



Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Local Food Promotion Program

Fiscal Year 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-26-0004

Publication Date: April 21, 2026

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on June 5, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	BASIC INFORMATION	4
1.1	Executive Summary	4
1.2	2026 Highlights and Changes	4
1.3	Available Funding	5
1.4	Federal Award Period Duration and Size	5
1.5	Tips For Applicants	5
1.6	Timing to Obtain and Submit Grants.gov Required Elements	6
1.7	Agency Contact Information	6
1.8	Stakeholder Input	7
2.0	ELIGIBILITY	7
2.1	Eligible Applicants	7
2.2	Partners and Collaborators	9
2.3	Limit on Number of Awards	9
2.4	Cost Sharing	10
3.0	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	11
3.1	Legislative Authority	11
3.2	Purpose	12
3.3	Project Types	12
3.4	Priority Consideration	15
3.5	Performance Measures	16
3.6	Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities	16
3.7	Indirect Costs	16
3.8	Subawards	17
3.9	Coordinator Meeting Travel	17
4.0	APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT	17
4.1	Application Checklist	17
4.2	SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance	18
4.3	SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs	19
4.4	Project Narrative for Planning and Implementation Projects	20
4.5	Project Narrative for Turnkey Projects	20
4.6	Letters of Verification for Cost Share Funds	21
4.7	Letters of Commitment from Partners and Collaborators	21
4.8	Evidence of Critical Infrastructure	22
4.9	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)	22
5.0	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES	23
5.1	Electronic Application Package	23
5.2	Submission and Recipient Procedures and Requirements	23
5.3	Additional Submission Details	25
5.4	Submission Date and Time	25
5.5	Intergovernmental Review	26
6.0	APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	26
6.1	Initial Review (Initial Screening)	26
6.2	Review Criteria (Technical Review)	26
6.3	Administrative Review (Selection Process and Risk Review)	28
7.0	AWARD NOTICES	29
7.1	Successful Applicants	29

7.2	Unsuccessful Applicants	29
8.0	POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION.....	29
8.1	Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	29
8.2	Reporting Requirements	29
8.3	Acknowledgment of USDA Support.....	29
9.0	OTHER INFORMATION	29
9.1	Definitions	29
9.2	Civil Rights Obligations/Non-Discrimination	31
9.3	Accessibility Accommodation.....	31
9.4	Accommodations and Complaints.....	31
9.5	Freedom of Information Act Requests	31
9.6	Paperwork Reduction	31

1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

Federal Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

Funding Opportunity Title: Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-26-0004

Assistance Listing Number: [10.175](#)

Type of Federal Assistance: *Grant Agreements* will be used to provide federal awards to successful applicants.

Type of Application: *New applications* will be evaluated competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in [section 6.0 Application Review Information](#).

Application Deadline: June 5, 2026, through [Grants.gov](#) at 11:59 pm Eastern Time. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the 2026 fiscal year (FY) Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). LFPP's purpose is to support the development, coordination, and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing to increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

LFPP is a part of the [Local Agriculture Market Program \(LAMP\)](#) umbrella program. AMS welcomes applications that meet LAMP goals (see [section 3.1](#)) to support the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products.

Approximately \$13.84 million is available to fund applications under this solicitation. In 2025, AMS funded 11.5% of eligible applications received and awarded a total of \$11.1 million.

This announcement identifies the eligibility criteria for LFPP projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an LFPP grant. AMS will award these grants competitively to eligible applicants proposing high-quality projects that meet the purpose and requirements of the program. All applications will be reviewed using merit and evaluation procedures described in [section 6.0](#).

1.2 2026 HIGHLIGHTS AND CHANGES

Below are highlights of major changes to the program since last year.

- The [AMS General Terms and Conditions \(AMS GT&C\)](#) have been updated to reflect changes to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) and to align with the [USDA General Terms and Conditions \(USDA GT&C\)](#) for Federal Awards that were published on December 31, 2025. Both sets of General Terms and Conditions set out requirements for recipients.
 - The [AMS GT&C](#) includes citations to 2 CFR Part 200 and the [USDA GT&C](#) to ensure recipients are aware of all requirements.

