Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program

Fiscal Year 2016 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: *USDA-AMS-TM-FSMIP-G-16-0004*

Application Due Date: *11:59 PM Eastern Time on May 12, 2016*

Program Solicitation Information

Funding Opportunity Title: Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-FSMIP-G-16-0004

Announcement Type: Initial

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.156

Dates: Applications must be validated by Grants.gov on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 12, 2016. 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) 2016 Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) to competitively award matching grants to eligible applicants for projects that explore new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the U.S. marketing system. Approximately $1 million is available to fund applications under this solicitation.

FSMIP funding will be available for use beginning September 30, 2016. A $1 for $1 match consisting of cash and/or in-kind non-Federal resources is required.

This announcement identifies eligibility criteria for FSMIP projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a FSMIP award.

Stakeholder Input: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) seeks your comments about this Request for Applications. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program. Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice via e-mail to: Janise.Zymont@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 responding to the **Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program** RFA.

Highlights and Changes for 2016

It is important that applicants read and adhere to the guidance contained in this Request for Applications when preparing their applications. Below are highlights of major changes to the program since last year.

- It is 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.

- The Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire is required of all applicants to assess your organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies.

- Each entity, including the applicant, must use the Verification of Match template to describe all cash and in-kind matching resources brought to the project.

- Applicants partnering with Promise Zone Lead Applicant Organizations must submit a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Promise Zone Certification Form.

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1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative authority is provided under section 204(b) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627).

1.2 PURPOSE

To explore new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the U.S. agricultural marketing system. FSMIP funds a wide range of applied research projects that address barriers, challenges, and opportunities in marketing, transporting, and distributing U.S. food and agricultural products domestically and internationally.

1.3 PROJECT TYPES

1.3.1 ELIGIBLE AGRICULTURAL CATEGORIES

Eligible agricultural categories include poultry, livestock, dairy, food, feed and fiber crops, fish and shellfish, horticulture, viticulture, apiary, and forest products, and processed or manufactured products derived from such commodities. Reflecting the growing diversity of U.S. agriculture, FSMIP accepts proposals dealing with nutraceuticals, bioenergy, compost, agroforestry products, and products made from agricultural residue. To check on the eligibility of agricultural categories not listed, contact the FSMIP Program Manager.

1.3.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECT SCOPE

Proposals may address topics dealing with any level of the marketing chain including direct, wholesale, and retail. Proposals must have a strong marketing focus, must involve research, and the primary beneficiaries must be agricultural producers and agribusinesses. Proposals that involve training or education programs must include a research component that tests the effects of the program on the marketing goals.

Proposals may involve small, medium or large scale agricultural entities but must benefit multiple producers or agribusinesses. Proposals that benefit one business or individual will not be considered. Proposals that address issues of importance at the State, multi-State, or national level are appropriate for FSMIP.

FSMIP will consider unique proposals on a smaller scale that may serve as pilot projects or case studies useful as models for others. Such proposals must include an objective to analyze opportunities and formulate recommendations with regard to how the project could be scaled up or expanded to other regions.

1.3.3 ELIGIBLE PROJECT TOPICS

FSMIP's enabling legislation authorizes projects to:

- Determine the best methods for processing, preparing for market, packing, handling, transporting, storing, distributing, and marketing agricultural products.
- Determine the costs of marketing agricultural products in their various forms and through various channels.
- Assist in the development of more efficient marketing methods, practices and facilities to bring about more efficient and orderly marketing, and reduce the price spread between the producer and the consumer.
- Develop and improve standards of quality, condition, quantity, grade and packaging in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices.
- Eliminate artificial barriers to the free movement of agricultural products in commercial channels.
- Foster new/expanded domestic/foreign markets and new/expanded uses of agricultural products.
- Collect and disseminate marketing information to anticipate and meet consumer requirements, maintain farm income, and balance production and utilization.

1.4 PRIORITY AREAS

All proposals that fit within the FSMIP scope are encouraged and will receive equal consideration during the review process. FSMIP will award five percent of total FSMIP funds to proposals that score among the higher ranked proposals and meet one of the following criteria:

- Reflect a collaborative approach between the States, academia, the farm sector and other appropriate entities and stakeholders, in recognition of the synergies and improved outcomes that are attributable to such collaborations and partnerships.

- Assess challenges and develop methods or practices that could assist producers in marketing agricultural products that meet the mandates of the Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act 21 U.S.C. 2201.

- Have the potential to create wealth and economic opportunity in rural communities through research and studies on issues relating to marketing in local and regional food systems, and value-added agriculture.

- Contribute to the strategy of a designated Promise Zone. For more information on current Promise Zones, visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Website: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/promise-zones/.

1.5 DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS

1.5.1 STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

State Agencies bear the primary responsibility for developing proposals and overseeing funded projects. Proposals must be structured so that the State Agency maintains control of the project objectives, sets policy, and ensures that the project will be carried out in accordance with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations as well as with the Grant Agreement and the Terms and Conditions of Award. State Agencies are responsible for ensuring that subrecipients maintain appropriate records and follow all applicable Federal statutes and regulations as well as the Grant Agreement and the Terms and Conditions of Award.

State Agencies must ensure that proposals are appropriate for FSMIP by reviewing Section 1.2. Contact the FSMIP Program Manager if there is any question about whether or not the proposal qualifies for FSMIP.

1.5.2 OUTREACH

State Agencies must assume the lead role in FSMIP projects and use cooperative or contractual linkages as needed to carry out the proposed work. State Agencies are encouraged to reach out to potential project partners within their States including producer and commodity groups, community-based organizations, economic development organizations, and groups that represent American Indians and Alaska Natives, socially disadvantaged producers, veterans, and Promise Zone partner organizations to engage them in developing proposals.

1.5.3 MULTI-STATE PROPOSALS

The State Agency that will assume the administrative and coordinating role for a multi-state proposal must submit the application.

