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Chronic Wasting Disease Cervid Management and Response Activities 2026 Cooperative Agreements

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-APHIS-10025-ASBVSWS00-26-0001

Publication Date: May 15, 2026

Application Due Date: June 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time

Funding Opportunity: Chronic Wasting Disease Cervid Management and Response Activities 2026

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) and Wildlife Services (WS) is announcing the availability of around \$12,050,000 in cooperative agreement funding¹ to control and prevent chronic wasting disease (CWD) in farmed and wild cervids of which up to \$2,000,000 may be awarded through non-competitive cooperative agreements as needed to address CWD outbreaks in farmed cervids. The amount available is based on the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Congressional appropriations language and directions.

The available funding will be divided amongst wild and farmed cervid activities as shown:

Wild Cervid: \$5,500,000; ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0001

Proposals may include, but are not limited to, the development and implementation of **wild** cervid CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in **wild** cervids. See [Section B.1](#) for eligible applicants.

Wild Cervid – Tribal Nations: \$500,000; ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0002

Proposals must be submitted by Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and may include, but are not limited to, the development and implementation of **wild** CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in wild cervids on lands owned or managed by **Tribal entities**.

Farmed Cervid: \$ 6,050,000²; ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-26-0007

Proposals may include, but are not limited to, the development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities. Proposals can include the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected **farmed** cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids, as part of an overall CWD management plan and in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#). See [Section B.1](#) for eligible applicants.

Applicants can find information for this funding opportunity in [Grants.gov](#) by searching this title, the Assistance Listing Number 10.025, or in [ezFedGrants](#) by search the funding opportunity number for farmed cervid: USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-26-0007, for wild cervid: USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0001, and wild cervid Tribal Nations: USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0002. Applications must be submitted through [ezFedGrants](#).

¹USDA APHIS VS may increase the funding available through this opportunity by adding unused funds allocated for indemnity payments or other uses within the budget line.

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SYNOPSIS

Funding Opportunity Title: Chronic Wasting Disease Cervid Management and Response Activities 2026

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-APHIS-10025-ASBVSWS00-26-0001

Funding Type: Cooperative Agreement

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance/Assistance Listing Number and Title: 10.025, Plant and Animal Disease, Pest Control and Animal Care

Application Due Date: Proposals must be received through [ezFedGrants](#) by June 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time. Proposals received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: APHIS will make approximately \$12,050,000 in cooperative agreement funding available in 2026 to support efforts to control and prevent CWD in farmed and wild cervid populations. Eligible activities include the development and implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response initiatives. The final amount available for competitive funding opportunities may be adjusted based on the need to issue noncompetitive agreements in response to CWD outbreaks.¹

Eligible Applicants: This competitive opportunity is open to the following entities: State departments of agriculture; State animal health agencies; State departments of wildlife or natural resources; Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments; and research institutions and universities. State agencies and Tribes, or in the case of Native American Tribal organizations, the Native American Tribal governments they are representing, must have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for farmed cervids to be eligible for the farmed cervid opportunity, or regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for wild cervids to be eligible for the wild cervid opportunities. Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments are listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior; [Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#). Universities include the [1994 Tribal colleges and universities](#), the [1890 land-grant institutions](#), [land-grant colleges and universities](#), and other accredited universities. Research institute is an establishment founded for conducting research that has published peer reviewed articles in the field and that currently employs one or more investigators who will work on the project with relevant experience in applied research on the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

Cost Sharing: Although cost sharing is not required, APHIS may take an eligible applicant's ability to contribute non-Federal funds for proposed activities into consideration.

A. BASIC INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: USDA APHIS

Funding Opportunity Title: Chronic Wasting Disease Cervid Management and Response Activities 2026

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-APHIS-10025-ASBVSWS00-26-0001

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance/Assistance Listing Number: 10.025

Funding Details: APHIS anticipates awarding around \$12,050,000 in cooperative agreement funding to support projects that address the funding priorities described in [Section C.2](#); the amount of funding is based on the FY26 Congressional appropriations language and directions:

Wild Cervid: \$5,500,000

Wild Cervid – Tribal Nations Only: \$500,000

Farmed Cervid: \$6,050,000³

APHIS anticipates awarding approximately fifty-five cooperative agreements; these agreements typically range from \$10,000 to \$250,000 each. The average farmed cervid award in 2025 was \$170,376 across 22 agreements (excluding indemnity). The average wild cervid award in 2025 was \$181,424 across 32 agreements. Based on reviewer recommendations, APHIS may adjust the amount of funds awarded to a project. In these cases, applicants may accept or decline the offered award. If accepted, applicants must submit a revised proposal package that aligns with the amount awarded and addresses reviewer concerns, as applicable. APHIS VS (farmed cervids) or WS (wild cervids) will provide additional guidance to applicants in this situation. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Awards will be funded via cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by APHIS to assist in the completion of the goals and objectives of the work. Grants are used when a recipient is performing all the work without the substantial involvement of APHIS.

This is a competitive funding opportunity. A team of reviewers will evaluate proposals and recommend proposals for funding based on the merits of the proposal as outlined in [Section F.2](#). Recipients are not pre-determined. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS VS (farmed cervids) and WS (wild cervids).

Key Dates: Proposals must be received through [ezFedGrants](#) by June 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time. Proposals received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will not be accepted.

The performance period will begin on or before September 30, 2026, and projects must be completed no later than 12 months after the start date. Funding will not be allowed, nor activities approved to occur, outside of the period of performance. There is an allowance for a one-time extension request of the performance period for up to 12 months to complete the project, assuming there is no increase in funding requested. This request must be submitted in accordance with the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) in order to be considered. Recipients wishing to continue work or build on projects

³ USDA APHIS VS may increase the funding available through this opportunity by adding unused funds allocated for indemnity payments or other uses within the budget line.

funded in prior years that are either complete or will be complete by the proposed period of performance may submit proposals to this opportunity. Recipients wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years which are not complete, and have not been extended previously, should submit a no-cost extension or by contacting the APHIS Program Manager rather than submitting a proposal to this opportunity.

Applicants can find information for this funding opportunity in [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) by searching this title, the Assistance Listing Number 10.025, or in [ezFedGrants](https://www.ezFedGrants.gov) by search the funding opportunity number for farmed cervid: USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-26-0007, for wild cervid: USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0001, and wild cervid Tribal Nations: USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0002. Applications must be submitted through [ezFedGrants](https://www.ezFedGrants.gov).

Executive Summary: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) and Wildlife Services (WS) is announcing the availability of around \$12,050,000 in cooperative agreement funding to control and prevent CWD in farmed and wild cervids of which up to \$2,000,000 may be awarded through non-competitive cooperative agreements as needed to address CWD outbreaks in farmed cervids. The amount available is based on the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Congressional appropriations language and directions.

Wild Cervid: \$5,500,000

ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0001

Proposals may include, but are not limited to, the development and implementation of **wild** cervid CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in **wild** cervids.

Wild Cervid – Tribal Nations Only: \$500,000

ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-WSNWRC00-26-0002

Proposals may include, but are not limited to, the development and implementation of **wild** cervid CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in wild cervids on lands owned or managed by **Tribal entities**.

Farmed Cervid: \$6,050,000⁴

ezFedGrants Opportunity USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-26-0007

Proposals may include, but are not limited to, the development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities. Proposals can include the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected **farmed** cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids, as part of an overall CWD management plan and in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-9/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-55/subpart-2).

The target audience and eligible entities are State departments of agriculture, State animal health agencies, State departments of wildlife or natural resources that have regulatory authority over farmed cervids, federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and Native American Tribal organizations that have regulatory authority over farmed cervids or that own farmed cervids or

⁴ USDA APHIS VS may increase the funding available through this opportunity by adding unused funds allocated for indemnity payments or other uses within the budget line.

universities representing such federally recognized Native American Tribal governments, and research institutes and universities.

