OMB No. 0581-0240



Local Food Promotion Program

Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-19-0001

Publication Date: April 18, 2019

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on June 18, 2019

Program Solicitation Information

Funding Opportunity Title: Local Food Promotion Program

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-19-0001

Announcement Type: Initial

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.175

Dates: Applications must be received before 11:59 pm Eastern Time **June 18, 2019**, through Grants.gov. Applications received after this deadline **will not** be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). LFPP's purpose is to help support the development, coordination, and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to help increase access and availability to locally and regionally produced agricultural products. AMS will competitively award grants to eligible applicants for projects that meet the purpose of the grant program.

Approximately $11.5 million will be available to fund applications under this solicitation. In the FY 2018 application cycle, AMS received 276 applications and was able to fund 51 (16%) of the applications. To be competitive, applications must meet all program requirements and be of high quality.

LFPP planning grant awards range from $25,000 to $100,000. LFPP implementation grant awards range from $100,000 to $500,000. A 25 percent match of total Federal funds is required.

This announcement provides information regarding the eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, and the application forms and instructions needed to apply for an award.

Stakeholder Input: AMS welcomes your comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments in developing the next RFA. Email written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice to: AMSGrants@ams.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are commenting on the **Local Food Promotion Program RFA**.

2019 Highlights and Changes

- The RFA has been updated to align with the changes provided in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334).
- Cost sharing or matching equal to 25% of the total amount of the Federal portion of the grant is required.
- Food Policy Councils are added as eligible entities.
- Applicants may use up to $6,500 of the amount requested in their application for upgrades to equipment to improve food safety.

Application Checklist

The application checklist below lists the required and conditionally required documents for an application package. AMS expects applicants to read the entire RFA prior to submitting their application to ensure they understand the program's requirements.

LFPP requires that **all application packages** include the following:

- ☐ Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Form SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Project Narrative (PDF Attachment)
- ☐ Signed Letters Verifying Matching Funds for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource (PDF or MS Word Attachment)
- ☐ Signed Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations (PDF or MS Word Attachment)

When applicable, application packages are required to include the following documents:

- ☐ AD-3030 – Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ AD-3031 – Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (in Grants.gov)
- ☐ Signed Letter(s) Stating Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure (PDF or MS Word – Attachment)
- ☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF Attachment)

Timing to Obtain and Submit Grants.gov Required Elements

Required Action	*Timing to Obtain/Submit*
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials	June 18, 2019 – *11:59 p.m. [Eastern Time]*
Obtaining Your Organization's DUNS Number (if you do not already have one)	1-2 business days
Establishing an *Active* SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 2 weeks

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1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) is authorized by subtitle A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. § 1621 et seq.) as amended under section 10102 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Public Law 115-334 (2018 Farm Bill). LAMP supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products. The primary goals are to:

- Connect and cultivate regional food economies through public-private partnerships;
- Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies for value-added agricultural production and local and regional food system infrastructure;
- Strengthen capacity and regional food system development through community collaboration and expansion of mid-tier value chains;
- Improve income and economic opportunities for producers and food businesses through job creation; and
- Simplify the application and the reporting processes for the grants administered under the Program.

The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP) and the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Program are implemented under LAMP. FMLPP is administered by AMS and VAPG is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service under Rural Development (RD). FMLFPP is administered in two components: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). This RFA is for LFPP.

1.2 PURPOSE

LFPP funds projects that develop, coordinate and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. The program focuses on:

- Supporting and promoting local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing;
- Supporting the processing, aggregation, distribution, and storage of local and regional food products that are marketed locally or regionally, including value-added agricultural products;
- Encouraging the development of value-added agricultural products;
- Assisting with business development plans and feasibility studies;
- Developing marketing strategies for producers of local food products and value-added agricultural products in new and existing markets;
- Facilitating regional food chain coordination and mid-tier value chain development;
- Promoting new business opportunities and marketing strategies to reduce on-farm food waste;
- Responding to changing technology needs in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing; and

- Covering expenses relating to costs incurred in obtaining food safety certification and making changes and upgrades to practices and equipment to improve food safety.

1.3 PROJECT TYPES

LFPP offers **Planning** and **Implementation** project types.

1.3.1 PLANNING PROJECTS

Planning projects are used in the planning stages of developing, coordinating, or expanding a food business that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system infrastructure.

Activities include developing, coordinating, and expanding such businesses. Projects may include:

- Completing a feasibility study for a new intermediary food channel (i.e., food hub).
- Hiring experts for technical assistance to implement a local/regional food transportation system.
- Hiring experts for training on managing a local/regional food storage or processing facility.
- Devising a business development plan associated with the processing/marketing of local/regional agricultural products, including value-added agricultural products.

1.3.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Implementation projects are used to establish a new food business or to improve or expand an existing food business that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system infrastructure.