1.5.4 PREVIOUS PROJECTS AND FOLLOW-UP PROPOSALS

If the proposal: (a) Builds on a project funded by the AMS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, the AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program, the AMS Local Food Promotion Program, or another USDA award program; (b) Is part of a larger project or initiative; or (c)

Builds on a previously funded FSMIP project; include an explanation in the project Narrative that indicates how the proposal relates to, but is distinct from, such work.

A follow-up proposal that builds on a previous FSMIP project is allowed only after the previous project has been completed, and the final report has been submitted to and accepted by FSMIP. A follow-up proposal to a FSMIP project that is still in progress as of the application deadline is not allowed.

1.5.5 PROPOSALS INVOLVING FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT

If a proposal involves foreign market development, determine first if the project is more appropriate for federal award programs administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) or for funding through a State-Regional Trade Group. FSMIP recommends that applicants search the FAS database of GAIN reports to ensure that a foreign market development proposal will not duplicate existing information. .

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

FSMIP will use a Grant Agreement to provide a Federal award to successful FSMIP 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.

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Approximately $1 million will be available to fund applications in fiscal year 2016.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

FSMIP projects are awarded for a period of 24 months (2 years), although it is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled ending date. All 2016 FSMIP projects will begin on September 30, 2016, and end no later than September 29, 2018. Insert these start and end dates on Block 17 on the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance.”

2.5 AWARD SIZE

FSMIP awards typically average about $60,000 each, and in recent years have ranged from $25,000 to $135,000.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants ("State agencies") are State departments of agriculture, State agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate State agencies from the 50 States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The term "other appropriate State Agency" means a State university, a State college, or a State government entity such as a State department of forestry, natural resources, or energy. The terms State university and State college include land-grant universities and colleges which are defined as institutions of higher education in the United States and designated by a State to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. Tribal colleges and universities that became land-grant institutions in 1994, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act, as well as other state-run colleges and universities are also eligible.

3.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Although not eligible to apply directly, producer associations, non-profit organizations and other agricultural and stakeholder organizations may participate in FSMIP as partners with an eligible applicant.

FSMIP will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit one individual farm or agribusiness. FSMIP projects must benefit multiple producers or agribusinesses, or have agricultural sector-wide impact.

3.3 COST SHARING OR MATCHING

FSMIP requires a $1-for-$1 match with cash and/or with properly-valued, in-kind non-Federal resources.

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 towards satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement the applicant is party to.

In addition, applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind as a match. Cost sharing must be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Applicants should indicate how the match will specifically align with their requested funding when completing the budget section of the application.

The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306. Refer to section 4.3.8 Verification of Matching Funds for more information.

All matching contributions must be committed or in place when the proposal is submitted to FSMIP. Non-Federal funds that are expected or anticipated to be awarded by the time the project commences cannot be counted toward the matching requirement.

Bringing more than the required $1-for-$1 match does not convey any advantage to the application in terms of evaluation and scoring during the review process.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 OBTAINING AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants must apply for FSMIP at www.Grants.gov. Applicants may search for the FSMIP funding opportunity using the FSMIP CFDA number "10.156," or the FSMIP Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-FSMIP-G-16-0004."

4.2 APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The checklist below provides the required, conditionally required, and optional documents for an application package.

REQUIRED

Submit the following required forms, available as part of the FSMIP application package at grants.gov, as separate attachments:

- ☐ SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance
- ☐ SF-424A – Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- ☐ SF-424B – Assurances - Non-Construction Program
- ☐ Areas Affected by Project (Block 14 of the SF-424)

Combine the following required application components into **one .pdf document in the order listed below**:

- ☐ Project Narrative
- ☐ Budget Narrative and Budget Spreadsheet
- ☐ Personnel Qualifications
- ☐ Verification of Matching Funds letter for each entity that will provide a cash and/or in-kind match (PDF or MS Word) See Letter Template.
- ☐ Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire (PDF) See Form.
- ☐ At least 1, and no more than 3, Letters of Support from Stakeholders or Beneficiaries (PDF)

MAY BE REQUIRED

Application packages may be required to include the following documents:

- ☐ AD-3030, Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants
- ☐ AD-3031, Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants
- ☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (.pdf)
- ☐ Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Promise Zone Certification Form

The SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, AD-3030, AD-3031 and Areas Affected by Project are available through grants.gov. All other documents must be prepared outside of grants.gov, then uploaded under SF-424 item #15. Click on "Add Attachments" (**do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe**) and follow the instructions on the form.

4.3 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.3.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required: Form SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance" is available via the 2016 FSMIP opportunity at www.Grants.gov. Most information blocks are either self-explanatory or explained in the instructions. However, for FSMIP applications, 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
#4 through #7	Not required
#8c Organizational DUNS	Applicant DUNS# for the Organization submitting the application. See D&B Request a DUNS Number
#8d Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	10.156
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-FSMIP-G-16-0004
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, states affected by project.
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant's	Provide a short description of the project

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 project will be implemented in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Start Date: September 30, 2016. End date: September 29, 2018 (all agreements will be for 2 years, but applicant can finish early).
#18a Estimated Funding - Federal	Total FSMIP award requested.
#18b – 18f Estimated Funding – Applicant	b. Applicant – Enter State Agency match c. State – Enter match from other State Agency (ies) or institution(s), if applicable d. Local – Enter match from local governments (examples: county, municipality), if applicable e. Other – Enter match from non-government sources (examples: non-profits, commodity or trade associations, producer groups), if applicable
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	This initiative is subject to intergovernmental review. Consult the website to determine applicability in your State.

4.3.2 SF-424A BUDGET INFORMATION – NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Required: The SF-424A is available via the FSMIP opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the instructions. However, the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424A should be used for FSMIP applications. **Do not** use instructions found in Grants.gov or elsewhere on the internet.