Agency Contact Information:

For administrative questions pertaining to **farmed** cervid applications, required documents, or the [ezFedGrants](#) application process, please contact VS.FiOps.ASC.Agreements@usda.gov, Stephanie Kozar, (970) 494-7374.

For programmatic questions regarding the **farmed** cervid CWD program, please contact the following APHIS VS Cervid Health Team: VS.SP.Cervid.Health@usda.gov, Tracy Nichols, (970) 494-7380

For administrative questions pertaining to **wild** cervid or **wild** cervid Tribal Nation only applications, required documents, or the [ezFedGrants](#) application process, please contact APHIS-WS.CWD_Agreements@usda.gov.

For programmatic questions regarding the **wild** cervid or **wild** cervid Tribal Nations only CWD program, please contact the following primary point of contact: Tim Linder, Staff Biologist, WS National Wildlife Disease Program, Timothy.J.Linder@usda.gov, (O) 970-266-6217, (C) 970-420-5309

For general information on the CWD Program and previous funding opportunities visit: [USDA APHIS | Cervids: Chronic Wasting Disease](#)

B. ELIGIBILITY

B.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following entities are eligible for funding through this opportunity:

1. State departments of agriculture
2. State animal health agencies
3. State departments of wildlife or natural resources
4. Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments⁵ and Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments.
5. Research institutes⁶ and universities⁷

⁵ Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments are listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior; [Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#).

⁶ Research institute is an establishment founded for conducting research that has published peer reviewed articles in the field and that currently employs one or more investigators who will work on the project with relevant experience in applied research on the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

⁷ Universities includes the [1994 Tribal colleges and universities](#), the [1890 land-grant institutions](#), [land-grant colleges and universities](#), and other accredited universities.

NOTES:

State agencies and Tribes or in the case of Native American Tribal organizations or universities the Native American Tribal governments they are representing, must have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for **farmed cervids or wild cervids to be eligible** for the respective opportunities. Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal Governments must attach letter(s) indicating intent to participate from the represented Federally recognized Native American Tribal government(s) to be considered for funding.

Research institutes or universities submitting a study that includes field work with regulated cervids **must** submit a letter indicating support, cooperation, or no objection from the appropriate cervid regulatory authorities for the state(s) involved, or a herd plan signed by the herd owner, APHIS, and representatives of the appropriate state regulatory authorities that is aligned with the work plan, to be considered for funding.

This list does not preclude award recipients from collaborating with other entities who may have direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in farmed cervids, State or national livestock, wildlife, sportsmen, or conservation organizations, or a Federal Agency.

Any application with a proposed sub-award over \$10,000 must complete an additional Financial Plan for the sub-awarded portion as a part of the proposal package.

Due to strict requirements around the distribution of funds to Federal agencies across fiscal years, sub-awarding this funding (any payment) to Federal agencies may not be included in the APHIS share of the Financial Plan. Recipients may use funds from other sources to pay for services from Federal agencies; if applicable, such expenses should be listed in the recipient share in the Financial Plan.

B.2 OTHER CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

All applicant organizations must have at least two users registered in [ezFedGrants](#), a Grants Administrative Officer and a Signatory Official, to successfully submit a proposal package. We recommend identifying these individuals and confirming they have access prior to submitting a proposal to ensure an efficient application process. This system will be used for all stages of the funding opportunity process, including submitting the proposal package, signing the cooperative agreement, and submitting reports.

Applicants will be checked against the System for Award Management (SAM) to ensure they have not been disbarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency and have an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). See [Section E.2](#) and [F.3](#).

An eligible applicant may submit multiple proposals for this funding opportunity, requesting up to \$100,000 per proposal for activities to control or prevent CWD in **wild** cervids for the **Tribal Nations** opportunity and requesting up to \$250,000 per proposal for activities to control or prevent CWD in **farmed** or **wild** cervids opportunities. Each proposal must be submitted as a separate package.

An eligible applicant for the farm cervid opportunity may submit a proposal requesting up to \$250,000 for management activities and request additional funds in excess of \$250,000 for the indemnification or purchase of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and/or CWD-exposed animals as part of an overall management plan (including the implementation of proposals based on genetic prediction and live animal testing), provided the application includes documentation supporting the appraisal of the farmed

cervids in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.3](#) and the owner has agreed to accept either the amount allowed by APHIS VS or a lower amount proposed by the owner or the state.

B.3 COST SHARING OR MATCHING

Cost sharing and matching is defined in [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) as a “portion of the project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute).” For additional information on cost share please reference [2 CFR Part 200.306](#).

Although cost sharing is not required, APHIS may take an eligible applicant’s ability to contribute non-Federal funds to carry out such a cooperative agreement into consideration but shall not require an eligible applicant to contribute funding as a condition to enter into a cooperative agreement.

If applicable, applicants should describe cost-share or in-kind funding for the project. Once the cooperative agreement is accepted and finalized, the cost share becomes legally binding, and the recipient will be required to meet the cost share ratio.

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

C.1 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The overall objectives of the funding opportunity are to control, manage, and/or prevent CWD in farmed and wild cervids. Through this funding opportunity, APHIS is soliciting collaborators who will further develop and implement farmed and wild cervid CWD surveillance, testing, management, prevention and response activities. Proposals can include the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids as part of an overall CWD management plan in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#). For wild cervids, funds may also be provided for applied research to further develop and evaluate; tools, techniques, and strategies for preventing and controlling CWD in wild cervids. Successful proposals will positively impact CWD control or prevention. The expected outcomes and deliverables will support the overarching goal of the funding opportunity, which is to control or prevent CWD. Controlling CWD is a public benefit because it reduces prions in the environment and safeguards wild and farmed cervids.

Funds may also be provided for applied research to further develop and evaluate tools, techniques, and strategies for identifying, preventing, and controlling CWD in farmed and/or wild cervids. Applied research attempts to find practical solutions to a specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD. Successful proposals will positively impact CWD control or prevention. The expected outcomes and deliverables will support the overarching goal of the funding opportunity, which is to control or prevent CWD. Controlling CWD is a public benefit because it reduces prions in the environment and safeguards farmed and wild cervids.

C.2 FUNDING PRIORITIES

Eligible applicants are encouraged to develop project proposals that directly support at least one of the five funding priorities described below:

1. FARMED CERVID

- a. **Improve the management of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds.** For the purpose of this priority, management means **controlling** CWD in affected farmed cervid herds or **preventing** the introduction or spread of CWD from affected farmed cervid herds or from CWD endemic free-ranging populations to farmed cervid herds. This includes implementing, or improving the implementation, of the Federal CWD Herd Certification Program (HCP) as described in the USDA APHIS VS [CWD Program Standards](#), the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and CWD-exposed, -suspect, or -positive cervids purchased as part of an overall CWD management plan in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#), or the use of predictive genetics and antemortem testing with the indemnification/purchase and removal of CWD positive and poor scoring exposed or potentially exposed white-tailed deer (See Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Management Proposal Work Plan Template).

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are disease detection, investigation, and response activities; the development and use of novel CWD tests in animals; epidemiology and risk analysis; farmed cervid movement monitoring and control (traceability); Federal HCP implementation or improvement, including enhanced compliance, monitoring, and enforcement activities; identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; sample collection training programs for HCP sample collectors and regulatory personnel; surveillance in herds not subject to mandatory sample submission; or, test result reporting to APHIS.