1.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Anticipated Available Funding: Approximately \$13.84 million. Enactment of future legislation may affect the availability or levels of funding for this program. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application, to guarantee minimum funding levels, or to make a specific number of awards.

Cost Share Requirements: A 25% cash or in-kind contribution is required.

1.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION AND SIZE

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the required performance period. AMS encourages applicants to take the full performance period to allow enough time to complete projects. However, a project may be completed before the scheduled performance period end date. The applicant must indicate the start date and end date on Block 17 of the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance.”

Award size varies by project type. Applicants must not request less than the minimum or more than the maximum award amounts. Applicants must justify the requested funding amounts within the “[LFPP Project Narrative](#)” or “[LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative](#)” or “[LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training](#).”

Project Type	Duration (Months)	Start Date*	End Date*	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Planning	24	September 30, 2026	September 29, 2028	\$25,000	\$100,000
Turnkey Projects (Both Types)	24	September 30, 2026	September 29, 2028	\$50,000	\$100,000
Implementation	36	September 30, 2026	September 29, 2029	\$100,000	\$500,000

*Dates are approximate. Start dates are set at the time of the award.

1.5 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- **To submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must:**
 - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
 - Be registered in [SAM.gov](#);
 - Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
 - Maintain an active and current SAM registration.
- **Allow time for [Grants.gov](#) Registration Completion:**
 - The organization registration process can take **as long as four weeks**.
 - Complete the registration as early as possible to meet all deadlines. See [section 5.0 Submission Requirements and Deadlines](#) for more information.
- **Review General Terms and Conditions:**
 - Review the [AMS GT&C](#) to understand allowable and unallowable costs.
 - Review the [USDA GT&C](#).
- **Ensure File Compatibility:**
 - Use latest version of Adobe Reader that it is compatible with [Grants.gov software](#).

- **File Naming and Size:**
 - Limit file names to 50 characters or fewer.
 - Avoid special characters in file names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- **Attachment Upload:**
 - Use the “Add Attachments” button in Grants.gov for uploading documents.
 - Do not use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader.
- **File Security and Formatting:**
 - Do not password-protect files.
 - Accept all tracked changes in documents before submission.
- **Accurate Data Entry:**
 - Verify that your UEI number is correctly entered on the SF-424 form cover page.
- **Grants.gov Resources for Support:**
 - [Applicant FAQs](#)
 - [Workspace Overview](#)

By following these steps and recommendations, applicants can reduce errors, meet deadlines, and ensure compliance with submission requirements.

1.6 TIMING TO OBTAIN AND SUBMIT GRANTS.GOV REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Required Action	Timing to Obtain/Submit
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through Grants.Gov	June 5, 2026 – 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Obtaining Your Organization’s UEI Number (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Establishing an Active SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	Up to 4 weeks
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 4 weeks

1.7 AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

1.7.1 AMS PROGRAM CONTACTS

After closely reviewing this NOFO in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties that have questions are encouraged to contact the LFPP program staff by e-mail at FMLFPPGrants@usda.gov.

AMS provides resources and information on the [LFPP website](#) that may be helpful to applicants, including [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), [Descriptions of Funded Projects](#), [Project Narrative Guides](#), and required application forms. AMS staff are available to provide technical assistance related to the application process. Staff cannot provide feedback on the merits of an application.

Local Food Promotion Program

USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Room 1510-S South Building

Stop 0264

Washington, DC 20250-0264

FMLFPPGrants@usda.gov

1.7.2 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance or issues must be directed to the [Applicant Support Center](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 (excluding federal holidays) toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

1.8 STAKEHOLDER INPUT

AMS seeks comments about this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). AMS considers comments to the extent possible when developing the next NOFO for the program. Written comments may be submitted to: AMSGrants@usda.gov. This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this NOFO and not for requesting information or forms. In your email subject line, please state that you are commenting on the **Local Food Promotion Program NOFO**.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

2.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

Entity Type	Description
Agricultural Business or Cooperative	A business or member-owned entity that provides, holds, delivers, transports, offers, or sells agricultural products or services for member benefit as well as the organization or other business that they represent.
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network or Association	Formal groups of farms that work collectively to offer consumers regular (usually weekly) deliveries of locally-grown farm products during one or more harvest season(s) often on a subscription or membership basis. This includes organizations or other businesses that assist, serve, or represent community-supported agriculture (CSA) or CSA networks.
Economic Development Corporation	An organization whose mission is to improve, maintain, develop, and/or market or promote a specific geographic area.

