Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP)

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Q: What is the Local Agriculture Market (LAMP) Program?

A: LAMP is the new program authorized under the 2018 Farm Bill. The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP) and the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Program are implemented under LAMP. The New Regional Food System Partnership Grant also falls under LAMP, but the RFA is still under development.

Q: What is the difference between the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)?

A: FMPP promotes direct-to-consumer activities (farmers selling products directly to consumers). There are two project types under FMPP:

Project Types	Duration (Months)	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Capacity Building	36	$50,000	$250,000
Community Development Training and Technical Assistance	36	$250,000	$500,000

LFPP promotes intermediary supply chain activities (activities that move products from the producer to markets, but the activities do not involve selling directly to the consumer). Applicants must aggregate, distribute, process or store locally or regionally-produced products (sourced within a 400-mile radius). There are two project types under LFPP:

Project Types	Duration (Months)	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Planning	18	$25,000	$100,000
Implementation	36	$100,000	$500,000

Note: Both FMPP and LFPP require 25% cost share or match of the total Federal portion of the grant.

Q: What is the definition of a Local or Regional Food Business Enterprise?

A: An organization or business entity that functions as an intermediary between producers (farmers or growers) and buyers by carrying out one or more of the following 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.

Q: What is the project duration for FMPP and LFPP projects?

A: Project duration is determined by the program project type for each program component (FMPP or LFPP). Please see question above under the Program Information section or see the corresponding RFA's for more information.

Eligibility Information

Q: Who can apply for an FMPP and LFPP grant?

A: All applicants must be domestic entities (organizations) owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States and U.S. territories. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Q: Are only domestic entities eligible to apply?

A: Yes, only domestic entities are eligible. Refer to Section 3.1 of the Request for Applications (RFA's) for eligible entity types under FMPP and LFPP.

Q: Can a sole proprietorship apply for an FMLFPP grant?

A: Yes, the project must show evidence of existing community support and engagement and benefit more than one individual or two or more farmers, producers or farm vendors who sell their agricultural products or services. The applicant would use his/her IRS registered Tax Identification Number to register with DUNS/SAM.gov.

Q: Do I have to be a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit to be eligible?

A: No, you can still apply without being a 501 (c)(3) organization. If you prefer, you may be able to use a fiscal sponsor. However, you must have the fiscal sponsor relationship in place before submitting your application.

Q: What is a fiscal sponsor? How can I apply using a fiscal sponsor?

A: Fiscal sponsorship is a formal arrangement in which an organization (normally with 501 (c)(3) status) sponsor another organization (normally newly formed) that may lack exempt status or the capacity to perform administrative functions. Applicants may apply directly and establish a contract with a fiscal sponsor or use a fiscal sponsor to apply on behalf of the applicant. Please see section 3.3.1 in the RFA's for more information.

Application Process

Q: When is the deadline to apply?

A: Please see the corresponding RFA's to determine the application due date. AMS encourages applicants to submit applications at least 2 weeks prior to the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met. Ensure that all components of the applications are complete before applying.

Q: Can I submit my application by fax, email, postal mail or hand delivered?

A: No, AMS will NOT accept applications submitted by fax, paper, email, postal mail or hand delivered. All applications must be submitted electronically by Grants.gov on the established due date. Please refer to AMS [Late and/or nonresponsive Applications policy](#).

Q: Does every part of the Grant Narrative application count towards the 15-page limit?

A: FMLFPP requires each applicant to prepare a narrative using the Project Narrative form. The narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in 11-point font, not to exceed 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, such as partner/collaborators letters, matching letters, critical infrastructure letters do not count toward the 15-page limit. Exceeding the page limit may disqualify your application.

Q: Do proposed projects have to address all five Outcomes/Indicators as described in the RFA's project narrative? Do proposed project have to add one unique project-specific outcome/indicators determined by the applicant?

A: Applicants are <u>required</u> to complete all Outcomes and Indicators that are <u>relevant</u> (apply) to the project with benchmark and/or estimated (target) numbers. If you cannot provide information to a specific outcome indicator, explain the reasoning (e.g. "Does not apply because…"). Applicants are <u>required</u> to include an additional Outcome(s) and Indicator based on relevant project activities not covered under the Indicators already provided.

Q: Can I apply for both FMPP and LFPP grants? Can I apply if I already have another FMPP or LFPP grant?

A: An applicant may submit project proposals to both FMPP and LFPP. If selected for both awards, applicants are only eligible to receive <u>one</u> FMPP and <u>one</u> LFPP award. If an organization currently has an active (not closed-out) award from a previous year under FMPP or LFPP, the organization must close out that award by the application due date to be considered for another award.

Closing out the grant before the end of the performance period, does not guarantee that your submitted project proposal will be awarded. It is recommended that awardees take the entire project period to complete their project work.

Q: Can I receive an FMPP or LFPP grant and a grant from a different USDA agency (VAPG, Farm to School, RBOG, etc.)?

A: Yes, if the projects have specifically different objectives, you may receive both an FMPP or LFPP grant and a grant from a different federal agency. Please check with the other federal program to ensure that you are not violating their terms and conditions.