- b. **Improve the management of CWD-affected farmed cervid premises.** For the purpose of this priority, management means controlling or preventing the spread of CWD from a CWD-affected farmed cervid premises and/or surrounding area by implementing or improving upon current guidance and methods, such as the USDA APHIS VS [CWD Program Standards](#), and may include cleaning and disinfection strategies, scavenger management, biosecurity measures, or applied research to address these areas.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are development and use of novel CWD tests for environmental testing, environmental decontamination, farmed cervid carcass and waste management, identification, and investigation of premises treatment options for CWD, or investigating the role of scavengers or predators in CWD transmission to or within farmed cervid herds or managing these risks.

- c. **Conduct novel research on amplification assays and other new test methods in farmed cervids.** Amplification assays are test methods that identify CWD by amplifying small amounts of prion protein to levels that are detectable [e.g., Protein Misfolding Cyclic Amplification (PMCA), real-time quaking induced conversion (RT-QuIC)]. Specifically, this funding opportunity is interested in proposals that will develop new test methods or optimize the use of amplification assays as diagnostic or environmental tests or meet the validation requirements for APHIS approval of a new test for program use.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are development and validation of new assays, new amplification assays, optimization to improve sensitivity and specificity of existing assays, or the expanded use of amplification assays for novel sample types and applications.

- d. **Conduct additional research on the development of whole genome predictive genetics, or utilize whole genome predictive genetics for herd management, in farmed cervids.** Current and ongoing research supports the use of whole genome predictive genetics to determine the susceptibility of farmed cervids to CWD, remove deer that are highly susceptible to CWD, and breed away from highly susceptible deer which provides the foundation for a genomics based CWD eradication program in the future.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are encouraging farmed white-tailed deer and/or elk owners to obtain predictive genetic scores for their deer, remove deer or elk that are highly susceptible to CWD, and encourage the breeding of less susceptible deer; conducting field trials to evaluate the use of a whole genome predictive genetics strategy in farmed white-tailed deer herds to prevent or control CWD; or, validating a whole genome predictive genetics strategy in mule deer or other susceptible species.

- e. **Develop and/or deliver educational outreach materials or programs to farmed cervid stakeholders.** For purposes of this priority, educational outreach means the methods, processes, or actions that provide education and facilitate learning of critical knowledge necessary to control and/or prevent CWD and its spread in farmed cervids, including the study of human dimensions on CWD prevention and control, and educational opportunities for accredited veterinarians and State staff and/or producers. Behavioral messaging research may also be included as part of an outreach program.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority include training for producers, cervid veterinarians and/or regulatory personnel on biosecurity, sample collection, CWD HCP requirements, carcass disposal, disinfection, etc.

2. WILD CERVID

- a. **Improve the management of CWD-affected wild cervid populations.** For the purpose of this priority, management means effectively **controlling** CWD in affected cervid populations or **preventing** the introduction or spread of CWD from affected or endemic populations to non-affected wild cervid populations by implementing or improving upon current guidance, such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) [Best Management Practices](#).

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are detection and prevention of CWD in wild cervid populations not currently affected with CWD; **increasing capacity and reporting for CWD testing in wild cervids**; increase disease detection, investigation, and/or*

response; the development and use of novel CWD tests in wild cervids; epidemiology and risk analysis; wild cervid movement monitoring and control (traceability); identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; wild cervid population management; sample collection training programs for personnel collecting samples; surveillance of CWD in wild cervids; prevention of CWD in wild cervid populations currently affected with CWD; or test result reporting to APHIS.

- b. **Improve the management of wild cervid CWD-affected areas.** For the purpose of this priority, management means managing the environment to effectively control CWD in wild cervid affected areas (CWD endemic areas) to control or prevent the spread of CWD by implementing or improving upon current guidance, such as the AFWA [Best Management Practices](#).

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are development and **use of novel CWD tests for environmental testing; environmental decontamination**; wild cervid carcass and waste management; identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; or investigating the role of scavengers or predators in CWD transmission to or within wild cervid populations and/or managing these risks.*

- c. **Conduct research on amplification assays in wild cervids or other new test methods in wild cervids.** Amplification assays are test methods that identify CWD by amplifying small amount of prion protein to levels that are detectable [e.g., Protein Misfolding Cyclic Amplification (PMCA), real-time quaking induced conversion (RT-QuIC)]. Specifically, this funding opportunity is interested in novel proposals which further the use of amplification assays as diagnostic or environmental tests.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are development of new amplification assays or the expanded use of amplification assays for novel sample types and applications, and/or the development or investigation of new tests for the detection of CWD.

- d. **Development and/or application of predictive genetics for wild cervids.** Research to support the use of genetics to determine and understand the susceptibility of wild cervids to CWD on the landscape. Current and ongoing research supports the use of whole genome predictive genetics to determine the susceptibility of cervids to CWD, which may provide the foundation for a genomics based CWD control or eradication program in the future.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are evaluation of predictive genetics in wild cervids affected with CWD or located in CWD endemic areas to prevent or reduce the incidence of CWD.

- e. **Develop and/or deliver educational outreach materials or programs to wild cervid stakeholders or Tribal entities.** For purposes of this priority, educational outreach means the methods, processes, or actions that provide education and facilitate learning of critical

knowledge necessary to control and/or prevent CWD and its spread in wild cervids, including the study of human dimensions on CWD prevention and control. Behavioral messaging research may also be included as part of an outreach program.

NOTE: Any other proposed projects or activities that would further develop and implement farmed or wild cervid CWD control, prevention, surveillance, testing, management, and response fall within the scope of activities for this funding opportunity. While proposals within this scope that do not fall under the funding priorities above would receive a lower review score than proposals of equal quality that do, they will be reviewed and may score sufficiently for funding.

C.3 OTHER FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Each proposal should describe how the project will leverage existing resources through partnerships with local, State, and/or Federal government agencies⁸, Native American Tribal governments and Native American Tribal organizations, industry organizations, professional associations, producer groups, institutes of higher education and/or non-profit organizations with direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in farmed and wild cervids. Successful projects will meet the evaluation criteria described in [Section F.1](#).

While all proposals that meet the administrative eligibility criteria listed in [Section F.1](#) will be considered for funding, for **farmed** cervid proposals APHIS may give priority to proposals submitted by an eligible applicant: (1) in a state that has either experienced recent incidents of CWD in farmed cervids or that has farmed cervid herds bordering a CWD endemic area; and, (2) either has a CWD Federal HCP or a State CWD control program that includes, but is not limited to, monitoring and surveillance, or proposes to create a Federal or State CWD control program. For **wild** cervid proposals, APHIS may give priority to proposals submitted by an eligible entity (1) in a State or on Tribal lands that has either experienced recent incidents of CWD in wild cervids or that have wild cervid populations bordering a CWD endemic area; and, (2) has a State or Tribal CWD control program that includes, but is not limited to, monitoring and surveillance, or that proposes to create a control program. **Eligible applicants not meeting these criteria are encouraged to apply and their proposals will be considered for funding.**

Applicants should describe the anticipated involvement by APHIS personnel needed to complete the proposed activities in the Work Plan and Financial Plan (excluding personnel to administer or oversee the cooperative agreement). APHIS intends to collaborate with recipients to successfully complete activities funded via this opportunity; however, due to the limited availability of personnel, APHIS encourages proposals that are not contingent on APHIS participation where possible, unless that participation was agreed upon during the development of the proposal.

C.4 COST GUIDANCE

Each applicant must submit a detailed Financial Plan that provides sufficient information to determine the costs for each of the proposed activities and objectives.

⁸ Due to strict requirements around the distribution of funds to Federal agencies across fiscal years, sub-awarding this funding (any payment) to Federal agencies may not be included in the APHIS share of the Financial Plan. Recipients may use funds from other sources to pay for services from Federal agencies; if applicable, such expenses should be listed in the recipient share in the Financial Plan.

Allowable costs must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary to the project. Office of Management and Budget cost principles ([2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E](#)) must be used to determine whether a cost can be charged to the project and, if so, the extent to which it can be charged. Funds are intended to complement and build upon activities associated with other APHIS cooperative programs or grants geared toward controlling or preventing CWD in farmed or wild cervids.