Entity Type	Description
Food Council	A food policy council or food and farm system network that represents multiple organizations involved in the production, processing, and consumption of food and local, Tribal, or State governments, that addresses food and farm-related issues and needs within a city, county, State, Tribal region, multicounty region, or other food system network.
Local Government	Any unit of government within a State, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937 , or a public transportation agency; special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.
Nonprofit Corporation	Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the organization or institution’s net earnings of which inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
Producer Network or Association	A producer group or member-owned organizations or businesses that provide, offer, or sell agricultural products or services through a common distribution system for the mutual member benefit the owners, including organizations that assist, represent, or serve producers or producer networks.
Public Benefit Corporation	A corporation organized to construct or operate a public improvement, where the profits inure to the benefit of one or more State or to the people therein.
Regional Farmers Market Authority	An entity that establishes and enforces State, regional, or county policies and jurisdiction over State, regional, or county farmers markets. State agencies are eligible if their State’s regulatory statutes identify the specific State agency as a regional farmers market authority.
Tribal Government	A governing body or governmental agency of any Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in Section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

2.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Engagement with partners and collaborators strengthens LFPP projects. Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities.

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

Partners and collaborators may not be immediately connected to the ownership or governance structure of the applicant's organization unless approved in advance by AMS.

The applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators or may engage with them without funding. For instance, a project may have partners or collaborators who have their own funding or who are contributing to the project financially, such as by providing a cash or in-kind cost share. Regardless of whether there is a financial subcontract or subaward relationship, applications must show evidence of existing community or industry engagement (see [section 4.7](#)).

Applications should demonstrate a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants.

2.3 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF AWARDS

Applicants may submit more than one application to LFPP in this round of funding. If an applicant is selected as a finalist for more than one award, that applicant is still limited to receiving **one** LFPP award per funding cycle. AMS staff may contact the applicant to discuss which application they would like to complete.

Applicants with active LFPP award must close out the award to be eligible to receive a new LFPP award. For example, a recipient of a Planning award must close out that award prior to receiving an Implementation award. The applicant must submit all required close-out documentation by the application due date mentioned in [section 5.4](#). Please refer to the applicable AMS GT&C, available on the [Grants Terms and Conditions](#) webpage, for close-out instructions.

2.3.1 FISCAL SPONSORS/AGENTS

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

- Apply directly to AMS through Grants.gov and request to use funds to establish a contractual relationship with a fiscal sponsor/agent to perform administrative or financial functions on behalf of the applicant; or
- Use a fiscal sponsor/agent to apply for an award on behalf of the implementing organization. By doing so, the sponsor/agent accepts all financial and legal liabilities for that grant recipient's grant award at the time the agreement is signed. Fiscal sponsors/agents would submit the application as the applicant organization, and the Authorized Organization Role (AOR) responsible for all grant decisions and activities, including but not limited to implementation, subcontracts, and reporting to AMS. The AOR would be an employee of the fiscal sponsor/agent. Fiscal sponsors/agents are bound by the same requirements provided in this NOFO as other applicant organizations, including the limit on applications.

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

2.3.2 REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS (RFSP) RECIPIENT APPLICANTS

In accordance with the [LAMP legislation](#), current RFSP grant recipients may apply for a LFPP grant on behalf of requesting producers and/or eligible entities (as listed in the [Regional Food System Partnerships \(RFSP\) NOFO](#)). Active RFSP recipients are eligible to receive more than one FMPP or LFPP project within an award cycle to allow them to apply on behalf of those entities.