Please fill in **ONLY** sections A, B and C. (**Do not** complete sections D, E and F)

Section A- Budget Summary

Row	Column	Instructions
1.	(a) Grant Function or Activity	Type "FSMIP-Federal" (This title will copy to column 1 on the next page.)
1.	(b) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:	Type "10.156"
1.	(e) Federal	Include the entire amount of funds requested from the Federal government to complete the proposed project.

Row	Column	Instructions
		Note: The 1.(g) total is a prepopulated formula that will automatically calculate the total amount of this line.
2.	(a) Grant Function or Activity	Type "*FSMIP - Non-Federal*"
2.	(b) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:	Type "*10.156*"
2.	(f) Non-Federal	Include the entire amount of cash and/or in-kind contributions that your partner organization(s) will provide as a match during the proposed project.
5. Totals	(e), (f), and (g)	All of the boxes in this row have a prepopulated formula.

Section B- Budget Categories

Row	Column	Instructions
6. a. through j.	(1)	Enter the total amounts of each Object Class Category for which you are requesting federal funds.
6. a. through j.	(2)	Enter the total amounts of each Object Class Categories for which you or your partners will provide the **matching funds**.
6. k.	(1), (2) & (5)	All of the boxes in this question have a prepopulated formula. You should have totals in columns (1) and (2) and (5). **Important**: Verify that totals in *Section A* 5.(g) and *Section B* 6.(5) k. are the same.
7. Program Income	(1)	Enter the estimated amount of income, if any, expected to be generated from this project. There is a prepopulated formula in box 7.(5).

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Row	Column	Instructions
9.	(b)	Enter the amount of any cash and/or in-kind contribution that the applicant will bring as a match during the grant period, *if applicable.*
9.	(c)	Enter the amount of any cash and/or in-kind contribution that the state will bring as a match during the grant period. If the applicant is a state agriculture department and would like to provide the match, it should be reported in 9.(b) , *if applicable.*
9.	(d)	Enter the amount of any cash and/or in-kind contribution that other sources (Example: Partners) will provide as a match during the grant period, *if applicable.*
12.	(b), (c), (d) & (e)	All of the boxes in this question have a prepopulated formula, so the calculation will automatically appear if you have entered information into the boxes above. **Important**: Verify that totals in *Section C* 12(e), *Section B* 6.(2) k., and *Section A* 5.(f) are the same.

4.3.3 SF-424B ASSURANCES NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Required: The SF-424B is available to applicants when accessing the FSMIP opportunity at www.Grants.gov . This form must be signed by the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).

4.3.4 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required: To ensure a fair and equitable competition, the required format is a single-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Number the pages in the right hand bottom corner. The Narrative may be in Word (.doc, .docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), but whichever format is used, the cut/paste function must be operational.

Handwritten applications will be not accepted. Ensure that when you apply to www.Grants.gov , your document is in final form (e.g. if you used the "track changes" function, accept all changes before submitting so that the mark-up is not visible upon final submission).

Submit the Project Narrative components in one document in the following order:

COVER PAGE

The Cover Page includes:

- Proposal Title of no more than 10 words
- Name and contact information of the applicant organization
- Names and contact information of the project leader, other principal partners, as well as the university grants office and financial office, if applicable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

All pages must be numbered. The Table of Contents indicates the page number for all required sections of the application as well as for any attachments.

ABSTRACT

The Abstract must be a concise, stand-alone description of and justification for the project. The suggested maximum length is 250 words.

NARRATIVE (NOT TO EXCEED 10 PAGES)

The Narrative must include the following sections in the order they appear below. All sections of the Narrative must be in a paragraph format. Do not present or combine sections into a spreadsheet or table. The Narrative is limited to a maximum of 10 pages. References and draft surveys do not count toward the 10-page maximum.

(1) Background and Justification

(i) Clearly identify the marketing issue, problem, barrier, challenge or opportunity to be addressed and explain why the proposal is important and timely. Articulate the research question to be answered by the project or provide a concise problem statement. Provide a literature review sufficient to demonstrate the current state of knowledge about the topic and how the proposed work builds on it or addresses any gaps. See (7) References for instructions on how to handle literature citations.

(ii) Quantify and discuss the potential economic impact of the project on agricultural producers and agribusinesses. Impacts include, but are not limited to number of jobs, volume and value of sales or shipments, market share, and the value of new markets and new products.

(iii) Include data and/or estimates that describe the extent of the problem, and the number of agricultural producers or agribusinesses affected. Explain who will benefit and how they will benefit from the project.

(iv) If the proposal:

- Builds on a project funded by the AMS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, the AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program, the AMS Local Food Promotion Program, or another USDA award program, briefly describe what has been accomplished already, how the proposal is distinct from the previous work, and how the proposal furthers the ultimate overall goals of the project.

- Is part of a larger non-FSMIP project, briefly describe how the proposal fits into the larger project and how it is distinct from other aspects of the larger project.

- Is a follow-up to a previously completed FSMIP project, briefly describe what has been accomplished already, how the FSMIP proposal is distinct from the previous project, and how the proposal advances the overall project goals.

- Involves foreign market development, briefly describe efforts taken to ensure this proposal does not duplicate publically available reports or data, and describe how it will fill any data gaps.
- Involves a Promise Zone implementation partner, discuss the role and relevance of the Promise Zone implementation partner, and the impact of the Promise Zone strategy on the goals, purposes, and outcomes of the project. Applicants partnering with Promise Zone Lead Applicant Organizations must submit the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Promise Zone Certification Form.

(2) Other Federal Award Programs

Indicate if the proposal has been or will be submitted to another federal award program, and if so, identify the program. If the proposal is selected for funding by another federal award program after the proposal is submitted to FSMIP, inform FSMIP immediately and withdraw the FSMIP proposal.