Allowable uses of cooperative agreement funds include, but are not limited to, activities, equipment, supplies, and services needed to complete approved program activities that support the funding priorities and considerations described in [Section C.2](#). This may include:

- *Equipment*. The Federal definition of equipment is tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than 1 year and a per unit value of \$10,000 or more unless the applicant's definition of equipment is more restrictive.
- *Information technology systems*. The term "information technology," defined in [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) includes, but is not limited to, computers, network, and ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources. This also includes any equipment, interconnected system(s), or subsystem(s) of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information.
- *Outreach materials*. Whenever possible, existing publications or audiovisuals, referred to as outreach materials, should be used. A draft of any publications or audiovisuals produced with cooperative agreement funds for public use must be reviewed and approved by APHIS, the Office of the Deputy Administrator, and the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs. A determination will be made if the USDA logo may be used and if APHIS' participation in the project may be acknowledged. Please allow a minimum of 4 weeks for review and approval of materials (brochures, pamphlets, flyers, posters, etc.). **NOTE:** Approval must be obtained prior to printing.
- *Personnel*. APHIS will allow costs for salaries and wages provided the total compensation to individual employees is reasonable for the work performed, conforms to the established policy of the organization, and is consistently applied to Government and non-government activities.
- *Travel*. Funds may be requested for field work, training, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel costs associated with the proposed work. State agency recipients should follow their State's written travel policies when calculating travel costs. If there is no written travel policy or if the recipient is not a state agency, Federal per diem rates should be used in the calculation of travel costs.
- *Indemnity for **Farmed** Cervids Only*. State agencies may request funds to indemnify CWD-exposed, -positive, or -suspect cervids; such requests must conform with APHIS indemnity requirements and policies.

Project funds must be obligated by the recipient during the performance period identified in the Award Face Sheet. Reimbursement of costs outside of the performance period identified in the Award Face Sheet will not be reimbursed.

Funds **may NOT be used** for the following:

- Land acquisition
- Compensation for Federal Employees
- Travel of Federal Employees
- Federal subawards (any payment to Federal entities) unless paid from the recipient share

- Construction and/or major rehabilitation of buildings
- Bonuses or commissions
- Fundraising
- Meeting, conference, symposia, or workshop honoraria, which is payment to individuals or guests other than for documented professional services
- Vehicle purchases or leases
- Positions funded by other Federal cooperative agreements or grants
- International travel
- Projects or activities associated with APHIS-State-Industry cooperative program activities already funded via USDA APHIS annual cooperative agreements
- Promotional, outreach, or giveaway items such as calendars, rulers, pens, pencils, squishy balls, cups, refreshments, etc.
- Indemnification or purchase of cervids more than \$3,000 each or 95% of their appraised value, whichever is less

Nothing in this section prevents an eligible applicant from using funds received to enter into sub-agreements with another eligible applicant, university, or non-profit entity or to reimburse a Tribe, State or local agency for services rendered, such as animal depopulation or testing.

C.5 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

For **farmed** and **wild** cervid awards: Under the [Animal Health Protection Act](#) (AHPA), as amended, (7 USC § 8301 et seq.), the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to issue regulations and orders and to carry out operations and measures to prevent, detect, control, and eradicate diseases and pests of livestock and to cooperate with other Federal agencies, States or political subdivisions of States, national governments of foreign countries, local governments of foreign countries, domestic or international organizations, domestic or international associations, Indian Tribes, and other persons to carry out the purposes of the AHPA.

Pursuant to 7 USC § 2279 (g) and, notwithstanding Chapter 63 of Title 31, APHIS is authorized to use cooperative agreements to reflect a relationship with a State or other recipient to carry out programs to protect the nation's animal and plant resources or to carry out educational programs or special studies to improve the safety of the nation's food supply.

For **wild** cervid awards: Under the Act of March 2, 1931, (46 Stat. 1468-69; 7 USC Parts 8351-8352, as amended), and the Act of December 22, 1987 (Public Law No. 100-202, Part 101(k), 101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 USC Part 8353), the Secretary of Agriculture may conduct a program of wildlife services with respect to injurious animal species and take any action the Secretary considers necessary in conducting the program. Additionally, the Secretary of Agriculture, except for urban rodent control, is authorized to conduct activities to control nuisance mammals and birds and those mammal and bird species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases. In carrying out a program of wildlife service's involving injurious and/or nuisance animal species or involving mammal and bird species that are reservoirs for zoonotic diseases, the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with states, local jurisdictions, individuals, public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions.

D. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

FARMED CERVID:

An eligible applicant may submit multiple proposals for this funding opportunity, requesting up to \$250,000 per proposal for activities to control or prevent CWD in **farmed** cervids. Applicants who wish to submit multiple proposals must submit each proposal as a separate proposal package. An eligible applicant may submit a proposal requesting up to \$250,000 for management activities and request additional funds in excess of \$250,000 for the indemnification or purchase of CWD-affected **farmed** cervid herds and/or CWD-exposed animals as part of an overall management plan (including the implementation of proposals based on genetic prediction and live animal testing), provided the application includes documentation supporting the appraisal of the farmed cervids in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.3](#) and the owner has agreed to accept either the amount allowed by APHIS or a lower amount proposed by the owner or the state. Multiple proposals from a single eligible applicant may be selected for funding with the applicant receiving a total award greater than \$250,000, provided the additional awarded proposal(s) is significantly superior in reviewer scoring when ranked against other proposal packages.

WILD CERVID:

Multiple proposals from a single eligible entity for **wild** cervids may be selected for funding with the applicant receiving a total award greater than \$100,000 for the wild cervid **Tribal Nations** only opportunity and greater than \$250,000 for the **wild** cervid opportunity, provided the additional awarded proposal(s) is significantly superior in reviewer scoring when ranked against other proposal packages.

All applicants should refer to [Appendix 1: CWD Proposal Checklist and Tips](#) for initial steps to take when developing a proposal.

The proposal package must include the following:

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” that matches the submitted Financial Plan – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (for Federal Assistance **greater** than \$100,000)
- [SF-LLL](#), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000 **when there are activities to disclose**)
- Waiver or approval response letter from the State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) if the applicant is in a state that is required to comply with Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, if applicable (See [Section E.5](#) for additional information)
- Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if indirect costs are claimed
- One of the suggested work plans or an equivalent work plan;
 - [Farmed Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Management Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Tribal Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
- Suggested [Financial Plan template](#) (Excel) or equivalent.
- For research proposals working with the CWD agent (e.g., infectious CWD prions) and/or known positive tissues or other biological samples from known CWD positive animals, copy of a current

APHIS VS Controlled [Materials, Organisms, and Vectors permit](#) for the possession and handling of known CWD positive samples or tissues from known CWD positive animals

- For research proposals involving live animals in a laboratory setting, documentation of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval
- Research institutes or universities submitting a study that includes field work with regulated cervids **must** submit a letter indicating support, cooperation, or no objection from the appropriate cervid regulatory authorities for the state(s) involved, or a herd plan signed by the herd owner, APHIS, and representatives of the appropriate state regulatory authorities that is aligned with the work plan, to be considered for funding
- Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal Governments must attach letter(s) indicating intent to participate from the represented Federally recognized Native American Tribal government(s)
- Letters of collaboration from additional contributors listed in the Work Plan

Please note, ezFedGrants attachments are limited to PDF files only (no digital signature or fillable PDFs) and the total size of ALL attachments cannot exceed 20MB.

Applicants should refer to [Appendix 1: CWD Proposal Checklist and Tips](#) when preparing a proposal package for submission. Any proposal package with missing or significantly incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.

Letters of support other than those specifically described above are not required but may be included in the proposal package. Applicants should not request letters of support from APHIS employees; however, informal discussions are encouraged.