Active RFSP recipients applying to LFPP on behalf of their eligible partnerships should indicate on the “[LFPP Project Narrative](#)” or “[LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative](#)” or “[LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training](#)” that they are a current RFSP recipient. They must meet all program requirements (see [section 4 and 5](#)) and undergo competitive peer review (see [section 6](#)) as do all other FMPP or LFPP applicants.

If selected for funding, active RFSP recipients signing the grant agreement as the AOR on behalf of their producers and eligible entities accept all financial and legal liabilities for that grant recipient’s award at the time the agreement is signed. In addition, they are responsible for all decisions and project activities related to the grant agreement, and accountable for meeting Federal statutory requirements, regulatory requirements, and the terms and conditions of the award. An applicant organization, including RFSP recipient applicants, cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to another organization (including the producer or eligible entity associated with the active RFSP grant).

Alternatively, RFSP recipients wanting to solely provide technical assistance or administrative support to producers and/or eligible entities applying to LFPP, but not serve as the AOR, may provide that directly with no formalized agreement, and the eligible entities or producers may apply directly (noting that the project must benefit more than one producer). The RFSP recipient could also choose to pursue the contractual relationship mentioned in [section 2.3.1 Fiscal Sponsor/Agents](#).

2.4 COST SHARING

This funding opportunity requires recipients to fund their projects, in part, with cost sharing funds from non-Federal sources in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions equal to 25% of the amount of Federal funds being requested. If an applicant voluntarily pledges cost sharing above the required 25%, the additional cost share becomes a binding requirement of the Federal award once the award is issued. There is no competitive advantage for an applicant to provide a cost share that exceeds the required amount.

Cash contributions are generally defined as actual monetary funds (not the ‘value’ of someone’s time/effort) from the applicant’s general revenue/reserves/savings/line of credit, or 3rd-party partner(s), or other non-Federal grants. The applicant must be able to track and show the source of the cost share, and that the funding source will be dedicated entirely to the grant project, and produce records to that effect (for example, taking the cash cost share in your accounting system, or from your partner, and placing it into a special ‘grant project’ account).

In-kind contributions are generally defined as the value of goods or services provided by the contributor for the benefit of the grant project, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a Tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as an in-kind contribution to the project as described in [2 CFR § 200.306\(e\)](#).

Cost sharing must be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Applicants electing the 15% de minimis rate indirect costs may not use indirect cost as cost share. Only applicants with a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) can use indirect cost as a source of cost sharing (see [section 3.7.1](#)).

All cost sharing contributions **must be committed or secured** at the time an applicant is selected for an award. An award will not be issued unless all cost sharing funds over the life of the grant are secured. Additional anticipated cost sharing funds not in place by the time the project starts **cannot be counted** toward the cost sharing requirement.

Cost share contributions (either cash or in-kind) cannot be used for this program if they are already being used toward satisfying a cost share requirement under any other Federal grant agreement.

Applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind (as defined in [2CFR § 200.306\(b\)\(5\)](#)) or program income as cost share. Program income is defined as income directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance ([2 CFR § 200.1](#)). Unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Award (NOA) provisions section, AMS authorizes the use of program income through the additive method ([2 CFR § 200.307\(b\)\(2\)](#)). Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the project and under the conditions of the award.

Applicants must indicate the total amount of cost share and how it will specifically align with their requested funding when completing the fiscal plan and resources section of the "[LFPP Project Narrative](#)" or "[LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative](#)" or "[LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative](#)." Additionally, applicants must submit signed letters verifying the cost share for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource (see [section 4.6](#)).

Refer to [2 CFR § 200.306](#) for additional Federal requirements and definitions, including the basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions.

3.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

3.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) is authorized by subtitle A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 ([7 U.S.C. § 1627c](#)), as amended. LAMP supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products. The primary goals are to:

- Connect the regional food economy by bringing farmers, businesses and communities together.
- Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies for value-added agricultural products and local and regional food system infrastructure.
- Strengthen capacity and development of regional food system development through community collaboration and expansion of mid-tier value chains.
- Improve income and job opportunities for producers and food businesses.
- Simplify the application and reporting processes for the program.