Q: Can I submit the same proposal to both FMPP and LFPP?

A: No, you must submit different proposals to each program. Each proposal should be for different project activities and meet the specific program purposes.

Q: Can AMS staff member review a draft of my application prior to submission?

A: Unfortunately, we are not able to review draft applications before they are submitted. However, if you need assistance, you are welcome to reach out to us via email ([FMPP](#) or [LFPP](#)) or [phone](#).

Q: Is it required that the critical resources and infrastructure be in place at the time of the application submission?

A: Yes, it is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the start-up, implementation and completion of the proposed project activities. Applicants are required to submit evidence (as PDFs or MS Word) of critical resources and infrastructure if the project depend on the initiation and completion of a project are in place at the time of proposal submission. For example, Land, structures, share-used kitchen and/or other resources must be in place and committed prior to submitting an application. Not providing proof of critical resources may disqualify you for funding.

Q: For FMPP, we are expanding a single farmer's market location. Our lease is one year at a time. Is it acceptable to indicate Year 1 is secured in the Critical Infrastructure letter, with years 2 and 3 likely happening, or another equal space will be located?

A: If the success of the market is contingent upon the location of the market, then you must be able to show that the market location is secured for the duration of the project.

Q: Are we required to partner with another organization or entity to apply and if so, are letters of commitment from partner organizations required?

A: FMLFPP projects must benefit more than one agricultural producer, individual, farm, or business. FMLFPP will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit one individual or entity. Applicants are required to show evidence of existing community support and engagement. Applicants must provide letters of commitment (in MS Word or PDF) from all partner organizations stating they agree to the project management plan presented in the Project Narrative.

Grants.gov Information

Q: What does AOR stand for?

A: AOR is the Authorized Organization Representative. An AOR is the only person who has the authority to sign and submit grant applications on behalf of the company, organization, institution or government. AOR's are authorized by their EBiz POC (E-Business Point of Contact) so they can submit applications on behalf of their organization.

Q: How do you become or register to be an AOR?

A: You would first register as an applicant on Grants.gov once you have a DUNS and your organization has an active SAM account. Your EBiz POC will receive an email notifying them that you have registered and need to be authorized.

Q: What is EIN?

A: The EIN is the Employer Identification Number. This number is assigned by the IRS.

Q: How do I know, if my application was submitted on time?

A: 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 Authorize Official Representative (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 an acknowledgement email to confirm your application was retrieved from Grants.gov.

Q: How are attachments uploaded in Grants.gov?

A: Attachments must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15. When uploading attachments, click the "Add Attachments" button (do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader). If you use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader the attachments will not be received with the application package.

Q: Can we apply before having the Duns and Bradstreet and SAM.gov registration?

A: No, you must first have the Duns and Bradstreet number to register in SAM.gov. You must then register in SAM.gov before you can register and apply through Grants.gov

Q: Do I have to register before I can see the requirements of the grant application?

A: No, you do not have to register in Grant.gov to view the opportunity and download it. However, you must be registered to apply.

Q: Is the EBiz POC someone in my organization or a federal employee?

A: The EBiz POC is someone assigned in your organization.

Q: Can the EBiz POC and AOR be the same person?

A: Yes. In that case, you'd need two accounts/log-ins. One to serve in each capacity.

Q: Can an organization have multiple EBiz POC's?

A: No, you can only have one EBiz POC but may have multiple AOR's.

Q: How do I contact Grants.gov if there is an issue with my registration?

A: You may contact the Customer Contact center by either e-mail support@grants.gov or phone 1-800-518-4726. You can also use the Self Help link https://grants-portal.psc.gov to find answers to common questions.

SAM Registration

Q: So, if we already have a DUNS, can we go straight to SAM.gov?

A: Yes. SAM registration can take up to 2 weeks to complete so register early. Check the SAM.gov website for additional login procedures.

Q: If I have already had a SAM.gov account, do I have to do anything else?

A: Yes, you must be sure that your SAM.gov account has not expired. If the account expired, you must renew your account before applying.

Q: Do I have to pay to activate a SAM.gov account?

A: No, registering and renewing a SAM.gov account is completely free. If you received notification on having to pay to renew your account beware that it is likely a SCAM and should be reported to the appropriated authorities.

Matching Information

Q: What is cost sharing or matching?

A: Simply put, "match" is the non-federal share of costs that the grantee is required to contribute to accomplish the purpose of the grant. Match can be cash and/or in-kind contributions. Cash can be the recipients cash outlay, or cash donations from non-federal third parties or non-federal grants. In-kind can be the value of non-cash contributions typically in the form of value of personnel, goods, and services, including direct and indirect costs. Other federal funds cannot be used as match.

Q: Do both programs (FMPP and LFPP) require cost sharing or matching?

A: Yes, the 2018 Farm Bill changed the cost sharing and matching requirements. Both FMPP and LFPP will require cost sharing or matching of 25% of the Total FEDERAL portion of the grant. For example, if a grant request $500,000 on federal funds an applicant will be required to match for $125,000.