(3) Goal(s), Objectives and Work Plan

Describe the overall goal(s) in one or two sentences. List and describe the proposal objectives. Explain how each objective will be accomplished and by whom. Also include the expected completion date for each objective and indicate the major milestones of the project.

(4) Project Evaluation, Outputs and Expected Outcomes

Describe what the project is expected to accomplish, the expected benefits, and how the project will be evaluated while in progress and upon conclusion. Describe outputs that explain who the target audience is and what activities are to be completed. Describe expected measureable outcomes that explain what knowledge may be gained or what actions may be implemented as a result of the project. Include at least one quantitative metric that will be reported at the beginning and the end of the project to demonstrate impact.

(5) Project Deliverables

List any expected deliverables that will result from the project in addition to the required final report. Examples of project deliverables include professional journal or farm press articles, Extension bulletins, and manuals.

(6) Outreach Plan

Describe how the project results will be shared with and disseminated to the target audience(s), stakeholders and other interested parties beyond those directly served by the project. Examples of such activities include presentations at professional conferences or producer meetings, publication of articles in professional journals or the agricultural press, educational brochures, slides, survey instruments, and websites. Web pages devoted to the project must also include this information in a prominent location. All materials must be made available electronically and disseminated via appropriate websites.

(7) References

Do not use footnotes. Cite the literature referenced in the text and attach a separate page called "References" with the detailed literature citations. **Reference pages do not count toward the 10-page Narrative maximum.**

(8) Draft Survey

If the proposal involves a survey, briefly discuss the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used for data collection and analysis, and the population to be surveyed. It is not required, but if a draft survey is available, include it at the end of the Narrative. **A draft survey does not count toward the 10-page Narrative maximum.**

4.3.5 BUDGET SPREADSHEET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Required: The Budget Spreadsheet must show the relevant expenditure categories in the far left column and, proceeding across the page, there must be a column showing the dollar amount of FSMIP funds requested and separate columns showing the dollar amount for each of the non-federal entities that will provide matching resources. Provide separate Year 1, Year 2, and cumulative budgets.

The Budget Narrative must explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section 4.7.3 for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.

The Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative do not count toward the 10-page Narrative maximum.

4.3.6 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

Required: Provide a one- to two-page resume or summary of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and for each of the other major project participants. *Longer resumes will be disregarded*. **Personnel qualifications do not count toward the 10-page Narrative maximum.**

4.3.7 AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (BLOCK 14 OF THE SF-424)

Required: Complete Block 14 on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and submit as a separate attachment with the application. In addition to listing the areas affected, it is acceptable to attach a map showing areas affected to demonstrate impact.

4.3.8 VERIFICATION OF MATCHING FUNDS LETTER

Required: Each FSMIP application requires verification of match commitment from the FSMIP applicant and/or any third party who will contribute cash and/or in-kind matching non-Federal resources to the project. **Submit one Verification of Matching Funds letter (in PDF) for EACH cash and/or in kind resource.** The letter template is available at the FSMIP website.

If you do not use this template, your letter 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 (provide documentation), and amount matched per year)
- Explain how each type of match will correspond to the budget, or be used by the Applicant.

Applicant Match: The applicant must print and sign the Verification of Matching Funds letter indicating the amount of the match. If contributing an in-kind donation, applicants must indicate the total cash value of the match according to fair market value and describe how they arrived at that value. The authorized representative of the project application must then sign the bottom of the letter in the designated field.

Third Party Matches: For each separate third party who will contribute a portion of the match, provide one signed Verification of Matching Funds letter addressed to the FSMIP applicant. Each third-party contributor must indicate the amount and type of match. This form may be scanned and/or .pdf'd in order to obtain the required signatures.

4.3.9 LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS OR BENEFICIARIES

Required: At least one, but no more than three, letters of support from stakeholders or beneficiaries detailing the expected benefits of the project to the group is required. Applications that include more than three letters of support will not receive extra points or be considered more favorably.

Letters of support must be on letterhead and may be addressed either to the State Agency or to the FSMIP Program Manager. Letters of support must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Do not send original letters. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

Email messages of support are allowed. Form letters are discouraged. Congressional letters of support do not meet this requirement.

4.3.10 ACCOUNTING SYSTEM AND FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Required. Applicants must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200 Standards for Financial and Program Management. AMS uses the Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire to assess your risk in handling Federal funds. This form is available on the FSMIP website and must be submitted in PDF with final signatures.

4.311 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. 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 version of the form in grants.gov. This requirement does not apply to state departments of agriculture, but it may apply to state universities and state colleges.

4.3.12 AD-3031 – ASSURANCE 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. The applicant must submit the version of the form in grants.gov. This requirement does not apply to state departments of agriculture, but it may apply to state universities and state colleges.

4.3.13 HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) PROMISE ZONE CERTIFICATION FORM

Required if proposal involves a Promise Zone Implementation Partner. If the proposal involves a Promise Zone Implementation Partner, the HUD Promise Zone Certification Form must accompany the proposal at the time of application. This form is available on the FSMIP website. Unsigned forms will not be accepted.

4.3.14 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant's request or match is more than the 10 percent de minimis rate. The NICRA must be in PDF format.

If you have a negotiated indirect cost rate greater than 10 percent of total direct costs, submit a copy of the approved *indirect cost rate agreement* to substantiate the request, as described in Appendix III to Part 200—Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment, and Rate Determination for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) through Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals of this part, and Appendix IX to Part 200—Hospital Cost Principles.

4.4 SUBMITTED APPLICATION QUALIFICATION

Your application will not be accepted if:

- You are not an eligible entity.
- The application is received by grants.gov after the submission deadline.
- The application is submitted via any method other than through www.grants.gov .
- The application does not meet the required $1 for $1 match.
- The topic and/or approach of the application is outside the FSMIP program scope.