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Program and the Regional Food Partnership Program (RFSP) are implemented under

LAMP, LFPP, FMPP and RSFP are administered by AMS. The VAPG is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service under Rural Development. This NOFO is for LFPP.

3.2 PURPOSE

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

- Supporting the processing, aggregation, distribution, and storage of local and regional food products that are marketed locally or regionally, including value-added agricultural products.
- Encouraging the development of value-added agricultural products.
- Assisting with business development plans and feasibility studies.
- Developing marketing strategies for producers of local food and value-added products.
- Facilitating regional food chain coordination and mid-tier value chain development.
- Promoting new business opportunities and marketing strategies to reduce on-farm food waste.
- Responding to changing technology needs in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing; and
- Covering expenses related to cost incurred in obtaining food safety certification and improvements to food safety practices and equipment.

3.3 PROJECT TYPES

LFPP offers four project types: **Planning, Implementation, Turnkey Marketing and Promotion, and Turnkey Recruitment and Training**. Each application must select only one project type.

Project Type	Planning	Implementation	Turnkey Marketing and Promotion	Turnkey Recruitment and Training
Funding Range	\$25,000 - \$100,000	\$100,000 - \$500,000	\$50,000 - \$100,000	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Duration (months)	24	36	24	24
Description	Supports the planning stages of a food business that supports the development, coordination or expansion of local and regional food system.	Establish, improve, or expand a new or existing Local and Regional Food Business Enterprise that benefits the local and regional food system.	Supports marketing and promotion activities through a set of 5 pre-defined activities.	Supports vendor and producer recruitment and training activities through a set of 5 pre-defined activities.

Project Type	Planning	Implementation	Turnkey Marketing and Promotion	Turnkey Recruitment and Training
Key Points	Planning awards should not include Implementation project type activities.	Recipients of previous Planning awards must describe how that work informs the Implementation project application.	Simplified application. Projects conduct a minimum of 3 (of 5) specific activities.	Simplified application. Projects conduct a minimum of 3 (of 5) specific activities.

3.3.1 PLANNING PROJECTS

Planning projects range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to be spent within 24 months (2 years). Planning projects are used in the planning stages of developing, coordinating, or expanding a food business that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system infrastructure.

Example of eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Completing a feasibility study or facilitating supply chain partner planning for a new intermediary food channel (i.e., food hub), to analyze market potential, capacity, and potential competitors, and partners in the region.
- Hiring experts for technical assistance to implement a local/regional food transportation system.
- Hiring experts for training on managing a local/regional food storage or processing facility.
- Devising a business development plan associated with the processing/marketing of local/regional agricultural products, including value-added agricultural products.

3.3.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Implementation projects range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to be spent within 36 months (3 years). Implementation projects are used to establish a new food enterprise or market channel or to improve or expand an existing food enterprise or market channel that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system infrastructure.

Example of eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing or expanding food incubator programs or mid-tier value chains.
- Connecting, cultivating, and strengthening relationships between local and regional producers and local and regional food businesses and consumer-facing markets.
- Instituting group-based Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification to increase opportunities for farmers to sell produce into institutional or wholesale marketing channels, including providing financial support for making changes and upgrades to practices and equipment to improve food safety.
- Cultivating new local and regional wholesale market channels through an online portal or virtual marketplace.
- Investigating and implementing more cost-effective means of transportation for food supply chains through backhaul, route optimization, and/or other operational efficiencies.

If the applicant previously received an LFPP planning award that is directly related to the submitted proposal, the applicant must indicate how this project contributed to its proposed work in the Project Narrative ([section 4.4](#)).

3.3.3 TURNKEY MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to be spent within 24 months (2 years). The Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option offers a streamlined application for common LFPP marketing and promotion activities. Those applying to the Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option agree to conduct specific activities that support the marketing and promotion of intermediate producer-to-consumer market opportunities for local and regional foods. Applicants must select a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5, pre-defined activities listed below. Applicants may not propose other activities under this project type. Doing so will disqualify the application from consideration.

- Identify and analyze new or improved market opportunities.
- Develop or revise a marketing plan.
- Design or purchase marketing and promotion media.
- Implement a marketing plan.
- Evaluate marketing and promotion activities.