Project Proposal Work Plan

Applicants must submit a Work Plan and include all the information outlined in the suggested templates:

- [Farmed Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
- [Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Management Proposal Work Plan](#)
- [Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
- [Tribal Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)

Applicants are encouraged to use one of the provided Work Plan Templates. Work plans using a template may not exceed twenty pages in 12-point Times Roman font. Work plans not using a template are limited to ten pages in 12-point font. Any pages beyond these limits may not be evaluated. Diagrams, visuals, reference sheets, and letters of collaboration do not count toward the page limits and may be included as supplemental materials.

Work Plans must address at least one of the funding priorities or fall under the scope of activities described in [Section C.2](#), with individual objectives directed toward cervid management or research. Applicants are encouraged to submit separate proposals for each funding priority provided the objectives or activities are not dependent on all proposals being selected for funding. Submitting separate projects in a single proposal may result in an activity that would have scored high enough to be funded individually not scoring well due to another activity in the proposal scoring poorly or being unacceptable. If multiple funding priorities are addressed within a single Work Plan, applicants should specify which funding priority is addressed for each objective.

Project Proposal Financial Plan

Applicants must submit a [Financial Plan](#) that clearly identifies the costs associated with the proposed activities for **each objective** listed in the Work Plan and includes all of the information outlined in the suggested Financial Plan Template. Applicants are encouraged to use the Financial Plan Template. The Financial Plan total must match the required SF-424A total submitted through [ezFedGrants](#), and provide additional details as necessary. When preparing a Financial Plan, applicants must comply with the cost guidance and funding restrictions described in [Section C.4](#). Any application with a proposed sub-award over \$10,000 **must** complete an additional Financial Plan for the sub-awarded portion as a part of the proposal package.

E. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

E.1 ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE

All application materials are available through this announcement and through [ezFedGrants](#).

If assistance is needed with locating application materials, please reach out to VS.FiOps.ASC.Agreements@usda.gov for farmed cervid or APHIS-WS.CWD_Agreements@usda.gov for wild cervid and wild cervid Tribal Nations, at least **72 hours** prior to the application deadline.

E.2 UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

All applicants are required to register in SAM prior to submitting a proposal for this funding opportunity, provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in the application, and maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during the application process and award period of performance ([2 CFR Part 200.206](#)). This does not apply if the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted 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). To register, go to the [SAM website](#). During the SAM registration process, it is mandatory to complete the Financial Assistance Certification Report to receive federal financial assistance. Please allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the SAM registration. Registration is free. Frequently Asked Questions, user guides, demonstration videos, etc. can be found at the [SAM website](#), under the "[SAM.gov | Help](#)" tab.

Your organization will need a UEI which is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.

E.3 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Only electronic submissions of proposals through [ezFedGrants](#) will be accepted. The [ezFedGrants](#) system requires registration, during the registration process you will select a password that will be required to log in to the system. Hard copy proposals and submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will not be accepted. APHIS complies with [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

Applicants experiencing technical difficulties should reach out to VS.FiOps.ASC.Agreements@usda.gov for farmed cervid or APHIS-WS.CWD_Agreements@usda.gov for wild cervid, at least **72 hours** prior to the application deadline of June 15, 2026, 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time for assistance. Proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

E.4 SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

All proposals must be completed and received electronically through [ezFedGrants](#) no later than **June 15, 2026, 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time**. The electronic date and time stamp from [ezFedGrants](#) will be used to determine whether proposals were received before the deadline. Proposals received after this deadline will **not** be reviewed or considered for funding. Submissions through [Grants.gov](#) will **not** be accepted.

We understand unanticipated issues can arise; therefore, we urge applicants to submit their application package early to allow time to address any complications. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please reach out to VS.FiOps.ASC.Agreements@usda.gov for farmed cervid or [APHIS-WS.CWD_Agreements@usda.gov](#) for wild cervid. Any proposal package with missing or significantly incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.

Applicants should review Appendix 1: CWD Proposal Checklist and Tips to ensure all required documents are included before submitting their proposal package.

E.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

The Intergovernmental Review Process is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

Names and addresses of States’ Single Point of Contact (SPOC) are listed on the [APHIS website](#). Please reach out to your State’s SPOC for additional information on your specific State requirements.

For those applicants that have this process in their State, submit your application to the SPOC simultaneously to submitting to APHIS. If possible, please upload a waiver or approval response letter from the SPOC with your proposal package in [ezFedGrants](#) to fulfill this requirement. Awards will not be finalized until a copy of the SPOC waiver or approval letter is provided for applicable states. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a rejection of your application.

E.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Project funds are available only during the period of performance and must be committed by the recipient within 12 months from the date APHIS makes the funds available, as shown on the Award Face Sheet start date, unless otherwise specified. Costs incurred before the start date or after the end date of the period of performance are not reimbursable. Construction is not an allowable activity.

Applicants must submit a copy of their fully executed current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), negotiated with their cognizant Federal Agency, when indirect costs are included in the budget. Indirect costs for any sub-award must also be disclosed.

Higher education institutions and non-profit organizations’ assessment of indirect costs are limited to not more than 10% of total direct costs or the application of their approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, whichever is less. This restriction only applies to Cooperative Agreements.

The Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act (H.R. 5608) limits indirect costs for eligible entities conducting research to the lesser of 10 percent of total direct costs or their approved NICRA.

Due to restrictions on distributing funds to Federal agencies across fiscal years, recipients may not include sub-awards or payments to Federal agencies in the APHIS share of the Financial Plan. Recipients may use other funding sources to obtain services from Federal agencies, and such costs must be listed in the recipient's share of the Financial Plan.

Please refer to the cost guidance in [Section C.4](#) for additional information on funding restrictions and limitations.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

F.1 REVIEW CRITERIA

APHIS will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals during the review process. Applicants should consider these criteria when preparing the proposal package. **NOTE:** Proposed activities must align with current Federal, State, and Tribal regulations.

Administrative Criteria (Responsiveness Review) Both Farmed and Wild Cervid

Proposal packages must meet these initial screening criteria to be considered for further review. Proposals that do not meet these criteria may not be considered.

1. Proposals must be received by the deadline. Proposals received after the established deadline will not be reviewed or considered.
2. Proposals must be submitted by an eligible applicant.
3. Proposals must address at least one of the funding priorities or fall under the scope of activities described in [Section C.2](#).
4. All required documents and forms listed in [Section D](#) must be included in the proposal package and comply with the submission instructions described in [Section D](#). Any proposal package with missing or significantly incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.
5. Proposals must be consistent with allowed use of funds guidance. Proposals that do not align with the cost guidance described in [Section C.4](#) of this announcement will not be considered for review, resulting in a rejected proposal.
6. Timeline must be reasonable to complete objectives within 12 months. If the proposal is designed to run more than 12 months, it will be rejected.
7. In addition, research proposals must also follow the below criteria:

- a. Project must focus on applied⁹ research. Proposals without a clearly defined application to control or prevent CWD will be rejected.
- b. Timeline must be reasonable to complete objectives within 12 months. If the proposal is designed to run more than 12 months, it will be rejected.
- c. The principal investigator must clearly demonstrate evidence of necessary technical background and facilities to conduct the proposed project. Demonstrated evidence of technical background may include relevant peer reviewed publications and/or technical reports.
- d. If the project involves working with the CWD agent (e.g., infectious CWD prions) and/or known positive tissues or other biological samples from known CWD positive animals, the investigator must submit a copy of their current CWD [Controlled Materials, Organisms, and Vectors permit](#) issued by APHIS to work with CWD in their facility with the proposal package.
- e. For research proposals involving live animals in a laboratory setting, documentation of IACUC approval must be included in the proposal package.

