



Conservation Technical Assistance: Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Agreements

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2022
Conservation Technical Assistance:
Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
(GLCI) Cooperative Agreements**

**Funding Opportunity
No. USDA-NRCS-NHQ-GLCI-22-
NOFO0001216**



Request for Applications (RFA)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Submission date typo correction: Page 20

Information added concerning floor and ceiling amounts: Page 10

Deadline date modifications: Pages 3, 10, 20

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Funding Opportunity Title: Conservation Technical Assistance: Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Cooperative Agreements

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-GLCI-22-NOFO0001216

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): This program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 10.902.

Funding Opportunity Summary

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) delivers conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world. NRCS provides leadership and funding to ensure that all programs and services are made accessible to all customers, fairly and equitably, with emphasis on reaching historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

The goal of this funding opportunity is for NRCS, in collaboration with a diverse set of partners, including historically underserved farmers and ranchers and their organizations, to expand the delivery of conservation technical assistance to support grazing planning and conservation practice implementation and monitoring, conferences and other education, demonstrations, producer networks, workforce training, research and outreach projects to improve agricultural resilience. The anticipated amount for cooperative agreements under this request for applications (RFA) is approximately \$12 million in fiscal year (FY) 2022.

Funding for the Conservation Technical Assistance: Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Cooperative Agreements is supported by FY 2022 GLCI. GLCI also provides support to NRCS for grazing technical assistance to producers, as well as the National Grazing Lands Coalition to help state grazing coalitions form and persist with participation from historically underserved producers, to host a Triennial National Grazing Lands Conference, and to act as navigators for grazers seeking additional resources.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on **10/06/2022**. 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.

Limit questions to those regarding specific information contained in this RFA (such as dates, page numbers, clarification of discrepancies, etc.). Questions related to eligibility, or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

The agency anticipates making selections by **11/03/2022** and expects to execute awards by **12/01/2022**. These dates are estimates and are subject to change. Note that completing all steps required to apply for a Federal award can take some time; the table below represents a general outline of how long applicants should allow for each part of this process.

Required Action	Timing
Obtain a TIN/EIN from the IRS	Up to 35 days
Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number	1-2 business days
Register with SAM.gov	7-10 business days
Register with Grants.gov, add a profile, and authorize an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)	Up to 14 days
Submit GLCI application in Grants.gov	10/06/2022
Applicants notified of selection or non-selection	11/03/2022
Awards executed	12/01/2022

Application Checklist

NRCS expects applicants to read the entire RFA prior to submitting their application to ensure that they understand the program's requirements. This application checklist provides the required and conditionally required documents for an application package.

Conservation Technical Assistance: Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Cooperative Agreements requires that **all application packages** include the following, which can be found in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity in Grants.gov:

- ☐ Project Proposal Template
 - Ensure the required format and does not exceed the page limit.
 - Ensure project excludes unallowable costs and activities per Section D, Part 6, Funding Restrictions.
- ☐ SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
- ☐ SF 424A – Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.
- ☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying

If applicable, packages may also be required to include the following documents:

- ☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or De Minimis Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this RFA 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 via <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.

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Legislative Authority

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, 16 U.S.C. 590a-590f, 590q; the FY 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Public Law 117-103; and 7 CFR Part 610.

2. Program Purpose and Priorities

- The purpose of Conservation Technical Assistance: Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Cooperative Agreements is to enhance NRCS and partner resources to:
 - Increase acreage across the nation in managed grazing that addresses natural resource concerns.
 - Increase availability of technical assistance for farmers and ranchers engaged in grazing activities.
 - Increase technical assistance for historically underserved farmers and ranchers engaged in grazing activities.
 - Expand and establish new peer-to-peer networks and direct financial support for mentors working with new, beginning, or transitioning farmers and ranchers engaged in grazing activities.
 - Ensure a broad set of the grazing community including minority producers, and associated institutions such as 1890, 1994, and Hispanic serving Land Grant Institutions, are serviced by GLCI.
 - Ensure strong participation by minority producers in new and existing grazing coalitions.
- Eligible Activities for the GLCI Cooperative Agreements include:
 - Technical assistance
 - Write and implement grazing plans
 - Develop rangeland health reference worksheets and/or grazing management interpretations on both rangeland and pastureland to update current Ecological Site Descriptions.
 - To spur innovation and grazing technologies
 - Education (Conferences, workshops, webinars, and other educational events).
 - Grazing networks (field days, pasture walks, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, mentorship)
 - NRCS Workforce Development, including mentorship, training, and apprenticeship arrangements.
 - Examples of trainings for NRCS employees include Working Effectively with Livestock Producers, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Pasture Condition Scoring, Conservation