Activities include developing, coordinating, or expanding, such businesses. Projects may include:

- Developing or expanding food incubator programs or mid-tier value chains.
- Instituting group-based Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification for sellers of food into institutional or wholesale marketing channels, including providing financial support for making changes and upgrades to practices and equipment to improve food safety.
- Cultivating new wholesale market channels through online portal or virtual marketplace.
- Investigating and implementing more cost-effective means of transportation for food supply chains through backhaul, route optimization, and/or other operational efficiencies.

If the applicant previously received an LFPP planning award that is directly related to the submitted proposal, the applicant must indicate how this project contributed to its proposed work in the Project Narrative (section ***4.2.3 Project Narrative***). **PLEASE NOTE** that the previously awarded LFPP planning grant agreement must be closed (section ***3.3 Limit on Number of Applications***).

1.3.3 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Projects are not eligible for consideration if the proposed activities:

- Are not related to local and regional food system activities.

- Are to glean, purchase, or collect food or services to donate to other entities and/or individuals (section ***4.6.4***).
- Are for production related expenses, including food production and the purchase of farm equipment, tools, materials, supplies and other related costs (section ***4.6.4***)
- Depend on the purchase or lease-to-own of a vehicle—vehicles can be leased, but not leased-to-own or purchased (section ***4.6.4***).
- Benefit only one agricultural producer, vendor, or individual.
- Promote general food consumption (unrelated to a specific product or service) (section ***4.6.4***).
- Depend upon a critical component (such as land and structures) not in place at the time of application submission (section ***4.2.8***).
- Depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.
- Duplicate activities in a project that has received a Federal award from another Federal award program, including FMLFPP.

1.4 PRIORITY AREAS

Priority consideration will be given to projects that benefit communities located in areas of concentrated poverty with limited access to supermarkets or locally or regionally grown food as defined in section ***1.4.1 Low Income/Low Food Access***.

AMS does not require that applicants meet the priority areas to be eligible to apply or receive grant funds.

1.4.1 LOW INCOME/LOW FOOD ACCESS

If requesting low income/low food access (LI/LA) priority consideration, the project's implementation address must be in a LI/LA census tract as defined by the four major map layers on the ERS Food Access Research Atlas. "implementation address" refers to the street address or census tract location within the targeted community (LI/LA census tract) at which the applicant plans to conduct or deliver approved project activities.

The applicant must provide its census tract(s) for at least one LI/LA address (priority area). If your organization or business is located in and/or primarily serves at least one LI/LA community, your application will be considered under this priority area.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide the Federal award to successful applicants.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in section ***5.0 Application Review Information.***

Continuation application. These applications are submitted by applicants who have received prior FMLFPP funding, such as an LFPP planning grant or a previous FMPP grant. Such applications must contain the same information that is required for new applications, as well as a description – via the FMLFPP Project Narrative form – of how the newly proposed project builds on previous activities. Continuation applications will be evaluated according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications, in addition to consideration of the applicant's performance during the previous FMFLPP grants and its apparent ability to improve upon that work.

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

It is anticipated that approximately $11.5 million will be available to fund applications in fiscal year 2019. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the required timeframe. It is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled performance period end date, however AMS encourages applicants to take the full allowable grant period to allow ample time to complete projects. The applicant must indicate the start date and end date on Block 17 of the SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance". Required project start dates and completion dates are provided on the table below:

Project Type	Duration (Months)	Start Date	Completion Date
Planning	18	September 30, 2019	March 31, 2021
Implementation	36	September 30, 2019	September 29, 2022

2.5 AWARD SIZE

Award size varies by project type. Applicants may not request less than or more than the respective minimum/maximum amounts.

Project Type	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Planning	$25,000	$100,000
Implementation	$100,000	$500,000

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All applicants must be domestic entities owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Tribal Governments. Eligible applicants include:

Entity Type	Description
Agricultural Businesses or Cooperatives	Business entities, member-owned entities or businesses that provide, hold, deliver, transport, offer, or sell agricultural products or services for member benefit as well as the organization or other business that they represent.
Producer Networks or Association	Producer group- or member-owned organizations or businesses that provide, offer, or sell agricultural products or services through a common distribution system for the mutual member benefit as well as organizations or other businesses that assist, represent, or serve producers or producer networks.
CSA Networks or Associations	Formal groups of farms that work collectively to offer consumers regular (usually weekly) deliveries of locally-grown farm products during one or more harvest season(s) often on a subscription or membership basis. This includes organizations or other businesses that assist, serve, or represent CSAs or CSA networks. Customers have access to a selected share or range of farm products offered by the group of farmers based on partial or total advance payment of a subscription or membership fee.
Food Council	Food policy council or food and farm system network that represents multiple organizations involved in the production, processing, and consumption of food, as well as local, Tribal, or State governments; and that addresses food and farm-related issues and needs within city, county, State, Tribal region, multicounty region, or other region designated by the food council or food system network.
Local Governments	Any unit of government within a state, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937; special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.
Nonprofit Corporations	Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education,