Applicants who would otherwise choose Planning or Implementation project types may apply under the Turnkey track, if they focus on marketing and promotion and meet all other Turnkey requirements, such as the minimum and maximum funding limits. Applicants to the Turnkey project type must use the simplified "[LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative Form](#)." See [section 4.5](#) for more information.

3.3.4 TURNKEY RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

The Turnkey Recruitment and Training option range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to be spent within 24 months (2 years). The Turnkey Recruitment and Training option offers a streamlined application for common LFPP recruitment and training activities for local and regional food system stakeholders. Turnkey applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to farmers and ranchers. Those applying to the Turnkey Recruitment and Training track agree to conduct specific activities that support the development or delivery of vendor and producer recruitment strategies, as well as training opportunities. Applicants must select a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5, pre-defined activities listed below. Applicants may not propose other activities under this project type. Doing so will disqualify the application from consideration.

- Identify and analyze new or improved strategies for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Develop or revise strategies or plans for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Design materials for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Implement plans for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Evaluate outcomes related to vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.

Applicants who would otherwise choose Planning or Implementation project types may apply using the Turnkey option, if they focus on recruitment or training for vendors and producers and meet all other Turnkey requirements, such as the minimum and maximum funding limits.

Applicants to the Turnkey project type must use the simplified “[LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative Form](#)”. See [section 4.5](#) for more information.

3.3.5 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Projects are **not eligible** for consideration if the proposed activities:

- Are not related to local and regional food system activities.
- Are for agricultural production-related expenses, including crop production and the purchase of farm equipment, tools, materials, supplies, and other related costs ([section 3.6](#)).
- Include training, labor, or other activities related to agricultural production, including harvesting, crop rotation, and planting techniques.
- Benefit only one agricultural producer, vendor, entity, or individual. Applicants must collaborate with others to benefit the larger community.
- Are to buy land, or for construction of a building or structure.
- Intend to register, train, and/or educate customers about Food Assistance Programs (such as SNAP, WIC, etc.), other than providing information about how they can use those benefits at the market.
- Depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.
- Include legal fees and other costs associated with establishing a business or organization.
- Duplicate activities that are already funded by another Federal award program, including the Farmers Market Promotion Program.
- Provide capital for revolving loan funds or seed equity funds.

For additional information on allowable and unallowable activities please refer to the [AMS GT&C](#), [USDA GT&C](#), as well as the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#). Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing these documents should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under [section 1.7.1](#).

3.4 PRIORITY CONSIDERATION

AMS will provide priority consideration to applications that demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Benefit underserved communities, including communities that are located in areas of concentrated poverty with limited access to fresh locally or regionally grown food, which AMS has determined to mean the application is for a project located in a low income/low food access (LI/LA) census tract (as defined below); or
- Are used to carry out eligible activities under a partnership agreement in a Regional Food Systems Partnership project (see [section 2.3.2](#)) and have not received a LFPP award within the past five (5) years.

To qualify for LI/LA priority consideration, the project’s implementation address must be in a LI/LA census tract, as defined by one of the four major map layers on the [ERS Food Access Research Atlas](#). “Implementation address” refers to the street address or census tract location within the targeted community where the applicant plans to conduct or deliver approved project activities.

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

Applicants are not required to meet these priorities to be eligible to apply for or receive grant funds. AMS will review the applicants' project narrative responses and consider these priorities during the administrative review process (see [section 6.3](#)).

3.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To evaluate and report on the outcomes of the LFPP program on a national scale, AMS collects information on performance measures. Each project submitted must include target numbers for at least one outcome and at least one of the indicators under the selected outcome(s) listed in the Achievability section of the Project Narrative ([section 4.4](#) or [4.5](#)).

Recipients must report progress on the selected outcomes and indicators in the Annual Performance Report and provide final results in the Final Performance Report. Please refer to the [Grant Performance Measures website](#) for more information.

3.6 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [AMS GT&C](#) and [USDA GT&C](#).

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this document should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under [section 1.7.1](#).