Q: Can unallowable cost be brought as an in-kind or cost share match?

A: No, unallowable cost cannot be used as a match. Only cost allowable under Subpart E of the Cost Principles can be brought as a match. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306.

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Q: Can land, buildings or labor count as in-kind matches?

A: Donated land and/or buildings cannot be used as an in-kind match. However, labor/personnel may be used as a match as long as you are only bringing the percentage of time the person is working on the project. For example, if someone is only spending 25% of his/her time working on the project, then you can only bring that 25% to the project as a match. Also, you must ensure that what you would normally pay that individual is reasonable according to standard personnel rates for similar positions in your geographic locality.

Q: Can unrecovered indirect cost be used as part of the cost sharing or matching?

A: Yes. 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 recipients approved negotiated indirect cost rate.

Q: Does the non-federal match have to be confirmed at the time of proposal submission or can it be lined up by the time of contracting in the event of an award?

A: Yes, all matching contributions must be committed or in place when the proposal is submitted to LFPP, and prior to accepting the award. Additional anticipated matching funds not in place by the time the project commences cannot be counted toward the matching requirement. Match verification letters are required to be submit with the application.

Q: How many match verification letters do I submit?

A: An applicant must submit one letter verifying the match for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization. Each LFPP application requires written verification of match commitment from the LFPP applicant and/or any third party who will contribute cash and/or in-kind matching non-Federal resources. Letters may be submitted in either PDF or MS Word formatting.

Review Process and Applicant Notifications

Q: What is the likelihood my organization will be selected for funding?

A: FMLFPP is very competitive program that receives over 800 applications every year. The program success rate for last year was between 16-17%. Applicants must develop high quality applications to have higher probability of being selected for funding.

Q: What is the evaluation criteria used to evaluate applications?

A: The RFAs outline the five evaluation criteria used by external reviewers to evaluate applications. In addition to these criteria and reviewer selection, AMS aims to maintain a diverse portfolio and consider a variety of other factors such as geographic diversity, department priorities, and benefit to undeserved communities when determining which applicant are selected for funding.

Q: I submitted a proposal. How and when should I hear back whether it was funded?

A: All applicants will be notified via email if they were selected for funding or not. It can take several months from the application due date for applicants to be notified.

Q: How can I find out about awarded or completed FMPP and/or LFPP projects?

A: You may view the list of awarded projects and final reports on the FMPP and LFPP websites: www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants. Click on the applicable grant program website (FMPP or LFPP), then click on "Awarded Grants" or "Final Performance Reports."

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Allowable/Unallowable Costs

Q: Can funds be use for production related activities?

A: No. Funds cannot be use for any type of production activities including purchase of farm equipment, tools, supplies, gardening, including production related training.

Q: Can funds be used to purchase food for voucher/reimbursement programs or for food pantry donations?

A: No, it is unallowable to use grant funds for costs of coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase food for voucher/reimbursement programs or to purchase food for donations.

Q: Can funds be used for micro-loans or be re-granted?

A: Grant funds may not be used for awarding micro-loans or for re-granting.

Q: Can I use funds to purchase land or buildings?

A: It is unallowable to use grant funds 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 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. You may rent a land or a building with grant funds. However, lease-to-own agreements are not allowable.

Q: Can funds be used to purchase vehicles?

A: Vehicles may be leased, but not purchased. 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 signed copy of the lease agreement will be required prior to first payment approval.

Unallowable for the purchase of trucks that are commercially available for rent. An example of an unallowable truck purchase includes 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 <u>not</u> purchased.

Q: Can funds be used to repair and/or upgrade existing equipment?

Funds may be used to modify equipment that is not already available and readily usable in its current format. Examples include, specialized equipment for mobile markets, mobile slaughter unit components, trailers to be retrofitted and walk-in-coolers.

Q: Can FMLPP funds be used to purchase EBT machines that provide access point for low-income residents?

A: No. FMPP funds cannot be used to purchase EBT machines. The USDA [Food and Nutrition Service](#) (FNS) offers funding to expand the availability of SNAP EBT equipment and services at farmers markets to the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) and State SNAP agencies.

Q: Can you provide some examples of "non-construction programs or infrastructure improvements" that fall under allowable costs and activities? And the difference between those items and unallowable "Equipment" as defined in RFA?

A: "Non-construction" would be renting a larger space and adding the equipment needed for the expansion (cold storage, kitchen equipment, pre-made shelves, pallets, pallet lifters). Please review [previous project final reports](#) for additional information.

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Q: What is the new Farm Bill Authority limiting expenses related to food safety costs?

A: Applicants can use up to $6,500 of the amount requested in their applications for purchasing or upgrading equipment to improve food safety. This fund limitation does not apply for applicants requesting funds for food safety certification activities.

Reviewers

Q: If my organization submits a proposal to LFPP can I serve as a reviewer for FMPP or vice versa?

A: Yes, if your organization submits an LFPP or FMPP proposal you may serve as a reviewer for the program to which you have not applied.

Q: How can I become a reviewer for the programs?

A: To become a reviewer, you must register online during the active grant cycle. Refer to our website for more information.