Evaluation Criteria

Farmed cervid applicants: the approximate weight of each criteria's impact to the score is listed below.

1. **Requirements in the announcement. (around 37% of the weighted score)** These criteria assess the extent to which the applicant and proposal meet the minimum eligibility requirements. Submissions that do not meet these criteria cannot be considered for funding.
 - a. **Applicant criteria for States or Tribal Nations.** State agencies and Tribes, or in the case of Native American Tribal organizations the Native American Tribal governments they are representing, must have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for farmed cervids to be eligible. APHIS may give priority to applications for management agreements from States or Tribes that have experienced recent incidents of CWD or border a [CWD endemic area](#) based on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) CWD Distribution Map, have a CWD Federal HCP (or a State or Tribal CWD control program) or propose to create a Federal, State, or Tribal CWD control program.
 - b. **Regulations.** The submitted proposal must be compliant with current Federal and State regulations.
2. **Addresses priorities (around 9% of the weighted score)**
 - a. **Funding priorities.** The proposal directly addresses at least one of the five funding priorities. The activities, outcomes, or deliverables must directly address a concern identified in at least one of the five funding priorities or fall under the scope of activities described in [Section C.2](#). "Scope" refers to activities that further develop/implement CWD control, prevention, surveillance, testing, management, and/or response.

⁹ Applied CWD research attempts to find practical solutions to a specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD.

- b. **Research project type.** Research projects must be applied in nature and attempt to find practical solutions to solve a specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD.
 - c. **Critical need.** The proposal should address a critical need or known gap related to CWD control and prevention and demonstrate how the need or problem aligns with the priority area being addressed. The expected outcomes/deliverables should, if successful, address or resolve the identified need/gap.
 - d. **Redundancy.** Research proposals should avoid redundancy with similar work already conducted. The proposed activities should complement existing or ongoing activities without being duplicative to work already completed. For management or education proposals, effective strategies that have been successfully implemented by other entities are not considered redundant when being repeated in or expanded to new areas and should be scored as “Expansive.”
3. **Feasibility of success (around 17% of the weighted score)**
- a. **Outcomes and deliverables.** The proposal must include enough detail for the reviewer to understand what outcomes/deliverables will be produced for each objective.
 - b. **Methods or activities.** The proposal must provide sufficient detail so the reviewer can understand what methods or activities will be performed to generate the stated outcomes and deliverables for each objective. The proposal should include a plan of action that is logical, well organized, and complete.
 - c. **Technical and scientific soundness.** The proposed methods or activities must be technically/scientifically sound and likely to successfully produce the stated outcomes and deliverables for each objective. These activities or methods must be supported by current scientific knowledge and, in the case of management proposals, relevant experience. The proposal should include reasonable quantitative and qualitative criteria to evaluate project success.
4. **Performance parameters (around 13% of the weighted score)**
- a. **Performance period.** The proposed objectives must be accomplished in a 1-year performance period. The performance period must begin on or before September 30, 2026, and should end no later than 12 months after the start date. The project schedule must define a reasonable amount of time to complete all proposed objectives within this performance period.
 - b. **Potential problems.** The proposal should describe factors that may negatively impact the project and provide solutions to reduce risk as well as any potential problems that may negatively impact the successful accomplishment of the proposed objectives. This would include any situations that may delay project outcomes/deliverables, such as competing time commitments of collaborators or stakeholders who are critical to project completion. The proposal should also describe possible solutions to reduce or eliminate these risks.
5. **Resources (around 10% of the weighted score)**
- a. **Partnerships.** The proposal should describe partnerships and collaborations needed to complete the proposed objectives and produce the expected outcomes/deliverables. This

may include but is not limited to land grant or other universities; State or national livestock, wildlife, sportsmen, or conservation organizations with direct and significant interest in the control of CWD; or a federal agency. **A letter of collaboration from each contributor must be included in the proposal.**

- b. **Qualifications/skills.** The Project Manager or Principal Investigator must have the qualifications and skills to successfully produce the outcomes/deliverables. This criterion considers the extent to which the key persons who will carry out the methods or activities have the qualifications, skills, abilities, and experience to successfully achieve the objectives, conduct the proposed methods or activities, and produce successful outcomes/deliverables.
- c. **Infrastructure.** The Project Manager or Principal Investigator must have the infrastructure to successfully conduct the proposed methods or activities or describe in the proposal how the necessary infrastructure will be obtained. The proposal should include information to support that key persons who will carry out the project have the infrastructure (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment) to achieve the proposed objectives by conducting the proposed activities and producing the outcomes/deliverables. This may include articles, reports, and/or testimonies from interested parties other than the applicant and any relevant experience supporting the proposed activities.

6. Impact and value of outcomes (around 10% of the weighted score)

- a. **Impact.** If successful, the outcomes/deliverables should positively impact CWD control or prevention. The expected outcomes and deliverables should support the overarching goal of the funding opportunity, which is to control or prevent CWD. If successful, the project should produce outcomes/deliverables that are high in value and positively impact the funding priority area.
- b. **Use to others.** The outcomes/deliverables could be used by other States, groups, and stakeholders, either by replicating the proposed activities in other areas (e.g., in other States/regions or to new audiences) or by using the information to support policies and decisions. Proposals must indicate how the applicant will share the project outcomes/deliverables so other entities can make use of them.
- c. **Data sharing.** Proposals must indicate how the applicant will share the project outcomes/deliverables (e.g., peer reviewed publication, video) with other States, groups, or stakeholders.

7. Cost effectiveness (around 4% of the weighted score)

- a. **Justification.** The proposal must provide specific and detailed justification to fully understand how each budget item supports the proposed activities (Necessary Costs). The proposal should include a budget that is logical, well organized, and complete. All costs should be explained in enough detail for the reviewer to understand how each budget item is necessary to complete the proposed activities.
- b. **Reasonable cost.** The proposed costs must be reasonable to complete the proposed objectives. For this opportunity, a cost is reasonable if it does not exceed costs that would

be incurred under normal circumstances. Costs included in the proposal should be generally recognized as ordinary to complete the proposed activities.

- c. **Cost saving measures.** The proposal may include cost-saving measures to complete the proposed objectives. APHIS may take an applicant's ability to contribute non-Federal funds into consideration (cost-sharing). The proposal may also include cost-saving measures using existing resources or partnerships (in-kind contributions). For example, an applicant may include the practical use of existing personnel, vehicles, computers, venues, supplies, and other items to complete proposed activities. Cost share will be evaluated in this criterion and will make up less than five percent of the total score.

Wild cervid and wild cervid Tribal Nation applicants: Applicants should consider the criteria when preparing the proposal package.

NOTE: Proposed activities must align with current Federal, State and Tribal regulations. The approximate weight of each criteria's impact on the score is listed below.

1. **Requirements in the announcement. (around 18% of the weighted score)** This criterion assesses the extent to which the applicant and proposal meet the minimum eligibility requirements. Submissions that do not meet these criteria cannot be considered for funding.
 - a. **Applicant criteria for Tribal Nations.** The Federally recognized Native American Tribal government must have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for wild cervids to be eligible. APHIS may give priority to applications for management agreements from Tribes that have experienced recent incidents of CWD or border a [CWD endemic area](#) based on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) CWD Distribution Map, have Tribal wild cervid CWD control program or propose to create a Tribal CWD control program.
 - b. **Regulations.** The submitted proposal must be compliant with current Federal, State and Tribal regulations.
2. **Addresses priorities (around 15% of the weighted score)**
 - a. **Funding priorities.** The proposal directly addresses at least one of the five funding priorities. The activities, outcomes, or deliverables should directly address a concern identified in at least one of the five funding priorities or fall under the scope of activities in [Section C.2](#). "Scope" refers to activities that further develop or implement CWD control, prevention, surveillance, testing, management, and/or response.
 - b. **Research project type.** Research projects must be applied in nature and attempt to find practical solutions to solve a specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD.
 - c. **Critical need.** The proposal should address a critical need or known gap related to CWD control and prevention and demonstrate how the need or problem aligns with the priority area being addressed. The expected outcomes/deliverables should, if successful, address or resolve the identified need/gap.
 - d. **Redundancy.** Research proposals should avoid redundancy with similar work already conducted. The proposed activities should complement existing or ongoing activities

without being duplicative to work already completed. For management or education proposals, effective strategies that have been successfully implemented by other entities are not considered redundant when repeated in or expanded to new areas.