3.7 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”—defined at [2 CFR § 200.1](#)) are costs, “incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.” Applicants that do not have a current NICRA may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate up to 15% of the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC). Applicants with a NICRA must apply their approved NICRA rate. For more information on indirect costs for recipients and subrecipients, refer to section 4.5 of the [USDA GT&C](#) and [2 CFR §§ 200.413](#) and [200.414](#).

3.7.1 USING INDIRECT COSTS FOR COST SHARING

Applicants with a valid NICRA may use all or a portion of the indirect cost as cost share with 2 CFR 200.306(c).

The maximum indirect costs allowed for a project may be included in different ways:

1. They can be part of the Federal portion of the project budget. For example, if the maximum indirect cost is \$8,000, the applicant can include the full amount in the Federal part of the budget.
2. Alternatively, indirect cost can be offered as an In-Kind Cost Share contribution. For example, if the maximum indirect cost is \$8,000, the applicant can include the full amount in the In-kind Cost Share part of the budget.
3. The applicant may split the indirect cost allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total amount of indirect costs does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowed. For example, they could include \$4,000 in the Federal budget and \$4,000 as an in-kind contribution. Alternatively, the applicant may request any other combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowable.

Applicants that elect to use the *de minimis* indirect cost rate may *not* use indirect costs as cost share. Refer to [2 CFR §200.413](#) and [§200.414](#) for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

3.8 SUBAWARDS

The applicant is expected to perform most of the work of the project. However, the applicant may subaward and/or contract ([2 CFR 200.331](#)) with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources to complete the proposed project and that are not available within the applicant organization. In all subaward or contract scenarios, the primary applicant will maintain the oversight and reporting responsibility as the AOR. See [section 2.3.1](#) for more information. Using grant funds to competitively “re-grant” funds in mini-grant programs or to activities that are not central to the purpose of the project or for unknown costs is unallowable.

3.9 COORDINATOR MEETING TRAVEL

Recipients are expected to attend an AMS sponsored grant management meeting during the project’s period of performance. The proposed budget must include travel funds for an individual identified in the Key Staff section of the Project Narrative. In addition, the application may include travel costs for a second staff member.

Estimate the cost of travel including flight, hotel, per diem, ground transportation to a major city for 3-day, 2-night stay. For previous year, an example of this estimate can be around \$1,700 per individual. Location and dates are to be determined with possibility of a virtual conference. If the conference is virtual, recipients will be able to reallocate those funds to another allowable item.

4.0 APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Applicants **MUST** submit the required documentation in the appropriate format as listed in this section. Applications that do not comply with the requirements may be deemed incomplete and ineligible for review.

4.1 APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting an application, applicants must read the NOFO in its entirety to fully understand the program’s requirements. This application checklist provides the mandatory and, where applicable, additional documents required for a complete application package.

Mandatory Documents:

- SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (Grants.gov)
- Project Narrative Form ([section 4.4](#) or [4.5](#))
 - Must use required template.
 - Executive Summary is no more than 250 words.
 - Ensure it does not exceed the page limit specified in [section 4.4](#) or [4.5](#).
 - Ensure the application excludes unallowable costs and activities per [section 3.6](#).
 - Ensure the federal funds requested do not exceed the maximum or minimum award amount per [section 3.3](#).
- Signed Letter(s) of Verification for Cost Share Funds for each cost share resource per [section 4.6](#).

- Signed Letter(s) of Commitment from Partners and Collaborators per [section 4.7](#).

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

- Signed Letter(s) Stating Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure per [section 4.8](#).
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) per [section 4.9](#).

AMS strongly recommends submitting applications at least **two weeks before the deadline** to allow time to address potential technical or submission issues.

