



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Foreign Agricultural Service

**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**  
**Emerging Markets Program**

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## **1. Basic Information**

### **1.1 Executive Summary**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, announces this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support the E (Kika) de la Garza Emerging Markets Program (EMP) by issuing new awards. The purpose of this program is to develop, maintain, or expand markets for exports of United States agricultural commodities and to promote cooperation and exchange of information between agricultural institutions and agribusinesses in the United States and emerging markets. This opportunity is available to U.S. entities to achieve the purposes of this program by: (1) making assessments of food and rural business systems needs; (2) making recommendations on measures necessary to enhance the effectiveness of food and rural business systems, including potential reductions in trade barriers; and (3) identifying and carrying out specific opportunities and projects to enhance the effectiveness of food and rural business systems in emerging markets.

### **1.2 Federal Agency Name**

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

### **1.3 Funding Opportunity Title**

2027 Emerging Markets Program

### **1.4 Announcement Type**

New Announcement

### **1.5 Funding Opportunity Number**

USDA-FAS-EMP-2027

### **1.6 Assistance Listing Number**

10.603 Emerging Markets Program

### **1.7 Funding Details**

Total Available Federal Funding: Anticipated to be no more than \$8 million. The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, as extended, provided no more than \$8 million in funding for each of the fiscal years through FY 2026. Congress has not yet determined funding levels for FY 2027.

Anticipated Number of Awards: 40 awards.

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

### **1.8 Key Dates**

Deadline for Question Submission: July 31, 2026

Application Submission Deadline: FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all applications. The initial application submission deadline is 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Friday, August 14, 2026. All

applications received by the initial application submission deadline will be considered for funding in the initial allocation tranche. Applications will continue to be accepted after the initial application submission deadline and will be considered for funding in the order received on the following dates as long as funding remains available: Tranche II deadline - December 31, 2026; Tranche III deadline - March 31, 2027; Tranche IV deadline - June 30, 2027. No applications will be accepted after June 30, 2027.

## **1.9 Agency Contact Information**

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Curt Alt

Email Address: [curt.alt@usda.gov](mailto:curt.alt@usda.gov)

Phone Number: (202) 690-4784

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

## **2. Eligibility**

### **2.1 Eligible Applicants**

Any United States private or government entity with a demonstrated role or interest in the export of U.S. agricultural commodities or products. Government organizations consist of Federal, State, and local agencies. Private organizations may include non-profit trade associations, colleges and universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and private companies. Foreign organizations, whether government or private, may participate as subrecipients or in-kind partners for activities carried out by eligible organizations, but are not eligible as recipients under the program.

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

### **2.2 Eligibility Threshold Criteria**

*Eligible Commodities:* All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration. Processed products that contain at least 50 percent U.S. origin agricultural commodity content by weight, exclusive of added water, are also eligible. No EMP application may include more than three promoted commodities. Any application that includes more than three promoted commodities will be found ineligible and will not be considered.

*Eligible Markets:* Only applications that exclusively target countries classified by the World Bank as low- or middle-income economies as of the application submission deadline will be considered for funding. Countries classified by the World Bank as high income economies are not eligible markets under EMP, and any application that includes an ineligible market will be found ineligible for consideration. World Bank income limits and country classifications can change from year to year, with the result that a given country may qualify one year but not the next, so applicants should consult the current World Bank country classification list for guidance. The World Bank's list of countries by income can be found [here](#). Any countries off

limits for funding due to U.S. sanctions or other restrictions are ineligible regardless of World Bank classification status, so applicants should check U.S. sanctions lists before submitting an application.