Planning on Grazing Lands, and other grazing land tools and technologies used to assess grazing lands.

- Youth outreach related to grazing land management
 - A limited amount of funds in each region may be used to conduct on-farm research as a supplemental goal for any projects conducting the above activities
- Projects should identify and remove barriers to accessing grazing information and programs and reach historically underserved groups through a combination of outreach and technical assistance in managing grasslands that address the following NRCS priority areas:
 1. Addressing local natural resource concerns
 2. Utilizing Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry practices and principles.
 3. Encouraging existing and new partnerships to advance the resource needs of underserved communities.
 4. Identifying and implementing strategies to quantify, monitor, report on and verify conservation benefits associated with grazing management systems.

Applicants *must* propose a project that responds to one or more of the program priority areas listed above.

For priority 2 above, an example of utilizing Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry practices and principles would be a project that through outreach introduces conservation planning alternatives to address water quantity and quality, soil erosion and health, air quality, plant productivity and health, energy efficiency, and other resource concerns that mitigate the impacts of climate change to their grazing operation and the environment. Additional information related to Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry may be found at:

<https://www.farmers.gov/conservation/climate-smart>

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/climatechange/?cid=nrcseprd1881023#soil>

- NRCS will place priority upon projects—
 - Promoting grazing management systems
 - Having a long-term project plan for funding beyond the life of this award
 - Led by organizations serving primarily historically underserved producers or which have demonstrated ability to serve historically underserved producers
 - With multi-stakeholder partnerships of three or more organizations
 - With significant farmer and rancher involvement
 - With strategies to quantify, monitor, report on and verify conservation benefits

3. Definitions

Historically underserved producers are defined as the following:

Beginning Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years, and who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who has direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of one or more of the following groups whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities, 7 U.S.C. § 2279(e). Groups include, but are not limited to:

- African Americans
- American Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Hispanics
- Pacific Islanders

Veteran Farmer or Rancher (VFR) is a farmer or rancher who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable and who also meets the definition of beginning farmer or rancher (BFR). The VFR must: a) not have operated a farm or ranch; or b) not have operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding

a. Estimated Funding

The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is \$12 million.

b. Federal Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The funding floor is \$50,000 for a one-year agreement and \$100,000 for a two-year agreement. The funding ceiling is \$150,000 for a one-year agreement and \$300,000 for a two-year agreement.

c. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be up to one to two years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of 12/15/2022.

d. Number of Awards

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

e. Regional Balance

To balance the need to support grazing where it exists and provide opportunities for states with limited grazing to build their capacity to encourage climate friendly grazing, NRCS may prioritize applications for funding on a regional basis which corresponds to the NRCS regions as follows:

- West – Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Pacific Islands Area, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming
- Central – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin
- Northeast – Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia
- Southeast – North Carolina, Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, Louisiana, and the Caribbean Area

Additionally, NRCS may allocate available award funding based on the extent of grazing lands in each region. Individual NRCS State offices will be responsible for administering cooperative agreements with organizations in that state.

Agreements can cover projects developed at the county, regional, state, or multi state level. For applications involving organizations in multiple states, one NRCS office will be selected to administer the award.

2. Type of Award

a. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award a cooperative agreement(s) pursuant to this opportunity. The agency will be substantially involved in the work performed under the agreement and will undertake activities such as the following:

- a. Authority to suspend work if specifications or work statements are not met.
- b. Review and approval of one stage of work before another may begin.
- c. Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts beyond existing Federal policy.