AMS will also not accept an application (after submission or prior to award) if FSMIP confirms that:

- An applicant or recipient has not fulfilled all the terms and conditions of a previous Federal award.
- An applicant or recipient has committed fraud, including inclusion of materially misleading or incorrect information on the application (such as misrepresentation of DUNS registration or false identity statements).
- An applicant or recipient has mismanaged Federal funds.
- The FSMIP proposal is funding the same activities as another Federal grant program.
- An applicant is found to be ineligible for a Federal award.

AMS will use the Federal Do Not Pay system, SAM.gov, and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (*FAPIIS*) to verify that applicants are in good standing.

If AMS anticipates that the total Federal share of the FSMIP award will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000- see 2 CFR §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold) over the grant period of performance:

- AMS will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);
- The applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;
- AMS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards.

4.5 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

The deadline for submitting FY 2016 applications through grants.gov is 11:59 pm Eastern Time, May 12, 2016. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submitting them to Grants.gov. It may take more than one try before your application is successfully submitted so plan ahead to leave enough time for the application process. The application will meet the deadline if it is validated by Grants.gov no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 12, 2016.

4.6 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

FSMIP is subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

4.7 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.7.1 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at 2 CFR §200.56) represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.

The maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award budget or, alternatively, the maximum allowed indirect costs may be offered as a matching contribution (if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget).

A recipient may split the allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total percentage of indirect costs under the project does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. For example, if indirect costs are capped at 10 percent,

the recipient may request 5 percent of the indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution. Alternatively, the recipient may request any other, similar percentage combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect cost rate for the type of grant requested. Refer to 2 CFR §200.413 and 414 for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

As stated in the regulations (2 CFR §200.413 and 414) any recipient 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 which may be used indefinitely. As described in 2 CFR §200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

Sample Calculation

Total Direct Cost = $80,000

Total Indirect Cost assuming a negotiated cognizant rate of 30% = $24,000

Total Project Cost = $104,000

FSMIP Share = $52,000

Applicant Share = $52,000

Some examples of possible allocations of Indirect Cost:

A. FSMIP covers all indirect cost:

   FSMIP = $28,000 direct + $24,000 indirect; Applicant = $52,000 direct

B. Applicant covers all indirect cost:

   FSMIP = $52,000 direct; Applicant = $28,000 direct + $24,000 indirect

C. FSMIP and Applicant split indirect cost:

   FSMIP = $40,000 direct + $12,000 indirect; Applicant = $40,000 direct + $12,000 indirect

4.7.2 SUBAWARD RESTRICTION

The applicant is expected to perform a major portion of the project, however, subawards or subcontracts with partners, collaborators, and/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" in mini-grant programs or similar endeavors is unallowable.

4.7.3 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

The following is information on allowable and unallowable costs in common categories of FSMIP proposal budgets. This section is not intended to be all-inclusive. Reference Subpart E-Cost Principles of 2 CFR part 200 for the complete explanation of the allowability of costs. Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this section should contact FSMIP.

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.

Item	Description
Advisory Councils	*Unallowable* for costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.
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. *Allowable* for rental costs of land with prior approval. However, lease agreements to own (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. A *building* is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of people, animals or property having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.
Conferences	A conference is defined as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, workshop or event whose primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information beyond the non-Federal entity and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the Federal award.

Item	Description
	Unallowable if the project solely consists of conference or workshop. *Allowable* if a conference or workshop is part of a larger project. The applicant must clearly indicate the purpose and target audience for the conference or workshop, and explain how the activity will be paid for. Also indicate if registration fees will be collected and if applicable, show the fees as program income on the Budget spreadsheet and provide an explanation in the Budget Narrative. If funds are requested to pay for food or refreshments, provide an estimate. *Allowable* to rent a building or room for training, however, where appropriate, FSMIP 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. *Unallowable* for meal costs (breakfast, lunch and dinner) unless the applicant justifies that to do so would otherwise impose arduous conditions on the continuity of a meeting and its participants. Breakfasts for conference attendees are usually considered unallowable as it is expected that individuals will have sufficient time to dine on their own before the conference begins. *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.
Contributions or Donations	*Unallowable* for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the recipient, regardless of the recipient (also referred to as "re-granting of funds"). *Allowable for* products or samples purchased with FSMIP funds or brought as a match if they are used in a study that assesses acceptance by the target audience, or has a similar evaluative objective.
Entertainment Costs	*Unallowable* for entertainment costs, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives.

Item	Description
Equipment	*Unallowable* for acquisition costs of general purpose equipment. *Allowable* for rental costs of general purpose equipment. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle. *Unallowable* for lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own). For 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 equipment leased. *Allowable* for acquisition costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment provided the following criterion is 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 only be used to solely 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 part 200.313 as applicable. ***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 which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000.

Item	Description
	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.
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.
Fixed Amount Subawards	*Unallowable.*
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.
Goods or Services for Personal Use	*Unallowable* for costs of goods or services for personal use of 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.

Item	Description
Insurance and Indemnification	*Allowable* as indirect costs for insurance and indemnification.
Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs	*Unallowable* for costs of membership in any civic or community organization.
Organization Costs	*Allowable* with prior approval for organization costs per 2 CFR 200.455. *Unallowable* for costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.
Participant Support Costs	Incentives for Study Participants and Survey Respondents: *Allowable* to provide cash, coupons, vouchers or other appropriate incentives to recruit target entities to participate in a research project such as to complete a survey or participate in a focus group. All other uses of coupons and vouchers are not allowed. The amount and type of the incentive must be reasonable and appropriate, and is subject to approval by FSMIP. *Allowable* with prior approval, for participant support costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects.
Pre-Award Costs	*Allowable*, if such costs are necessary to conduct the project or program, and would be allowable under the grant, if awarded. A recipient may incur pre-award costs 90 calendar days before FSMIP makes the award without prior approval from FSMIP. Expenses more than 90 calendar days pre-award require FSMIP prior approval. All costs incurred before FSMIP makes the award are at the recipient's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of an award imposes no obligation on FSMIP to award funds for such costs.