Entity Type	Description
	where no part of the organization or institution's net earnings of which inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
Public Benefit Corporations	Corporations organized to construct or operate a public improvement, the profits from which inure to the benefit of one or more State or to the people therein.
Economic Development Corporations	Organizations whose missions are to improve, maintain, develop and/or market, or promote a specific geographic area.
Regional Farmers Market Authorities	Entities that establish and enforce regional, State, or county policies and jurisdiction over State, regional, or county farmers markets. State agencies are eligible if their State's regulatory statutes identify the specific State agency as a regional farmers market authority.
Tribal Governments	Governing bodies or governmental agencies of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in Section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602)) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

3.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

The applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators (section ***4.6.3***). However, only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators do not need to meet these eligibility requirements provided in section **3.1**.

- A *partnership* is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties with specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities. Applicants must show evidence of existing community or industry support and engagement.

3.3 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

Applicants may submit multiple applications to FMPP and LFPP. If recommended for an award, applicants are limited to receiving **one** LFPP award and **one** FMPP award. For example:

- For LFPP, this means that an applicant may be awarded one Planning **OR** one Implementation grant, but not both during this fiscal year.
- For FMPP, this means that an applicant may be awarded one Capacity Building **OR** one Community Outreach and Development grant, but not both during this fiscal year.

If recommended for multiple awards under both FMPP and LFPP, AMS staff will contact the applicant to discuss the options.

Applicants must close out an active (not closed-out) FMPP or LFPP grant award from a previous year to be eligible to receive an award under this fiscal year RFA. For example:

- If applying for an FMPP project, an applicant must close any active (not closed-out) grant award from a previous FMPP project to be eligible to apply and receive an FMPP award under this fiscal year.
- If applying for an LFPP project, an applicant must close any active (not closed-out) grant award from a previous LFPP project to be eligible to apply and receive an LFPP award under this fiscal year.

The applicant must submit all required close-out documentation by the application due date mentioned in section ***4.4 Submission Date and Time***. Please refer to the respective General Award Terms and Conditions, available on the "How to Administer the Awards" webpage, for close out instructions.

3.3.1 FISCAL SPONSORS/AGENTS

LFPP eligible applicants may use fiscal sponsors/agents in their effort to attain and administer a grant award under LFPP. Such applicants seeking to implement an LFPP project may:

- Apply directly to AMS through Grants.gov and request to use funds to establish a contractual relationship with a fiscal sponsor/agent to perform administrative or financial functions on behalf of the applicant; or
- Utilize a fiscal sponsor/agent to apply for an LFPP award on behalf of the implementing organization. By doing so, the sponsor/agent accepts all financial and legal liabilities for that organization at the time the award is made. In the case of LFPP applications, fiscal sponsors/agents would submit the application as the applicant organization, and the AOR responsible for all grant decisions would be an employee of the fiscal sponsor/agent. Fiscal sponsors/agents are bound by the same requirements mentioned in this RFA as other applicant organizations.

An applicant organization cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to a fiscal sponsor/agent.

3.4 COST SHARING AND MATCHING

LFPP requires matching funds in the form of cash and/or in-kind contribution in an amount equal to 25 percent of the total Federal portion of the grant.

Cost sharing or the required match must be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Refer to 2 CFR §200.306 for additional Federal requirements and definitions, including the basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used toward satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement to which the applicant is a party.

All matching contributions **must be committed or in place** when the proposal is submitted. Additional anticipated matching funds not in place by the time the project commences cannot be counted toward the matching requirement.

Applicants must indicate the total amount of match and how it will specifically align with their requested funding when completing the budget section of the FMLFPP Project Narrative. Additionally, applicants must submit letters or other documentation verifying the match for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource. Refer to section ***4.2.4 Matching Funds and Letters of Verification*** for more information.

Indirect costs may count toward your match. Refer to section ***4.6.2 Using Indirect Costs for Cost Sharing or Matching*** for more information.

Applicants may not use program income (as defined in 2 CFR §200.80) or Federal funds of any kind as a match or cost share.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to in response to this RFA. AMS encourages applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see the Apply for Grants webpage on Grants.gov. This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete the required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in section ***4.7 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements***.

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Catalog of Federal Assistance CFDA number "10.175," or the LFPP Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-19-0001".