- d. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation.
- e. Project monitoring to permit specified kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of interrelationships with and impacts on other projects.
- f. Highly prescriptive agency requirements that limit recipient discretion.
- g. Review and approval of key personnel.
- h. Direct agency operational involvement or participation during the activity.

NRCS will have the following responsibilities:

- a. Collaborate with the partner to build capacity to deliver grazing conservation technical assistance.
- b. Participate in building technical capacity of NRCS State level grazing coordinators and partner field production and conservation employees to develop and implement effective projects.
- c. Intervene in project activities to achieve positive natural resources outcomes.
- d. Provide assistance to entities in promoting NRCS programs and services.

b. Procurement Contracts

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

c. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to apply. The project must have originally been awarded through a cooperative agreement between NRCS and the applying entity. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing cooperative agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this RFA. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing cooperative agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this RFA.

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)). International and foreign organizations are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types based in

any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands):

- a. Nonprofit organizations having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (other than institutions of higher education)
- b. Farmer or rancher organizations
- c. State and local conservation governmental agencies
- d. Agricultural Extension Services
- e. Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- f. Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- g. Land grant universities including 1890 or 1994 land grant institution (7 U.S.C. 3222 *et seq.*), Hispanic-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1101a), or other minority-serving institution, such as an historically Black college or university (20 U.S.C. 1061), a tribally controlled college or university (25 U.S.C. 1801), or Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1059g).

2. Other

Any award made pursuant to this RFA will be made to a single individual or 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 may not submit more than one application. If more than one application is submitted, only the last application will be considered.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no specified cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity, however providing a match counts towards the applicant’s evaluation criteria.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. How to Submit an Application

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Submissions must be received by the time and date due referenced under “Key Dates” in this document. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system-generated date and time receipt documentation for submission made.

2. Information for New Users of Grants.gov

a. Overview

While a Grants.gov account is not required to download a RFA and related documents, it is required to submit an application. If your organization has never submitted an application through Grants.gov, please be aware that there are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can submit an

application. **Completing those steps can take a significant amount of time; plan accordingly.**

For information about the Grants.gov pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle, go to <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 before 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 (see steps i. through v. below). Complete organization registration instructions are included on Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Although creating a Grants.gov account online can take only minutes, SAM registration 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.

c. Steps to Register

- i. Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): All entities applying for funding must have a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet or a UEI issued by SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the DUNS number or UEI in the data entry field labeled "UEI" on the SF-424 form.
- ii. Register with System for Award Management (SAM): All organizations must register with SAM 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, go 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 see the detailed instructions at <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 your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the DUNS number/UEI for the organization in the “UEI” field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, go 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. (Please be aware that the EBiz POC and the person with the AOR role cannot be the same individual; they must be different people.) 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, go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

For instructions about tracking your role request, go 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 (see step c.v. above) is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and 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 RFA, 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, go 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 drives, 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 see 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/UEI. Once it is completed, the information will transfer 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 before 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.

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

3. Electronic Application Package

Applicants interested in submitting an application in response to this RFA must submit it through Grants.gov; the agency **will not** accept applications submitted by 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.

DUNS Number/UEI and SAM

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c) or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to —

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- (ii) Provide a valid UEI in its application; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information while it has an active Federal award or an application 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 UEI and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, the agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Entities must obtain a DUNS number or UEI 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 SAM registration.

SAM Registration: To register, go to <https://www.sam.gov>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted through the “Help” tab at the website listed above.

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

The Federal 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 UEI or the Entity ID. See [Planned UEI Updates in Grant Application Forms](#) for UEI updates.

4. 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 that are incomplete. Page limits are noted in parentheses after each item. 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.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the documents and information requested in a-j below.

a. Project Title and Summary (1 page maximum)

Provide a descriptive title of your project. Then, 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 area or community to be served. Describe how this project will initiate, build upon, or expand related work or programs. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the purpose and priorities of GLCI as outlined above.

b. Project Narrative (15 page maximum)

The project narrative must cover all activities proposed to be carried out with Federal funds.