*Eligible Activities:* All EMP applications must fall into at least one of the following four categories. Applications that do not fall into one or more of these four categories will not be considered, regardless of previous guidance provided regarding the EMP:

1. **Market Assessments:** Assistance to teams (which must clearly consist primarily of U.S. agricultural consultants, agricultural producers, other persons from the private sector, or government officials expert in assessing the food and rural business systems of other countries) to enable those teams to make assessments of the food and rural business systems needs of the target market. This type of proposal must accomplish all three of the following elements:
  - Conduct an assessment of the food and rural business system needs of an emerging market;
  - Make recommendations on measures necessary to enhance the effectiveness of those systems, including potential reductions in trade barriers; and
  - Identify opportunities and projects to enhance the effectiveness of the emerging market's food and rural business systems.
2. **Subsistence and Travel to Emerging Markets:** Assistance to enable United States food and rural business system experts, including United States agricultural producers and other United States individuals knowledgeable in agricultural and agribusiness matters, to assist in transferring knowledge and expertise to entities in emerging markets.
3. **Subsistence and Travel to the United States:** Assistance to enable individuals designated by emerging markets to consult with such United States experts to enhance the food and rural business systems of such emerging markets and to transfer knowledge and expertise to such emerging markets.
4. **Technical Training:** Technical assistance to enable individuals or other entities to carry out recommendations, projects, and opportunities in emerging markets.

*Limits on Number of Markets:* No EMP application may target more than four countries. Any application that targets more than four countries will be found ineligible and will not be considered.

*Limits on Applications:* EMP funds awarded to Federal government agencies must be expended or otherwise obligated by close of business September 30, 2027. All other eligible entities may request funding for up to three years in a single application. After three years, the project is assumed to have proven its viability and, if necessary, must be continued by the recipient with its own or alternative sources of funding. Multi-year funding may, at FAS' discretion, be provided one year at a time with commitments beyond the first year subject to interim evaluations and funding availability.

*Funding Limits:* Funding per award under EMP is limited to a maximum of \$500,000. Applications that request more than \$500,000 in total funding will not be considered.

## **2.3 Substantial Compliance**

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

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

#### **2.4 Evidence of Eligibility**

Applicants are responsible for including documentation, if necessary, establishing that they meet the stated eligibility requirements, when it is not immediately obvious. Applicants should not presume that USDA/FAS is sufficiently familiar with their organization, and USDA/FAS will not make assumptions as to the nature of an applicant's organization.

#### **2.5 Funding Restrictions**

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by applicable regulations, including [7 CFR Part 1486](#), [2 CFR Part 200](#), and [2 CFR Part 400](#). Awards issued pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, consistent with the statutory authority for the award.

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

Indirect costs are eligible for reimbursement under this program. In general, costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective but not readily assignable to specific awards, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved, are considered indirect costs. These may include facilities not specific to individual projects, enterprise-wide services such as IT, and enterprise management. Pursuant to USDA Departmental Regulation DR2255-001, a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a cognizant U.S. Government agency will be honored, except where prohibited by statute.

#### **2.6 Multiple Applications**

Applicants may submit more than one application, and applicants with previously approved EMP awards may apply for additional awards. However, the maximum number of active awards that a single EMP recipient can have underway at any given time is five.

#### **2.7 Cost Share/Match Requirement**

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

### **3. Program Description**

The EMP was established to develop, maintain, and expand markets for exports of United States agricultural commodities and to promote cooperation and exchange of information between agricultural institutions and agribusinesses in the United States and emerging markets. The EMP accomplishes its goals by funding activities that enhance emerging markets' food and rural business systems, including reducing trade barriers.

#### **3.1 Authorizing Statutes and Regulations**

Section 203(d) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 ([7 U.S.C. 5623\(d\)](#)), as amended.

#### **3.2 Type of Assistance Instrument**

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

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

### **4. Application Contents and Format**

#### **4.1 Complete Application Package**

EMP applications must be submitted through the Unified Export Strategy (UES) system and must contain the following information:

- (1) Organizational information, including:
  - (i) Organization's name, address, contact person, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI);
  - (ii) The title for the proposed project;
  - (iii) A description of the organization and its membership;
  - (iv) A discussion of any collaborating organizations and their experience and role in the project.
- (2) The project's targeted market and promoted commodity, and a discussion of the current conditions in the market that are affecting exports of the promoted commodity or product to the market. This market analysis should cover why the market and commodity were selected and should provide an analysis of current U.S. export trade data and production, supply, demand, competition, pricing, and competitor analysis applicable to the target market and commodity.
- (3) Constraints and Performance Measures:
  - (i) A discussion of the specific export trade barrier or obstacle that the applicant is trying to overcome and why the proposed activities are appropriate to that challenge.
  - (ii) The performance measures that will be used to measure the project's progress. In addition to the following standard performance measures, which are tailored to the type of EMP proposal and must be included with all applications, applicants may also include custom performance measures. Any

custom performance measures must be aligned, clear, quantifiable, and include an identified methodology:

**1 For proposals involving Market Assessments:**

- a Number of stakeholders that received the assessment report in the first 30 days after publication; and
- b Percentage of stakeholders that received the assessment report that indicate an increased interest in the market.