4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.2.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required. The SF-424 form is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or explained in the instructions. However, you must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instructions
#1 Type of Submission	Application
#2 Type of Application	New or Continuation
#4 through #7	Not required
#8c Organizational DUNS	Applicant DUNS# for the Organization submitting the application. See D&B Request a DUNS Number. **NOTE**: Applicants that apply for a grant must be capable of managing and monitoring Federal funds and project activities and outcomes. Recipients cannot transfer the award to another recipient organization once a grant is awarded (you may not apply under one DUNS number and switch to another later). Refer to section ***4.7.1, 1.* Obtain a DUNS Number** of this RFA.
#8d Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes not accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	10.175
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-19-0001 Ensure you are applying for the correct grant program.
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, states affected by project
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
#16a Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
#16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the projects will be implemented in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	**Planning Projects** - Your performance period cannot be more than 18 months in length. Planning projects begin September 30, 2019 and end no later than March 31, 2021. **Implementation Projects** – Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months (3 years) in length. Implementation projects begin September 30, 2019 and end no later than September 29, 2022.
#18 Estimated Funding – Federal	Total Federal award requested.
#18b Estimated Funding – Applicant	Enter the amount of match or cost share from the applicant organization and/or other partners.
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	This initiative is subject to intergovernmental review. Consult the official State Point of Contact (SPOC) list to determine applicability in your State.

4.2.2 SF-424B ASSURANCES FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Required. The SF-424B form is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov.

4.2.3 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required. Applicants are required to prepare and submit a narrative using the FMLFPP Project Narrative form. The form and instructions are available on the program's "How do I Apply for an LFPP Grant" webpage. The Project Narrative must clearly describe the direct or indirect producer or food business benefits intended by the applicant, applicable outcome indicators, and budget information.

All applicants must complete the FMLFPP Project Narrative form and convert it to PDF. This PDF document must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted. The narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in 11-point font, and not exceed fifteen (15) 8.5 x 11 pages (excluding existing Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Project Narrative form is 15 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 30 pages (15 pages + 15 pages)**. DO NOT modify the margins of the FMLFPP Project Narrative form.

The supporting documents listed below do not count toward the 15-page limit. Prior to submitting your application, make sure that it is in final form (i.e., if you used the "track changes" function, accept all changes before converting the document to PDF for final submission so that the mark-up is not visible).

4.2.4 MATCHING FUNDS AND LETTERS OF VERIFICATION

Required. Each application must include or be accompanied by written verification of match commitments from any party, including the applicant, who will contribute cash or in-kind matching from non-Federal resources to the project.

Submit one match verification letter for EACH cash or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization.

AMS has posted **A Suggested Match Verification Template Letter** on the LFPP application website. We highly encourage you to use this template. If you do not use this template or if you are an applicant submitting a match, your match verification document must minimally include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- Cash Commitment per year (if applicable) and Total Cash Match
- In-kind Contribution per year (if applicable) and Total In-kind Match. Break down items into categories as applicable:
    - Salaries (employee name, title, duties, pay rate/hr., amount matched per year)
    - Items/Activities (fair market value per unit, how value determined, and amount matched per year)
- Explanation of how each type of match will correspond to the budget or be used by the Applicant

- Signature of Matching Organization Representative with typed name and title

Submit *Matching Funds and Letters of Verification* on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **MATCH VERIFICATION LETTERS**. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

4.2.5 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Required. Applicants must provide letters of commitment (in MS Word or PDF) from all project partners and collaborators. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in section ***3.2 Partners and Collaborators***. The letter must state the partner or collaborator agrees to the project management plan presented in the Project Narrative. Emails will not be accepted. The Letter of Commitment must include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization's mission and its interest in LFPP development
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- Roles of the participating individuals, as applicable, and any individual time commitment
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

Submit *Letters of Commitment* on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT**. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

AMS has posted **A Suggested Partner Organization Template Letter** on the LFPP application website. We highly-encourage you to use this template.

Letter(s) must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

PLEASE NOTE: LFPP does not require Congressional letters of support and such letters do not carry any weight during the evaluation process.

4.2.6 FORM AD-3030, REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING FELONY CONVICTION AND TAX DELINQUENT STATUS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS

Required if the applicant is a corporation. A corporation includes, but is not limited to, any entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. territories. Corporations can include both for-profit and non-profit entities. The AD-3030 is a self-certification form. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if the AD-3030 needs to be completed and submitted. The applicant must submit the fillable PDF version of the form in Grants.gov. Most

information blocks on the required form are self-explanatory; however, AMS is providing further clarification below.

Block	Instructions
#1 Applicant's Name	Enter the name of the individual or authorized representative who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization.
#2 Applicant's Address	Enter the address of the applicant organization.
#3 Tax ID No.	Enter the last four digits of the applicant organization's Tax Identification number.
#4A, 4B, 4C Questions	Address these questions by checking the Yes/No boxes. For question 4B, see below for what is meant by "acting on behalf of." If the action of the official or agent resulted in a benefit to the corporation, then the official or agent was "acting on behalf" of the corporation. If the action of the official or agent resulted in a benefit to the official or agent, then the official or agent was not acting on behalf of the corporation.
#5A Applicant's Signature (By)	The individual or authorized representative who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization must sign the form.
#5B Title/Relationship of the Individual if Signing in a Representative Capacity	Enter the title of the individual or authorized representative who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization.
#5C Date Signed	Date the form.

