of the plan presented to effectively support the development of agriculture and innovative production activities such as gardens and

farms, rooftop farms, urban agroforest, food forests, orchards, outdoor vertical production, green walls, indoor farms, greenhouses, high-tech vertical technology farms, and hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farm facilities within the targeted area(s), including a plan for ensuring fiscal accountability (20%);

iii. Potential for positive impact where limited access to heathy affordable food is an issue as listedin the USDA Food Access Research Atlas (20%);

iv. Internal and external organizational support for execution of the project, including experience and expertise of key personnel in agriculture and innovative production (20%);

v. Quality of the plan for information sharing and creating partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities to achieve project objectives and outcomes (10%); and

vi. Projects with budgets not including the purchase of special-purpose equipment, vehicles, land, and building space during the length of the grant (10%).

3. Administrative and Risk Criteria

Notice of selection after merit/technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following notification of selection for funding (see section F), the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division's staff conducts a final administrative and risk review of those applications. The administrative review includes, but is not limited to, a check to ensure that NFO requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted via Grants.gov by the established deadline), and proposed costs are allowable, allocable and necessary. During this process, it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs).

In addition, to comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.206, the agency will follow, at a minimum, the risk review process described below (additional steps may be taken).

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

An applicant must meet the following standards to be considered for award:

i. Financial Stability. The applicant maintains an adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis in order to successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.
ii. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200. The applicant has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track federal funds. It has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.
iii. History of Performance. If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further that it has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards (items a through c. above). The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on rick assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR 200.208.

4. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)

a. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a));

b. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;

c. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.206, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

5. Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by August 31, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 30, 2021.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized official for signature.

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

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the General Terms and Conditions, which are included in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity on Grants.gov.

Preapplication coordination is not applicable. Environmental impact informationis not required for this program. This program is excluded from coverage under Executive Order 12372.

3. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are included in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity on Grants.gov. Recipients of awards under this NFO may anticipate the following reporting requirements:

a. Performance reports are on an annual basis to the ezFedGrants system or the FPAC Grants and Agreements Division due 30 calendar days after the reporting period and are based on the agreement period of performance start date.

b. Financial reports are on a quarterly basis to the ezFedGrants system or the FPAC Grants and Agreements Division. Reports are due 30 calendar days after the reporting period on January 31, April 30, July 31, October 31. Note that financial reporting is based on the calendar year.

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than $500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2 CFR Part 200 —Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any subawardees

must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170, unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact one of the following individuals with the NFO number in the subject line:

Name: Melanie Krizmanich
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center
Mailing Address: Patriots Plaza III, 11-149A, 355 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20319
Phone Number: (202) 572-5805
Email: Melanie.Krizmanich@usda.gov with a copy to FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact identified above via email with the NFO number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by July 14, 2021. A summary of questions and answers will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this NFO in Grants.gov approximately two weeks before the application due date.

2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**
   Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information, and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

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

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and

institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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