Item	Description
Printing and Publications	*Allowable* to pay the cost of preparing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and publications relating to the project, however the printing of hard copies is discouraged.
Program Income	Program income is gross income earned by a recipient resulting from activities supported by a federal award. It includes income in the form of fees for services performed during the award performance period, real property, usage or rental fees, or patent or copyright royalties. Program income cannot be used to meet the matching requirement.
Rearrangement and Reconversion Costs	*Allowable* only as indirect costs incurred for ordinary and normal rearrangement and alteration of facilities.
Selling and Marketing Costs	*Unallowable* selling and marketing costs include, but are not limited to: ▪ Advertising media costs to promote a producer-to-consumer direct marketing effort. *Advertising media* includes newspaper; radio; television; direct mail; bus, signs, or other advertisement wraps; and other electronic and computer transmittals. ▪ Promotional items such as point-of-sale materials, promotional kits, billboard space, signs or streamers, automobile stickers, table tents, and place mats, swag, souvenirs, memorabilia, or promotional items of a personal nature. ▪ Public relations activities utilizing advertising media to promote a direct producer-to-consumer marketing to the public or a specific and FSMIP approved audience. • Product advertising through any media, either directly or indirectly, through an advertising agency or other firm. • General publicity or information programs designed to build the image of the State's agriculture, State Department of Agriculture, or other State Agency. • Costs associated with County and State fair exhibits, or promotion of commodity months or weeks.

Item	Description
	• 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 the sponsorship costs will be used. These costs are considered a contribution or donation and only benefit the organization offering the funding. • Purchase of products or samples of products to give away to the public. However, products or samples may be purchased with FSMIP funds or brought as a match if they are used in a study that assesses acceptance by the target audience, or has a similar evaluative objective. • Expenses relating to domestic or foreign trade shows except educational programs or technical seminars conducted to educate potential buyers about the properties, characteristics or uses of an agricultural commodity or product. *Unallowable* for the purchase of food-relative incentives, including any types of bonuses, coupons, and vouchers. *Unallowable* for the purchase of food for displays, incentives or cooking demonstrations. *Allowable* with prior approval for the purchase or contribution of food products or samples for use in studies such as to obtain feedback about the food from a target audience, or to conduct technical analyses of the physical properties of the food.
Travel Costs	*Unallowable* for travel costs of government officials per 2 CFR 200.474 *Unallowable* for travel costs of producers or processors simply to gain marketing experience, to network and/or to sell their products. *Allowable* for domestic and international travel of individuals for activities directly related to the project objectives. Examples of personnel whose travel may be covered: state agency personnel working directly on the project, technical experts, producer representatives who have unique knowledge about a commodity or market, and individuals whose presence

Item	Description
	on an international trip will make a direct contribution to the goals of the project. All travel expenses associated with FSMIP projects must follow Federal travel regulations (41 CFR Chapters 300 through 304) unless State travel requirements are in place. If alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly, they must be utilized as an alternative to travel.

4.8 OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

4.8.1 DUNS REQUIREMENT

All entities applying for funding must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) number. The DUNS number must be included in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form. **It takes approximately 1-2 days to obtain a DUNS number.**

Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number are located at: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html. Authorized Organizational Representatives (see below) will need to know the organizational DUNS number to complete the application submission process.

4.8.2 SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM.GOV) REGISTRATION

Applicants must register with the Federal System for Award Management (SAM.gov). In addition to maintaining your organization's registration as a Federal recipient, SAM.gov is also how you will enter financial information necessary to be paid (by EFT) should your organization be awarded. Failure to register with SAM.gov will delay and/or prevent your application from Grants.gov submission.

NOTE: SAM.gov registration is FREE. Some websites exist that look like SAM and claim to offer their services for a fee. **If you are asked to pay a fee to register with SAM.gov, you are at the wrong website.** Additionally, any communication regarding your SAM.gov account will come directly from the website. Be suspicious if you receive unsolicited email notifications regarding your account (i.e. check the email address and/or call SAM.gov (866-606-8220) to verify that the communication is legitimate).

To create a SAM.gov account, you will need to designate your organization's E-Biz Point of Contact (E-Biz POC). This individual is the main contact for your organization in the SAM.gov

system. The E-Biz POC may be the same person as the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). See below for more information.

SAM.gov can take 7-10 days to create an active account, with an additional 1-2 days for Grants.gov to recognize the information. Immediately register your organization in SAM.gov (i.e. before your entire Grants.gov application is ready) to ensure you are able to submit your application to Grants.gov on time. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM are located at:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

NOTE: Each organization must have a Taxpayer ID Number (TIN/EIN) and taxpayer name. If your organization does not have a TIN/EIN, **allow an additional 2 weeks to request and obtain an EIN from the IRS (visit their website for details on obtaining this important piece of information.**

Additionally, each applicant must ensure that their respective organization's SAM.gov registration is up-to-date and active. SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an *active* SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.

4.8.3 AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE (AOR)

To apply through Grants.gov, an AOR must create a username, password and profile. The AOR is the individual who is able to make legally-binding commitments for the applicant organization. The AOR may be the same person as the E-Biz POC. See "NOTE" below for more information. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, visit:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html.

At any time, you can track your AOR status on the Grants.gov website: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-5-track-aor-status.html

NOTE: This next step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submission. After creating a profile on Grants.gov, the E-Biz Point of Contact (i.e. the E-Biz POC listed as your contact in SAM.gov) will receive an email granting the AOR permission to submit applications on behalf of your organization. The E-Biz POC will then log on to Grants.gov and approve the applicant as the AOR, thereby giving him or her permission to submit applications. You will be able to submit your application online any time after AOR authorization.