4.2.7 FORM AD-3031, ASSURANCE REGARDING FELONY CONVICTION OR TAX DELINQUENT STATUS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS

Required if the applicant is a corporation. A corporation includes, but is not limited to, any entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. territories. Corporations can include both for-profit and non-profit entities.

The applicant must submit the fillable PDF version of the form in Grants.gov. AD-3031 is a self-certification form. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if the AD-3031 needs to be completed and submitted.

4.2.8 EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed project. Applicants are required to submit evidence (in MSWord or PDF) that critical resources and

infrastructure on which the initiation and completion of a project will depend are in place, meaning in working condition or usable, at the time of proposal submission. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission. The letter must indicate the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project. The Letter of Evidence of Critical Infrastructure must include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A statement about committing/approving/granting permission, etc. of the critical resource or infrastructure to the project for the time period
- A description of the approved use of the critical resource or infrastructure approved for the project, any costs associated with its use, and any qualifying circumstances for its use.

Submit Letters of Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**. The evidence must accompany the proposal at the time of the application submission.

AMS has posted **A Suggested Evidence Of Critical Resources And Infrastructure Template Letter** on the LFPP application website. We highly encourage you to use this template.

Letter(s) must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15.

4.2.9 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Refer to section ***4.6.1 Indirect Costs*** for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

4.3 SUBMITTED APPLICATION QUALIFICATION

Your application will **not be accepted** if it:

- Is received by Grants.gov after the submission deadline (see AMS' Policy on Late Applications).
- Is submitted via any method other than through Grants.gov.

Your application will be **rejected** if it:

- Is not responsive to the requirements of this RFA (See AMS' Policy on Non-Responsive Applications).

4.4 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. AMS encourages

organizations to submit applications at least 2 weeks prior to the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

Only applications submitted and validated by 11:59 pm EDT on June 18, 2019 to Grants.gov will be accepted. See AMS' Policy on Late Applications.

4.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

FMLFPP is subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Click here to refer to the official State Point of Contact listing.

4.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.6.1 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at 2 CFR § 200.56) are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

As stated in (2 CFR §§200.413 and 414), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except State and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. As described in 2 CFR §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 must be used consistently for all Federal awards until a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDCs are defined in 2 CFR §200.68 as 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). MTDCs exclude 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 be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If a cognizant agency has approved an applicant's negotiated indirect cost rate, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved *NICRA* with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For cognizant agency assignments see 2 CFR §200.19.

4.6.2 USING INDIRECT COSTS FOR COST SHARING OR MATCHING

The maximum indirect costs allowed for the project may be included under the Federal portion of the budget or, alternatively, may be offered as a matching contribution if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget. For example, if a proposed project's maximum allowable indirect

costs are $8,000, the applicant may include $8,000 on the Federal portion of the budget or $8,000 as a matching contribution, but not both.

The applicant may split the indirect cost allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total amount of indirect costs does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowed. Alternatively, the recipient may request any other combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowable. Refer to 2 CFR §§ 200.413 and 414 for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

4.6.3 SUBAWARD RESTRICTION

The applicant is expected to perform a major portion of the project; however, subawards or subcontracts with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources for the purposes of the proposed project that are not otherwise available within the applicant organization are allowable. Using grant funds to competitively "re-grant" funds in mini-grant programs or to activities that are not central to the purpose of the project or for unknown costs is not allowable.

4.6.4 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

AMS awards are subject to the most recent AMS General Terms and Conditions, Uniform Requirements, Cost Principles, Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR §200), and other laws and regulations affecting Federal assistance.

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing the associated cost should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under section ***7.0 Agency Contacts***.

Note that the allowable costs listed below may also be cost-shared or brought as part of the required match. Unallowable costs cannot be brought as a match.

Cost Category	Description
Buildings and Land - Construction	*Unallowable* for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees). This also includes construction and construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing. *Unallowable* for Greenhouses and hoop houses. *Allowable* for rental costs of land and building space. However, lease to own agreements (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) are not allowable. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.