3. **Feasibility of success (around 15% of the weighted score)**

- a. **Outcomes and deliverables.** The proposal must include enough detail for the reviewer to understand what outcomes/deliverables will be produced for each objective.
- b. **Methods or activities.** The proposal must provide sufficient detail so the reviewer can understand what methods or activities will be performed to generate the stated outcomes and deliverables for each objective. The proposal should include a plan of action that is logical, well organized, and complete.
- c. **Technical and scientific soundness.** The proposed methods or activities should be technically/scientifically sound and likely to successfully produce the stated outcomes and deliverables for each objective. These activities or methods should be supported by current scientific knowledge and, in the case of management proposals, relevant past experience. The proposal should include reasonable quantitative and qualitative criteria to evaluate project success.

4. **Performance parameters (around 14% of the weighted score)**

- a. **Performance period.** The proposed objectives must be accomplished in a 1-year performance period. The performance period must begin on or before September 30, 2025, and should end no later than twelve months after the start date. The project schedule should include a reasonable amount of time to complete all proposed objectives within this performance period.
- b. **Potential problems.** The proposal should describe factors that may negatively impact the project and provide solutions to reduce risk as well as any potential problems that may negatively impact the successful accomplishment of the proposed objectives. This would include any situations that may delay project outcomes/deliverables, such as competing time commitments of collaborators or stakeholders who are critical to project completion. The proposal should also describe possible solutions to reduce or eliminate these risks.

5. **Resources (around 10% of the weighted score)**

- a. **Partnerships.** The proposal should describe partnerships and collaborations needed to complete the proposed objectives and produce the expected outcomes/deliverables. This may include but is not limited to land grant or other universities; State or national livestock, wildlife, sportsmen, or conservation organizations with direct and significant interest in the control of CWD; or a federal agency. **A letter of collaboration from each contributor must be included in the proposal.**
- b. **Qualifications/skills.** The Project Manager, Principal Investigator and/or collaborators must have the qualifications and skills to successfully produce the outcomes/deliverables. This criterion considers the extent to which the key persons who will carry out the methods or activities have the qualifications, skills, abilities, and experience to successfully achieve the

objectives, conduct the proposed methods or activities, and produce successful outcomes/deliverables.

- c. **Infrastructure.** The Project Manager or Principal Investigator must have the infrastructure to successfully conduct the proposed methods or activities. The proposal should include information to support that key people who will carry out the project have the infrastructure (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment) to achieve the proposed objectives by conducting the proposed activities and producing the outcomes/deliverables. This may include articles, reports, and/or testimonies from interested parties other than the applicant and any relevant experience supporting the proposed activities.

6. Impact and value of outcomes (around 20% of the weighted score)

- a. **Impact.** If successful, the outcomes/deliverables should positively impact CWD control or prevention. The expected outcomes and deliverables should support the overarching goal of the funding opportunity, which is to control or prevent CWD. If successful, the project should produce outcomes/deliverables that are high in value and positively impact the funding priority area.
- b. **Use to others.** The outcomes/deliverables could be used by other States, Tribes, groups, and stakeholders, either by replicating the proposed activities in other areas (e.g., in other States/regions or to new audiences) or by using the information to support policies and decisions. Proposals should indicate how the applicant will share the project outcomes/deliverables so other entities can make use of them.
- c. **Data sharing.** Proposals must indicate how the applicant will share the project outcomes/deliverables (e.g., peer reviewed publication, video) with other States, Tribes, groups, or stakeholders.

7. Cost effectiveness (around 8% of the weighted score)

- a. **Justification.** The proposal must provide specific and detailed justification to fully understand how each budget item supports the proposed activities (Necessary Costs). The proposal should include a budget that is logical, well organized, and complete. All costs should be explained in detail for the reviewer to understand how each budget item is necessary to complete the proposed activities.
- b. **Reasonable cost.** The proposed costs must be reasonable to complete the proposed objectives. For this opportunity, a cost is reasonable if it does not exceed costs that would be incurred under normal circumstances. Costs included in the proposal should be generally recognized as ordinary to complete the proposed activities.
- c. **Cost saving measures.** The proposal may include cost-saving measures to complete the proposed objectives. APHIS may take an applicant's ability to contribute non-Federal funds into consideration (cost-sharing). The proposal may also include cost-saving measures using existing resources or partnerships (in-kind contributions). For example: An applicant may include the practical use of existing personnel, vehicles, computers, venues, supplies, and other items to complete proposed activities. Cost share will be evaluated in this criterion and will make up less than five percent of the total score.

F.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

There is a single application deadline followed by the simultaneous review of all applications. APHIS will review proposals within 90 days of the application deadline and applicants will be notified by email of award status.

APHIS has final authority in determining which projects are funded for this initiative. A project may be selected for partial funding of specific objectives or activities within a proposed Work Plan, based on reviewer recommendations.

If multiple applications requesting funding for the indemnification or purchase of CWD-affected cervids as part of an overall CWD management plan are received, APHIS may recommend providing funds at a decreased level to increase the impact of awards across a larger number of proposals. APHIS may adjust an indemnity or purchase amount if a need is identified after proposal submission; likewise, an award may be amended to adjust an indemnity or purchase amount.

Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria in [Section B.1](#) will be subject to an administrative review by an APHIS Grants Specialist for compliance with the requirements in [Section F.1](#). Proposals meeting the administrative requirements will be evaluated by reviewers based on the merit of the proposal. APHIS is responsible for reviewing proposals against the evaluation criteria found in [Section F.1](#). The review panel will consist of internal and external subject-matter experts from various departments and agencies, and from academia as appropriate. High quality proposals are those that strongly support the funding priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in this funding opportunity.

Reviewers will have no association with projects they are reviewing to avoid potential conflicts of interest. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a reviewer shall recuse themselves as appropriate.

F.3 RISK REVIEW

During the application package review process, APHIS will conduct a risk assessment as part of the selection and review process. All applicants will be verified in SAM to ensure they have not been disbarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency. APHIS 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 these requirements by the time APHIS is ready to make a Federal award, APHIS 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.

If the anticipated Federal share exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold during the award period of performance, APHIS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#) before issuing the award. An applicant, if desired, may review and comment on any information about their organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#). Before making decisions in the risk review required by [2 CFR Part 200.206](#), APHIS will consider any comments provided by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records available in the [SAM website](#).

G. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants will receive an email notification stating whether their application has been selected for award within 150 days of the application deadline. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance on the project or to expend the funds. Either the APHIS Grants Specialist or the APHIS Program Manager may informally contact the applicant with application/Federal award status details.

Applicants selected for funding will receive an Award Face Sheet which will be routed to the applicant's Signatory Official(s) via [ezFedGrants](#). The Award Face Sheet will provide pertinent instructions and information including but not limited to the information described in [2 CFR Part 200.211](#) and reference to the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#). The Signatory Official must provide an E-Signature in [ezFedGrants](#) for the Award Face Sheet unless an alternate Federal award signature process is provided to the applicant by APHIS. This Award Face Sheet fully signed by the applicant's Signatory Official and the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer, which can be obtained electronically in [ezFedGrants](#), is the only document that officially obligates funds and authorizes the project to begin.

H. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

APHIS will administer awarded cooperative agreements, collaborate with project recipients to provide advice, receive and review project documents, offer comments and suggestions, track project performance, and communicate as necessary to ensure progress in accomplishing the project, identifying obstacles, and resolving concerns.

Recipients will track performance and expenditures, provide progress reports and project deliverables in accordance with the project Work Plan, and communicate with APHIS staff to assess and evaluate progress.

NOTE: Recipients may be asked to provide a brief presentation or summary outlining their work and anticipated outcomes at an annual CWD Cooperative Agreement Stakeholder meeting or for public posting.

H.1 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants must comply with the general [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#), approved project Work Plan, approved project Financial Plan, and applicable authorization used to issue the Award Face Sheet.

Successful applicants must comply with the requirements contained in the "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards," [2 CFR Part 200](#); "Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension," [2 CFR Part 417](#); "Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace," [2 CFR Part 421](#); "New Restrictions on Lobbying," [2 CFR Part 418](#); and, Office of Management and Budget regulations governing "Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public," [5 CFR Part 1320](#).

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at [2 CFR Part 200](#), all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, APHIS will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020. Particularly on: selecting recipients most likely to be successful in

delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications ([2 CFR Part 200.205](#)); prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 ([Pub. L. No. 115—232](#)) ([2 CFR Part 200.216](#)); **prohibiting the purchase of certain Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** in alignment with the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024 ([H.R. 2670](#)) and the [Blue UAS Cleared List](#); promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty ([Executive Order 13798](#)) and Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities ([Executive Order 13864](#)) (2 CFR Parts [200.300](#), [200.303](#), [200.339](#), and [200.341](#)); providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States ([2 CFR Part 200.322](#)); and, terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities ([2 CFR part 200.340](#)).

H.2 REPORTING

The recipient's Project Coordinator will provide performance reports on program activities outlined in the application and properly certified Federal Financial Reports, SF-425s, to the APHIS Program Manager through [ezFedGrants](#) as specified in the Award Face Sheet and in accordance with the general [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#). The reports will be used by APHIS to verify compliance with provisions of the Award Fact Sheet. The final report must include a summary (less than 500 words) of the outcomes and any lessons learned. APHIS may publish the summary on the APHIS webpage. Submission of photos or videos, where appropriate, is encouraged for use in our outreach and educational efforts. The recipient will be asked to provide a summary and other information that is likely to be of interest at the annual CWD Cooperative Agreement Stakeholder meeting.

Any requests for an extension of time to submit reports must be made in writing to the APHIS Program Manager. Extensions of time to submit reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the discretion of the APHIS Program Manager. If allowed, approval will be provided by the APHIS Program Manager in writing.

If the Federal share of the award exceeds \$500,000 during the period of performance, please be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR Part 200 Appendix XII](#).

H.3 PROJECT EVALUATION

The recipient's performance will be evaluated, through the review of performance and financial reports, based on the following criteria to determine if the recipient met the project standards and if the proposed results and benefits were achieved:

1. Adherence to project schedule;
2. Adherence to project budget;
3. Delivery of results that meet the cooperative agreement performance standards and achieve the stated outcomes; and,
4. Periodic discussion of project progress with the APHIS Program Manager.

I. OTHER INFORMATION

USDA is not obligated to make any award as a result of this announcement nor to make any changes to future announcements. Only the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer can bind the government to an expenditure of funds and this obligation of funds shall only occur in writing by authorized officials and under the approved USDA APHIS cooperative agreement format.

For general information on the CWD Program and previous funding opportunities visit: [USDA APHIS | Cervids: Chronic Wasting Disease](#)

APPENDIX 1: CWD PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND TIPS

CWD Management and Research Activities 2026 Proposal Checklist and Tips

Proposal Checklist

The proposal package must include the following:

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” that matches the submitted Financial Plan – Completed when applying to the funding opportunity in [ezFedGrants](#)
- [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000)
- [SF-LLL](#), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (for Federal Assistance greater than \$100,000 when there are activities to disclose)
- Waiver or approval response letter from the State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) if the applicant is in a state that is required to comply with Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, if applicable (See [Section E.5](#) for additional information)
- Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if indirect costs are claimed
- One of the suggested work plans or equivalent;
 - [Farmed Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Management Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
 - [Tribal Wild Cervid Proposal Work Plan](#)
- Suggested Proposal [Financial Plan](#) or equivalent
- For research proposals working with the CWD agent (e.g., infectious CWD prions) and/or known positive tissues or other biological samples from known CWD positive animals, copy of a current APHIS VS [Controlled Materials, Organisms, and Vectors permit](#) for the possession and handling of known CWD positive samples or tissues from known CWD positive animals
- For research proposals involving interventions with live animals, documentation of IACUC approval
- Research institutes or universities submitting a study that includes field work with regulated cervids **must** submit a letter indicating support, cooperation, or no objection from the appropriate cervid regulatory authorities for the state(s) involved, or a herd plan signed by the herd owner, APHIS, and representatives of the appropriate state regulatory authorities that is aligned with the work plan, to be considered for funding
- Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal Governments must attach letter(s) indicating intent to participate from the represented Federally recognized Native American Tribal government(s)
- Letters of collaboration from additional contributors listed in the Work Plan

Please note, ezFedGrants attachments are limited to PDF files only (no digital signature or fillable PDFs) and the total size of all attachments cannot exceed 20MB.

Tips for Applicants

- **DO** submit proposals early – **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE PROPOSAL DEADLINE.**
- **DO** remember that the reviewer’s job is to ensure Government funds are well spent, with those proposals selected for funding providing the highest likelihood of tangible end products that will control or prevent or directly lead to the control or prevention of CWD in cervids.
- **DO** take some time to think out your proposal. A proposal that is well written and easy to follow will be well received by the review panel.
- **DO** clearly and concisely define the need or problem that this proposal is addressing. Be **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound.** **DO NOT** include why it is important to control CWD in cervids or general information on CWD.
- **DO** align your proposal with the priorities in the current year’s opportunity announcement.
- **DO** provide sufficient detail for a reviewer to be convinced that you have thought out the process well, and understand the resources needed to complete the proposed objectives and activities.
- **DO** be sure to include all APHIS resources your proposal will need to successfully complete the work.
- **DO** ask questions. We want to help you submit the best proposal possible.

New Applicant Information

The applicant will be required to complete the application process by following the instructions below.

Register in SAM and Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number

[SAM](#) Website

- Applicants must register and complete the Financial Assistance Certification Report in SAM.
- A UEI number will automatically be assigned when a new entity is registered in SAM. If your organization is already registered in SAM, you have already been automatically assigned a UEI number and no additional actions are needed.

Apply for an eAuthentication Account

[eAuthentication](#) Website

- Applicants will be required to have a USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account to register for [ezFedGrants](#). USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. Please note that USDA will only accept eAuthentication accounts from individuals (not organizations) and you will need to verify your identity when creating an account.
- An individual may apply for a USDA eAuthentication account by visiting the [Create an Account page](#). For help with eAuthentication accounts or passwords, please visit the eAuthentication help desk online portal at <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/helpdesk/requesthelp>.

Getting Started in ezFedGrants

[ezFedGrants](#) Website

- Applicants will be required to establish an account in [ezFedGrants](#) which requires a USDA level 2 eAuthentication account (see section above for more information on this).

- [ezFedGrants](#) requires each applicant to have a minimum of at least one Grants Administrative Officer and one Signatory Official to successfully submit an application/proposal package. We recommend identifying these individuals and confirming they have access prior to submitting a proposal to ensure an efficient application process.
- To complete an application for a proposal selected for funding, the applicant must access the “Search Opportunities” screen and search for the correct Opportunity Number.
- For help with [ezFedGrants](#), applicants may contact the [ezFedGrants](#) help desk at ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.