**2 For proposals involving Technical Assistance:**

- a Activities must be measured by an appropriate metric (e.g., percentage change in understanding, number of targets adopting new behavior, etc.) that is tailored to the nature of the activity and can measure the impact of the technical assistance activity.

**3 For proposals involving Subsistence and Travel:**

- a Number of participants from the foreign market; and
- b Percentage of those participants with improved understanding of the concepts that the U.S. experts are presenting.

(4) Proposal details, including:

- (i) Project title;
- (ii) A comprehensive description/summary of the proposed activities, which must include the following elements:
  - i Clearly articulate which type of EMP activities (assessment, subsistence and travel, and technical assistance) the project includes;
  - ii Explain the specific activities proposed to address the trade barrier or problem;
  - iii Provide a detailed work plan covering the entire life of project that describes all activities, their sequence and timeframes, outputs and results, and milestones. The work plan must also include a list of planned submission dates for deliverables and reports the applicant will submit during the life of the project;
  - iv If the project involves trainings or meetings, please describe how participants will be selected and if they are new or returning to the project. (Lists of participants and contact information must be maintained for submittal to USDA/FAS);
  - v List all known projects in the targeted country for the last five years and discuss whether these activities are or were funded with USDA or other U.S. government resources (e.g., other FAS market development programs, Food Aid, Cochran, Borlaug, etc.) and/or were conducted in coordination with other U.S. government agencies.
- (iii) A discussion of how the proposed project will benefit the relevant sector of the U.S. agricultural economy as a whole and not just the applicant. Please also include a plan on how any data or reports generated by the project will be provided to the public;
- (iv) Describe the specific project objectives and accomplishments that the project aims to achieve, considering overall production, supply, demand,

- competition, pricing, U.S. export trade data analysis, and competitor analysis applicable to the target market(s) and commodity(ies);
- (v) A comprehensive discussion of the rationale for the proposed project, including why the applicant is targeting this particular market and why the applicant has chosen to implement a particular activity(ies) over another type of activity;
  - (vi) A discussion of how this project will benefit the emerging market's food and rural business systems and the degree to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to the development, maintenance, or expansion of U.S. agricultural exports to the market; and
  - (vii) An explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to undertake activities without such assistance.
- (5) For each proposed activity, a detailed budget request and description, including the applicant's required cost share, if applicable, must be provided. Detailed cost calculations and justifications for each budget line item must be provided, and all line items should be described in sufficient detail to enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project.
- (i) If indirect costs are included in the budget, attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If a negotiated indirect cost agreement does not exist, please attach a description of the basis for the indirect cost calculation. If electing to utilize the de minimis rate, consistent with [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), please include a statement of election.

#### **4.2 Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

If the applicant's organization has not previously participated in a USDA/FAS market development program, the applicant may submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that the organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably USDA or USDA/FAS agreements) and describe:

- (i) Whether, and how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage those agreements;
- (ii) The applicant's history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether the applicant adequately and timely reported on progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and
- (iii) The applicant's organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and the applicant's staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in [Section 6](#), USDA/FAS will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from USDA/FAS files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to

verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If applicants do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and applicants will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If applicants do not provide any response for these items, applicants will receive a score of 0 for these factors.

#### **4.3 Electronic Signatures**

Consistent with the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN Act), USDA/FAS uses and accepts electronic signatures for application and award documents. USDA/FAS will neither solicit nor send physical copies of documents.

#### **4.4 Proprietary Information**

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

#### **4.5 Other Application Information**

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

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

### **5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

#### **5.1 Address to Request Application Package**

This Notice of Funding Opportunity contains all information required to submit a complete application package.