Cost Category	Description
	A *building* is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of people, animals, or property and having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.
Conferences	*Unallowable* if the project solely consists of conference/workshop costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.432. *Allowable* if the conference is part of a larger project to fulfill the purpose of a grant program's legislated purpose. The applicant should clearly indicate the purpose and target audience for any conference or workshop and explain how the activity will be funded. Also indicate if registration fees will be collected and, if so, show the fees as program income in the Budget and Justification section of the Project Narrative form. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal recipient as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals (see Meals for restrictions) and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the recipient must report fees as program income (See 2 CFR §200.307 *Program Income*). *Allowable* to rent a building or room for training; however, where appropriate, AMS encourages the use of technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room. If renting a building or a room is necessary, the most cost-effective facilities such as State government conference rooms should be utilized.
Contingency Provisions	*Unallowable* for miscellaneous and similar rainy-day funds for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening. *Unallowable* for working capital for activities/items not already in place.
Contributions or Donations	*Unallowable* for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the recipient to other entities. *Unallowable* to purchase food or services to donate to other entities and/or individuals.
Entertainment Costs	*Allowable* for costs related to the project; however, they must not represent all or a majority of the project costs. *Unallowable* entertainment costs include amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to

Cost Category	Description
	shows or sporting events and gratuities), regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives. Entertainment costs are defined in 2 CFR §200.438
Equipment	*Unallowable* for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment or lease to own agreements (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own). *Allowable* for rental costs of general purpose equipment. Vehicles may be leased, but not purchased. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle. *Allowable* for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criteria are met: 1) Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant award; 2) Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible; 3) The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization; 4) Acquired in accordance with organizational practices; 5) Must be used only to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant award; 6) More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment; 7) Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and 8) Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR §200.313 as applicable. Unallowable for the purchase of trucks that are commercially available for rent. An example of an unallowable truck purchase is a refrigerated truck that can be rented as-is (without making modifications or retrofitting). This truck is considered general purpose equipment and can be rented, but not purchased. For vehicle and equipment leases or rentals with an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds $5,000, rates should be in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable vehicles and equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the vehicle or equipment leased.

Cost Category	Description
	Definitions ***Equipment*** is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient for financial statement purposes, or $5,000. ***Acquisition cost*** means the cost of the asset including the cost to ready the asset for its intended use. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. ***General Purpose Equipment*** means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles. ***Special Purpose Equipment*** is equipment used only for research or technical activities. FMLFPP examples include mobile markets; specialized equipment for mobile markets; walk-in coolers; cooler storage units, mobile slaughter unit components, a trailer to be retrofitted into a mobile market or food truck and other equipment that requires modification because it is not already available and readily usable in its current form.
Equipment – Food Safety	*Allowable for up to $6,500* to purchase or upgrade equipment to improve food safety.
Farm, Gardening, and Production Activities and Supplies	*Unallowable* for farm, gardening, and production activities, materials, supplies, and other related costs. Example items may include soil, seeds, shovels, and gardening tools.
Fines, Penalties, Damages and Other Settlements	*Unallowable* for costs resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with, Federal, state, tribal, local or foreign laws and regulations.
Fundraising and Investment Management Costs	*Unallowable* for organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions, regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used. This includes salaries of personnel involved in activities to raise capital.

Cost Category	Description
Goods or Services for Personal Use	*Unallowable* for costs of goods or services for personal use of the recipient's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
Indirect Costs – Unrecovered	*Allowable to* use unrecovered indirect costs as part of cost-sharing or matching. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount that could have been charged to the Federal award under the potential recipient's approved negotiated indirect cost rate.
Insurance and Indemnification	*Allowable* as indirect costs for insurance and indemnification.
Lobbying	*Unallowable* as described in 2 CFR § 200.450.
Meals	*Unallowable* for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost. *Unallowable* for breakfasts for conference attendees because it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning. *Unallowable* for meal costs that are duplicated in meeting participant's per diem or subsistence allowances. *Allowable* for lunch or dinner meals if the costs are reasonable and a justification is provided that such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. *Allowable* for meals consumed while in official travel status. They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established written travel policies.
Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs	*Unallowable* for costs of membership in any civic or community organization. *Allowable* for costs of membership in business, technical, and professional organizations.
Organization Costs	*Unallowable* for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.

Cost Category	Description
	Allowable for organization costs per 2 CFR § 200.455.
Participant Support Costs	*Allowable* for such items as stipends or subsistence allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with approved conferences, training projects, surveys, and focus groups.
Political Activities	*Unallowable* for development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 1501-1508 and §§ 7324-7326).
Pre-Award Costs	*Allowable* if such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of the project work. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the Federal award. A potential recipient may incur pre-award costs 90 calendar days before award. These costs and associated activities must be included in the applicant's Project Narrative and budget justification. All costs incurred before the award are at the potential recipient's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of an award imposes no obligation on AMS to award funds for such costs.
Rearrangement and Reconversion Costs	*Allowable* as indirect costs incurred for ordinary and normal rearrangement and alteration of facilities. *Allowable* as direct costs with prior approval for special arrangements and alterations costs incurred specifically for the award. Rearrangement and reconversion costs are those incurred in restoring or rehabilitating the non-Federal entity's facilities to approximately the same condition existing immediately before the start of the grant agreement, less costs related to normal wear and tear.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Coupons, Incentives or Other Price Discounts	*Unallowable* for costs of the value of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts (e.g., the $5.00 value for a $5.00 clip-out coupon). *Allowable* for costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (e.g., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) as long as they benefit more than a single program or organization.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Food for Displays, Tastings,	*Unallowable* for the purchase of food for displays, tastings, and/or cooking demonstrations, displays, or tastings.