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 and does not include the project summary described in section a. Each page must be numbered and have 1-inch margins.

c. The Organizations and Partners Involved

- Explain your organization's experience in the field of grazing land conservation, serving underserved communities, and providing outreach in target area or community.
- List your organization's leadership and key personnel for this project. For everyone listed, describe: their role in project and qualifications to carry out project, including experience and expertise in grazing lands conservation and working with target communities and related grazing systems.
- List one or more partner organizations for this project and include their contact information, relevant experience, community connections, and specific responsibilities for achieving the project goals.
- Explain plans to coordinate work with partner organizations and to leverage existing resources.

d. Workplan and Activities to Achieve the Goals

- Summarize the work to be performed in nontechnical terms for each goal and project objectives.
- 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 achieved. Include the specific tasks to complete each activity and identify the responsible party to complete the task.

- Describe plan to ensure financial accountability, including accounting and purchasing policies. Include the specific tasks to complete each activity and identify the responsible party to complete the task. Include the specific tasks to complete each activity and identify the responsible party to complete the task.
- Describe how you will evaluate the outcome and whether objectives were met.
- Describe how project will continue beyond end of the award period, how it will become self-sustainable, and potential funding sources for continuation of the project after Federal funding ends.

If your proposal will include information collection from non-Federal sources, ensure the collection meets the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. Surveys of individuals or entities are generally prohibited without prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget. For additional guidance about allowable and unallowable activities, please go to <https://pra.digital.gov/do-i-need-clearance/>

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

e. Standard Form (SF) 424, “Application for Federal Assistance”

See “Instructions for Completing SF-424” located at the end of this opportunity.

f. SF-424A, “Budget Information for 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 at the end of this opportunity.

g. Budget Narrative

- In a separate document titled “Budget Narrative,” explain and justify all requested budget items and costs. (See the budget narrative guidance located at the end of this opportunity.) Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency’s approval and estimate its cost. The pages included as the budget narrative do not count toward the page limit.
- Any non-Federal entity (except State and local governments that receive more than \$35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in [2 CFR Section 200.403](#), costs must be

consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

- iii. MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.
- iv. As required in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F, “Audit Requirements,” all U.S. States, local governments, Federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments, and nonprofit 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.

h. Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Under 31 U.S.C. 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 employee of 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 or your organization has made or agree to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying, you must also complete and submit the SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” located at 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR Section 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

i. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

In accordance with 2 CFR Section 400.2, the RFA must include a requirement that applicants disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest.

Applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award if there is a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any immediate family members, his or her

partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an applicant considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a State or local government or Indian tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that, because of the relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving a related organization.

j. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if applicable

If charging indirect costs (including for cost share), upload the NICRA under “Other Attachments” (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

5. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence

Applicants must submit applications through Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. eastern time (ET) on **10/06/22**. 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). 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.

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 (GRANTXXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov
- an email with the official date and 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.

6. Intergovernmental Review

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

7. 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 project amendments.
- d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives.
- e. Compensation for injuries to persons or for 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.
- g. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land and for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life. See 2 CFR Section 200.439 for additional information.
- h. Management fees and profit. Any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award-related direct and indirect costs only.
- i. 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 considered to be 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.

- j. 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 Section 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.
- k. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work. All costs must be

reasonable to be allowable, and 2 CFR 200.404 defines a reasonable cost as one that, in its nature and amount, 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. For additional information, please see 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, "Cost Principles."

8. Indirect costs limitations

- a. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired or qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR Section 200.414(f). 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 and who 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. Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

D. 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 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 application

by a common cutoff date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Merit and 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.

Proposals will also be reviewed for their alignment with USDA priorities on climate, equity, and environmental justice including but not limited to: participation in programs by historically underserved groups or groups serving historically underserved or vulnerable communities.

The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or Designee. In addition to the merit/technical review and risk reviews, the approving official may also give consideration to furthering programmatic purposes, including geographical dispersion, program balance, or diversity of awards.