Organizations cannot usually complete the profile and AOR authorization registration process in a single day. **Applicants that are not already registered should allow at least 2 weeks to complete this one-time process. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE TO REGISTER.** The validation time depends upon the responsiveness of your e-Biz point of contact.

To learn more about AOR Authorization, visit:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html

4.8.4 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Applications submitted through Grants.gov are considered electronically signed. The registration and account creation process, with the E-Biz POC approval, establishes the AOR authorization needed for the electronic signature. When you submit the application through Grants.gov, your AOR's name will be inserted into the signature line of the application.

4.8.5 HOW TO SUBMIT AN ELECTRONIC APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

Grants.gov allows applicants to download the application package, instructions and forms from the AMS website in order to work offline. The forms are provided in a variety of formats including Microsoft Office products and fillable Adobe PDFs.

Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher. Adobe Reader forms can be downloaded and saved to your hard drive, network drive(s), or to a flash or external drive. Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page to download the latest version of the software:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

Once you complete the SF-424 form in Grants.gov, the system will transfer much of your information to subsequent forms, such as the applicant name, address and DUNS number, on all subsequent Adobe Reader forms. Some fields will appear with a background color—these fields are mandatory and must be completed to successfully submit your application.

4.8.6 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

After you submit your application to Grants.gov, you will receive an automatic notification of receipt from the system that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification ONLY indicates receipt by Grants.gov and does not indicate receipt by AMS. Grants.gov may also send you an error message if your application was not submitted correctly.

AMS will retrieve your application from Grants.gov triggering a second electronic acknowledgment of receipt sent to the AOR. This email, which will be triggered shortly after the application deadline, indicates that the application was submitted successfully to AMS. This notification means that AMS *received* the application; it does NOT mean that AMS *accepted* the application. If you do not receive this second notification, you did not successfully upload your organization's application—contact Grants.gov to identify the issue if it is not already apparent. AMS will send a third email to inform applicants that either:

a) Their application was successfully submitted and will be forwarded to the peer reviewers for evaluation.
b) Their application did not meet the basic requirements and therefore will not undergo peer review.

All applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. AMS will not accept applications packages by fax, email or postal mail. AMS cannot waive these submission requirements. 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.

4.8.7 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.
- Thoroughly read this Requests for Applications and follow all of the instructions provided by AMS.
- 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-tools-and-tips.html and FAQs: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html

4.8.8 TIMING TO OBTAIN AND SUBMIT GRANTS.GOV REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Required Action	*Timing to Obtain/Submit*
AMS Deadline to receive application and all supporting materials	*11:59 AM Eastern time on May 12, 2016*
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 an TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your AOR authorization	Up to 2 weeks

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

(1) OBJECTIVES (25 points) – the proposal is well-justified, addresses an important marketing barrier, challenge or opportunity, and contains a problem statement or clearly frames the issue to be studied; the literature review supports the need for research; and aligns well with FSMIP's legislative and program goals.

(2) APPROACH (25 points) –the goals, objectives, and work plan are clear, appropriate, and logical; personnel demonstrate appropriate qualifications, knowledge and experience necessary to conduct the research; research methodology is described and appropriate to answer research questions; and all budget items, both federal award funds and matching resources, are allowable, reasonable and clearly described.

(3) IMPACT (30 points) – the proposal describes the potential impact it will have on target producers and agribusinesses, and the potential for the proposal to provide new knowledge and lessons learned that could be applied in other States or regions of the country; estimated economic impact is described and supported by relevant data. For small-scale or pilot proposals, the proposal includes recommendations as to how the project could be scaled up or expanded to other States or regions. The proposal includes at least one quantitative metric to demonstrate impact.

(4) DELIVERABLES AND OUTREACH (20 points) – the proposal describes deliverables attributable to the project in addition to the final report; and outlines a plan to disseminate project results electronically and in person to the target audience, stakeholders, and interested parties beyond those directly served by the project.

5.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Qualification Screening

To meet the basic eligibility requirements, use the application checklist to ensure your application is complete. Applications will be screened by FSMIP to determine if the applicant is an eligible entity, that all required components of the application have been submitted, and that the budget meets the $1 for $1 match. FSMIP will also ensure that the topic of the application is generally within the FSMIP program scope. Applicants will receive an email message from FSMIP once the initial screening is complete. Applications that pass Step 1 will proceed to Step 2: Technical Review.

Step 2: Technical Review

Proposals are reviewed and evaluated by a team of peer reviewers and subject-matter specialists. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement. Reviewers are not permitted to apply for FSMIP grant funds or receive financial benefit from any submitted application during the year in which they serve on the review panel. Individual reviewers evaluate and score their assigned proposals and then confer with other team members to derive a consensus score which serves as the basis for awarding and allocating FSMIP award funds. The consensus review focuses on strengths, weaknesses and suggestions, which are shared with unsuccessful applicants after the federal awards have been announced.

Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria listed in section 5.1. The text under each heading is provided to help applicants understand generally what aspects of their proposals will be evaluated, but is not meant to be a checklist or to indicate how scores within the individual evaluation categories will be weighted.

Proposals that address priority areas, including Promise Zone projects, will also be evaluated on the criteria listed in section 5.1 in competition with all other proposals. Five percent of FSMIP funds will be reserved for priority projects and will be awarded to such projects provided they score among the higher ranked proposals. Promise Zone projects will receive 5 priority points.

Step 3: Federal Assistance Regulations Review

Top applications that qualify for Step 3 of the review process will be evaluated to ensure the application is consistent with the appropriate *Federal Assistance Regulations*.

AMS selections are made based on review panel's top rankings and recommendations, Agency clearances and priorities, review of potential award project and budget (below), and available funding.