Cost Category	Description
Cooking Demonstrations	
Selling and Marketing Costs – General Marketing Costs	*Unallowable* for costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand. *Unallowable* for general marketing of the health value of food products. (e.g., "Vegetables keep you healthy!") *Allowable* for advertising costs designed to promote products that align with the purpose of the grant program. Advertising media includes magazines, newspaper; radio; television; direct mail; bus signs or other advertisement wraps; and other electronic and computer transmittals.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Sponsorships	*Unallowable* for costs associated with sponsorships. A sponsorship is a form of advertising in which an organization uses grant funds to have its name and/or logo associated with certain events and where the organization does not necessarily know how the funds associated with sponsorship costs will be used. These costs also benefit only the organization offering funding, limiting the beneficiaries to the sponsor organization.
Selling and Marketing Costs – Use of Meeting Rooms, Space, Exhibits that do not Align with Grant Purpose	*Unallowable* for costs associated with trade show attendance/displays, meeting room reservations, and/or any other displays, demonstrations, exhibits, or rental of space unless the activities specifically align with the purpose of the grant program. See the ***Conferences*** cost category for more information.
Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices	*Allowable* for costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies must be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs. Only materials and supplies actually used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. In the specific case of computing devices, charging as direct cost is allowable for devices that are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated, to the performance of a

Cost Category	Description
	Federal award. Where Federally-donated or furnished materials are used in performing the Federal award, such materials will be used without charge.
Travel Costs	*Unallowable* for travel costs of government officials per 2 CFR §200.444. *Unallowable* for international travel. *Allowable* for domestic travel, when costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy and the purpose aligns with the legislated purpose of the program. Allowable travel costs for applicants that do not have formal travel policies and for-profit entities may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulations, issued by the General Services Administration (GSA), including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. If a recipient does not have a formal travel policy, those regulations will be used to determine the amount that may be charged for travel costs. In the case of air travel, the lowest reasonable commercial airfares must be used. Applicants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of discount fares for airline travel through advance purchase of tickets if travel schedules can be planned in advance. Consideration should be given to the use of alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing if they are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly.

4.7 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.7.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

1) *Obtain a DUNS Number*: All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants

must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form.

2) *Register with SAM*: In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an *active* SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**

3) *Register with Grants.gov*: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need to assign an individual to the AOR role.

4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles*: After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

5) *Track Role Status*: After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you to track your status.

6) *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

4.7.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

Applicants can apply using Grants.gov 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 funding opportunity announcement (FOA), an applicant creates individual instances of a workspace.

1) *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

    a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device

storage, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: You may need to visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software.

b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.

c. *Complete Form 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. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

3) *Submit a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

   SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in section ***4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission*** are included.

4) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional training resources, including video tutorials. Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer to if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact mentioned in section ***7.0 Agency Contacts***.

4.7.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in section ***4.4 Submission Date and Time***. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When AMS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS.

AMS will not accept applications packages by fax, email or postal mail. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS. See AMS' Policy on Late Applications.

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections. Applicants using slow internet connections, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting the application on Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

4.7.4 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE**.
- Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all of the instructions provided by AMS.
- Apply for the correct grant program
    - CFDA number "**10.175**" and Funding Opportunity Number "**USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-19-0001**."
- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with Grants.gov software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Size/ File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the "Add Attachments" button (do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader).
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are "accepted".
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names ($, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct DUNS number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
  http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html
  https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application will be reviewed competitively using the following criteria and scoring:

Alignment and Intent ..... **25 Points**

1) The extent to which the application provides a clear and concise description of the specific issue, problem, or need and objectives for the project.

2) The extent to which the project helps develop, coordinate and expand local and regional food businesses (including those that are not direct producer-to-consumer markets) that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products and an agricultural local and regional food system infrastructure.

3) The extent to which the applicant identifies the intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries and how they will benefit.

Technical Merit ..... **25 Points**

1) The extent to which the application presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable methodology for fulfilling the goals and objectives of the proposed project.

2) The extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project during the award project period.

3) If the project and/or entity was previously funded, the extent to which the previous lessons learned are incorporated into the proposed project.