2. Merit/Technical Criteria

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

Project Consistent with GLCI Purpose and Priorities (30 points)

- Applicant provided assessment of the need or problem in target area, with at least one source of data supporting that access to grazing conservation technical assistance is issue in target area. Applicant provided description of target community, explained needs of the local community, and provided at least one source of supporting data. Applicant explained how project activities and outcomes are aligned with purpose and priorities of this program.
- Applicant described project goals, including who will benefit from the project and what community needs it will address. Applicant described project objectives that were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Applicant described project outcomes including what will be accomplished, who will benefit, and how many people will benefit.
- Quality of the plan presented to promote grazing conservation technical assistance to historically underserved producers within the target area.
- The project clearly demonstrates a potential for positive impact where limited access to grazing conservation technical assistance.

Internal Organization Support and Partnerships (25 points)

- Applicant explained organization's experience in grazing conservation technical assistance, serving communities lacking access grazing conservation technical assistance, and doing outreach in target area or community.
- Applicant listed organizational leadership and key personnel, described role in project and qualifications to carry out project, including experience and expertise of key personnel in agriculture and innovative production and working with target

communities and related food systems (which will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials). Such personnel demonstrate significant experience in grazing conservation technical assistance, with preference given to organizations with experience of 3 years or more.

- Applicant listed one or more partners with their contact information and described the partner's relevant experience, community connections, and responsibilities.
- Quality and extent of external partnerships, and plan to leverage existing resources.
- Applicant demonstrated willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results.
- Applicant described collaboration with one or more partner organizations working in the local community.

Project Workplan (20 points)

- Applicant described permissible activities the project will undertake, timelines and milestones, the specific tasks to complete each activity, and identified responsible party to complete the task.
- Applicant demonstrated the ability to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation.
- Applicant described how it will measure progress toward the project's goal and identified verifiable indicators to demonstrate progress.
- Applicant described how it will evaluate the outcome and whether objectives were met.
- Applicant described plan to ensure financial accountability, including accounting and purchasing policies.
- Applicant described how project will continue beyond end of award period, how it will become self-sustainable, and identified potential funding sources for continuation of the project after Federal funding ends.

Budget (25 points)

- Total funding requested is appropriate for scope of project. Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out project's goals and objectives.
- Budget narrative includes a line-item description of every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goal. Budget calculations are itemized sufficiently to show how the budget components were developed and costs estimated and derived.

3. Administrative and Risk Criteria

Notice of selection after merit or technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following notification of selection for funding (see section F. of this opportunity), 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 RFA requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted through 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 of 2 CFR Section 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 (currently 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:

- a. **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.
- b. **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.
- c. **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 has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards. The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR Section 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 FAPIIS accessible through SAM. FAPIIS is a Federal database intended to serve as a government-wide source of information about the prior performance and compliance of Federal procurement contractors, grantees, and cooperative agreement holders (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 FAPIIS, 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 Section 200.206, "Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants."

E. 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.

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 information is not required for this program. This program is excluded from coverage under Executive Order 12372.

3. Award Recipient 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 RFA may anticipate the following reporting requirements:

- a. Performance reports are due on an annual basis to the ezFedGrants system or the FPAC Grants and Agreements Division in accordance with the schedule included in the award statement of work. Note that the performance reporting period is 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.

4. Federal Awarding Agency Payments to Recipients

Payments to award recipients will be either on a reimbursable or advance basis in accordance with the schedule in the award statement of work (typically quarterly or semi-annually). This schedule will be established in cooperation with the recipient when the agreement is executed. Payment will be made based on actual expenditures, not to

exceed the amount obligated in the award. The Federal Awarding Agency will make a reimbursable payment within 30 calendar days after receipt of a proper payment request; however, payment will be withheld if the recipient has reports that are overdue.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any sub awardees 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).

F. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact the following individual with the RFA number in the subject line:

Name: Jeffrey Jacobs
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center

Email: Jeffrey.Jacobs@usda.gov with a copy to FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV

G. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Federal Awarding Agency contact identified above by email with the RFA number in the subject line.
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 FOIA without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and 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.

5. Any award made pursuant to this RFA may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and 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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