In consideration for an award, potential awarded projects and budgets may be revised by FSMIP based on allowable, allocable, and reasonable costs; fulfillment of Agency's funding, authorization and mission priorities; and quantitative evaluation of project outputs, outcomes, and performance metrics. Depending upon the timelines of award determination, the applicant may be contacted to negotiate these revisions or the FSMIP award may be rejected upon receipt. AMS will also assess your organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies. This assessment will consider your organization's:

(1) Financial stability – FSMIP will use the *Accounting System and Financial Capabilities Questionnaire* (part of the application package) as a basis to evaluate top-ranked applicants;
(2) Financial verification in SAM.gov, the Treasury Department's Do Not Pay website; and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System, if applicable;
(3) Recent history of performance with AMS grant programs (any open grants and grant closed within the last three years); and
(4) Reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F—Audit Requirements of 2 CFR 200 or the reports and findings of any other available audits.

6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, FSMIP 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 Grant Agreement sets forth pertinent information about the federal award, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Federal Agreement Identification Number (FAIN) or "agreement number;"
- Statutory authority for the award and any applicable program regulations;
- Name of Recipient organization;

- Name of the Recipient Project Coordinator;
- Approved period of performance start and end dates;
- Amount of Federal funds authorized for obligation by the recipient;
- Amount of matching resources brought to the project by the recipient and partners;
- Name of the Federal Agency Project Manager; and
- General Terms and Conditions of Award, by either reference or inclusion.

6.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

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

6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to the ones listed below.

2 CFR part 25 – *System for Award Management and Universal Identifier Requirements*

2 CFR part 170 – Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information

2 CFR part 175 – *Award Term for Trafficking in Persons*, which is the implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104(g))

2 CFR part 180 and part 417 – *OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-Wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)* and *USDA Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension*

2 CFR part 200 – *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*

2 CFR part 400 – *USDA implementation of 2 CFR part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*

2 CFR part 415 – *USDA General Program Administrative Regulations*

2 CFR part 416 – *USDA General Program Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments*

2 CFR part 418 – *USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying*

Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

2 CFR part 421 – *USDA Implementation of Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)*

7 CFR part 1, subpart A – USDA implementation of the *Freedom of Information Act*

7 CFR part 1b – USDA procedures to implement the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*, as amended

7 CFR part 3 – USDA implementation of *OMB Circular No. A-129* regarding debt collection

7 CFR part 15, subpart A – USDA implementation of Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, as amended

7 CFR part 331 and 9 CFR part 121—USDA implementation of the *Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002*

37 CFR part 401 – *Rights to Inventions made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms under Government Grants, Contracts, and Cooperative Agreements*

The implementation of the *Bayh Dole Act* (35 U.S.C. 200 et seq.) controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in federally-assisted programs.

48 CFR part 25 – *Foreign Acquisition*, which implements the *Buy American Act* (41 U.S.C. Ch. 83)

48 CFR subpart 31.2 – *Contracts with Commercial Organizations*

44 U.S.C. 3541 et seq. (Pub. L. 107-347) – *Federal Information System Security Management Act of 2002* (FISMA)

An Act designed to improve computer and network security within the Federal Government. Applies to recipients if it will collect, store, process, transmit, or use information on behalf of AMS.

Motor Vehicle Safety –

- *Highway Safety Act of 1966*, as amended (23 U.S.C. 402 & 403);
- *Government Organization and Employees Act,* as amended (5 U.S.C. 7902 (c));
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970*, as amended (29 U.S.C. 668);
- *Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949*, as amended (40 U.S.C. 101, et seq.);
- *Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States* (EO 13043);
- *Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving* (EO 13513)

Federal statutes and regulations found on the SF-424B "Assurances –Non-Construction Programs" (this form is submitted through Grants.gov with your application package)

2 CFR part 422 – *Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct*

6.4 REPORTING

6.4.1 PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Recipients are required to submit 6-month performance reports and a final performance report. Recipients are also required to submit an interim SF-425 "Federal Financial Report" with each 6-month performance report and a final SF-425 at the end of the grant period.

The 6-month performance report and SF-425 are due within 30 calendar days after each 6 month performance period. For 2016 Awards, the 2-year performance period begins September 30, 2016, and ends September 29, 2018.

Recipients will submit three 6-month performance reports and three interim SF-425s:

- #1 Interim documents are due within 30 days of March 31, 2017 (no later than April 30, 2017);
- #2 Interim documents are due within 30 days of September 30, 2017 (no later than October 31, 2017);
- #3 Interim documents are due within 30 days of March 31, 2018 (no later than April 30, 2018).

The final performance report and final SF 425 is due 90 days after the official grant ending date.

6.4.2 AWARD CLOSEOUT

To officially close out a FSMIP award, the following items are due within 90 days following the award performance period (by December 31, 2018):

1. Final Performance Report
2. Final Payment Request (SF-270), if applicable
3. Final SF-425, "Federal Financial Report, and if applicable, payment of unobligated balance
4. Tangible Personal Property Report, if applicable
5. A refund of any unused FSMIP grant funds (checks made out to *Agricultural Marketing Service,* if applicable.

Recipients should submit these items to FSMIP as required in the FSMIP Terms and Conditions of Award. Once the project is successfully closed, FSMIP will issue a closeout letter as the Agency's official notification.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact FSMIP by email at janise.zygmont@ams.usda.gov or by phone 202-720-5024.

FSMIP Program Manager:
Janise Zygmont

Mailing Address:
Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4549-South Building
Stop 0267
Washington, D.C. 20250-0267
Website address: http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fsmip

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 FSMIP TELECONFERENCE

FSMIP will hold a teleconference for potential applicants to review the basics of the 2016 program and give participants the chance to ask questions well before the application deadline. Information about the teleconference will be posted at www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP . A recording of the teleconference will be available at the website for potential applicants who could not participate in the live teleconference.

8.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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

8.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), as implemented by USDA's regulations (7 CFR part 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 ON USING FUNDS UNDER GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES THAT REQUIRE CERTAIN INTERNAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does 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 those employees, contractors, or subrecipients 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.