Achievability ..... **15 Points**

1) The extent to which the outcomes and indicator (s) are feasible for the scale and scope of the project including:

a. how indicator numbers were derived, with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator (s); and

b. the anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to and restrict progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.

2) The extent to which the proposed project can be easily adapted to other regions, communities, or agricultural systems.

3) The extent to which the applicant provides a comprehensive plan to disseminate the project's results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties.

Expertise and Partners ..... **25 Points**

1)The extent to which the proposed project represents qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborations to accomplish the project's goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:

a. Commitment from the key staff demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;

b. The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and names and titles of the individuals who comprise the Project Team; and

c. The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project.

2) The extent to which the application describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing, and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.

3) The extent to which the application describes how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project's period of performance (without grant funds).

Fiscal Plan and Resources ..... **10 Points**

1) The extent to which the application budget narrative or justification provides a clear, detailed, narrative description for each budget line item including:

a. How the budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project; and

b. How the budget relates logically to the narrative describing the project.

2) The extent to which the application provides evidence that critical resources and infrastructure that are necessary for the initiation and completion of the proposed project are currently in place.

3) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that its partners' or collaborators' contribution of non-Federal cash resources or in-kind contributions is available and obtainable for the project as evidenced through the submitted Matching Funds and Letters of Verification.

5.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Qualification Screening

To meet the basic eligibility requirements, applications must be responsive to the RFA. Please see AMS' Non-Responsive Application Policy for more information.

Step 2: Technical Review

Each application is evaluated by a panel of peer reviewers. AMS will make every attempt to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned proposals. The peer review panels evaluate their assigned proposals using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers confer with other team members to derive a consensus score. The consensus review serves as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Step 3: Administrative Review

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top rankings and recommendations. In addition to the rank and scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope, allowability of budget items, available funding,

geographic diversity, and USDA priorities. AMS staff will work with top-ranked applicants to negotiate any revisions if necessary and possible. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies using the guidance provided by 2 CFR §205(c).

6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. Grant Agreements consist of a 1-page Agreement Face Sheet (AMS-33) that will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The Notice of Award and Grant Agreement will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in 2 CFR §200.210 and reference to the *AMS General Terms and Conditions*.

6.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by AMS via email as soon as possible after the awards are announced to inform them of the results. AMS will email unsuccessful applicants anonymous review panel consensus comments regarding their proposals as feedback.

6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

All AMS grant agreements include the AMS General Terms and Conditions as part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement. More information is provided in the most recent version of the AMS General Terms and Conditions under the *Administrative and National Policy Requirements* section.

6.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the AMS General Terms and Conditions. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

7.1 PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact the LFPP staff by e-mail with questions about the grant program at USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov.

For additional information, please visit the LFPP Website at:
http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp

7.1 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

Questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's Applicant Support.

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Local or Regional Food Business means an organization or business entity that functions as an intermediary between producers (farmers or growers) and buyers by carrying out one or more local or regional food supply chain activities—including aggregating, storing, processing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced food products—to meet local and regional market demand.

Examples include but are not limited to eligible entities that serve as: food hubs, food aggregators, food distributors, food wholesalers, food processors, and other value-added production enterprises, such as shared-use kitchen or kitchen incubator operations.

Locally and Regionally Produce Food means food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same State, territory, or tribal land.

FMLFPP recognizes that domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities and local and regional food businesses may source or market some of their food products outside of the defined locality or region. These enterprises are encouraged to consider local boundaries for projects based on existing networks, foodsheds, distance to markets for farmers within the selected area, or other relevant factors. AMS may question the reason behind the selected local or regional food system development effort.

Value-Added agricultural product means any agricultural commodity or product that:

- has undergone a change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam);
- is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product, (such as organically produced products);
- is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved product);
- is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E–85 fuel; or
- is aggregated and marketed as a locally produced agricultural food product; and
- as a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

Mid-tier Value Chain means a local or regional supply network that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value- added agricultural product in a manner that:

- Targets and strengthens the profitability and competitiveness of small and medium-size farms and ranches that are structured as a family farm; and
- Obtains agreement from an eligible agricultural producer group, farmer or rancher cooperative, or majority-controlled producer-based business venture that is engaged in the value chain on a marketing strategy.

8.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

8.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 (5 U.S.C. § 552) FOIA and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a), as implemented by USDA's regulations (7 CFR §1, Subpart A) govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 3943-S, Mail Stop 0202, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0273, Telephone: (202) 720-2498; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

8.4 PROHIBITION AGAINST USING FUNDS UNDER GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES THAT REQUIRE CERTAIN INTERNAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

The applicant may not require any of its employees, contractors, or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting them from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information. Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in sections 743, 744 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Pub. L. 114-113, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions Government-wide) and any successor provisions of law on making funds available through grants and cooperative agreements to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and (2) section 744 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

8.5 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0581-0240.