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

Each applicant must:

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

#### **5.3 Submission Instructions**

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

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

#### **5.4 Submission Dates and Times**

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

#### **5.5 Intergovernmental Review**

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. USDA/FAS may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that USDA/FAS selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement. For more information about USDA's implementation for Intergovernmental Review, please [click here](#).

### **6. Application Review Information**

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

#### **6.1 Eligibility Threshold Review**

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

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

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

Applications that are deemed eligible and complete will move on to the Phase 2, Agency review.

## **6.2 Review Criteria**

*Agency Review (Phase 2):* An EMP review committee comprised of representatives from the FAS Program Areas will review each eligible application and will score and provide comments on each application using the following criteria, with the numbers in parenthesis indicating the weight attached to each criterion:

1. Appropriateness of the Activity (30 points), which will vary based on the type of application but will include:

For applications involving assessments: Does the application present a methodology that is likely to result in the needed recommendations and identification of specific opportunities and projects? Is the assessment team comprised of credible U.S. experts with experience in assessing food and rural business systems?

For applications involving subsistence and travel: Is the exchange of knowledge and expertise clearly described in terms of enhancements to the emerging market's food and rural business systems? Do we understand how travelers are selected?

For applications involving technical assistance: Is the potential for the proposed activities to enhance the effectiveness of the emerging market's food and rural business systems sufficiently justified?

2. Market Impact (50 points), including the degree to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to the development, maintenance, or expansion of U.S. agricultural exports to emerging markets; the conditions or constraints affecting the level of U.S. exports and market share for the agricultural commodity/product; and the demonstration of how a proposed project will benefit the industry as a whole; and

3. Completeness and Viability of the application (20 points), including evidence that the organization has the knowledge, expertise, ability, and resources to successfully implement the project; the cost of the project; the entity's willingness to contribute resources to the project; and the applicant's reported past EMP results and evaluations, if applicable.

## **6.3 Review and Selection Process**

*Development of Funding Recommendations (Phase 3):* In this phase of the review, a combined average score for each of the applications will be calculated from the individual scores provided by the EMP review committee members. The applications will be ranked highest to lowest by combined score, and the available funding will be allocated to the applications in order until all applications are funded or until the available funding is exhausted. Applications that receive an average score of less than 70 points will not be considered for funding. In addition to the scores, comments received from the reviewers will be considered when developing the funding recommendations. FAS may also solicit and consider feedback on the applications from

appropriate overseas Posts and other U.S. government subject area experts when determining funding recommendations.

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

#### **6.4 Risk Review**

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

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

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

#### **7. Award Notices**

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

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

#### **8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration**

## **8.1 Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

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

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

## **8.2 Reporting**

EMP recipients must provide interim and final performance and financial reports as specified by the terms and conditions of their award. Each report, whether interim or final, must evaluate the progress of the EMP project using the performance measures approved in the written agreement and provide an accounting of all project expenditures by cost category and actual contributions made to the project by the recipient and all other participating entities. Unusual deviations from activity budget amounts or lagging progress on performance measures should be noted and explained. All reports must be submitted in the UES.

### Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

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

### Closeout

Within 90 days after the agreement completion date, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, FAS will confirm that the recipient has provided all of the required reports and will review the reports for completeness and content. Once the required reports are approved, FAS will prepare a closeout letter that advises the recipient of the award closeout procedures. The notice will indicate that the period of performance has closed, note that any remaining funds will be de-obligated, and address any additional closeout requirements. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted.

## **8.3 Monitoring**

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

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

## **8.4 Conflict of Interest**

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

## **8.5 Mandatory Disclosures**

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

## **9. Other Information**

### **9.1 Extensions**

Extensions to this program are allowed. Recipients may request a no-cost extension to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period and must include a justification for why the extension is necessary and how the extension would effectively support the program's purpose. Requests for extensions are subject to review and approval by FAS.

### **9.2 No Awards**

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

### **9.3 SAM.gov Registration Instructions**

Organizations applying for this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using [login.gov](#)<sup>1</sup> to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes several steps and validations and is not complete until the registration is shown as Active. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **9.4 Faith-Based Organizations**

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

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

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