4.2 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required. Form SF-424 is available via the application package in Grants.gov. Applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instructions
1 - Type of Submission	Select Application
2 - Type of Application	Select New
4 through 7	Not required
8.c - Organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Enter applicant UEI for the organization submitting the application. The UEI must match the active registration in SAM.gov.
8.d - 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 (Assistance Listing Number)	10.175
12 - Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-26-0004 Ensure you are applying for the correct grant program.
13 - Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
14 - Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, states affected by project.
15 - Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
16a - Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
16b - Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the projects will be implemented in more than one location.
17 - Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	<p>Planning and Turnkey Projects – Your performance period cannot be more than 24 months (2 years) in length.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter start date: September 30, 2026, and • Enter end date: September 29, 2028.* <p>Implementation Projects – Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months (3 years) in length.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter start date: September 30, 2026, and • Enter end date: September 29, 2029.* <p>*Dates are approximate. Start dates are set at the time of the award.</p>

Block	Instructions
18 - Estimated Funding – Federal	Enter the Total Federal award requested.
18b - Estimated Funding – Applicant	Enter the Total Cost share amount.
19 - Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process.	See <i>section 5.5 Intergovernmental Review</i> .

4.3 SF-424A – BUDGET INFORMATION FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Required. The SF-424A is available via the application package in Grants.gov. The blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or easily explained in the form instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on the SF-424A.

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

Section A – Budget Summary

Box	Instructions
1.a – Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter “LFPP – Federal”
1.b – Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter “10.175”
1.e – Federal	Enter the total Federal funding amount requested for the project
1.f – Non-Federal	Enter the total cost share contribution amount for the project

Section B – Budget Categories

Box	Instructions
6.a – 6.j – Object Class Categories	In Column 1, enter the amount of Federal funds requested for each Object Class Category. Do not include cost share funding. For example, if you are requesting \$2,000 in Federal funds for “Travel”, enter 2000 in Column 1, box 6.c

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Box	Instructions
8.a – Grant Program	Should auto-populate from Section A, Box 1.a
8.b – 8.d	Enter the cost share amount being provided from each source (Applicant, State, or Other) for the project

4.4 PROJECT NARRATIVE FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Required. All applicants for project types Planning and Implementation Projects **MUST** prepare and submit a narrative using the [LFPP Project Narrative](#) form. The form and instructions are available on the “[How do I Apply for an LFPP Grant?](#)” webpage. The Project Narrative must clearly describe the objectives and goals, types of activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The [Project Narrative Guide](#) can assist applicants in filling out the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and **must not exceed fifteen (15) 8.5 x 11 pages** (excluding existing Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Project Narrative form is 20 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 35 pages (20 original form pages + 15 pages of applicant content)**. DO NOT modify the LFPP Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified. Before submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes or mark-up edits and comments are visible. Handwritten applications or applications submitted in MS Word will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit the [LFPP Project Narrative form](#) as a PDF form, and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” link in Grants.gov. Applications not submitted in the required narrative template and missing critical information could be disqualified.

The supporting documents listed in sections 4.6 through 4.9 do not count toward the 35-page limit.

4.5 PROJECT NARRATIVE FOR TURNKEY PROJECTS

Required for all Turnkey projects. Applicants **MUST** prepare and submit a narrative using the “[LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative](#) form” or the “[LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative form](#).” The form and instructions are available on the “[How Do I Apply for an LFPP Grant?](#)” website. The Turnkey Project Narratives lists all the activities that may be included in the project. DO NOT propose any additional activities. Doing so will disqualify the application from consideration. The Turnkey Project Narrative must clearly describe the activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The [Project Narrative Guide](#) explains how to fill the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and **must not exceed five (5) 8.5 x 11 pages** (excluding existing Turnkey Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Turnkey Project Narrative form is 16 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 21 pages (16 pages + 5 pages)**. DO NOT modify the Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified. Before submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes, mark-up edits, or comments are visible. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit the “LFPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative” or the “LFPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative” form as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” link in Grants.gov. Applications not submitted in the required narrative template and missing critical information will be disqualified.

THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS LISTED IN SECTIONS 4.6 THROUGH 4.9 DO NOT COUNT TOWARD THE 21-PAGE LIMIT.

4.6 LETTERS OF VERIFICATION FOR COST SHARE FUNDS

Required. Applicants **MUST** provide written proof of the cost share commitments from every *party*, including the applicant, who will contribute cash or in-kind cost sharing to the project.

Submit one letter verifying the cost share for EACH cash or in-kind resource that is being contributed. The letter must be signed by the cost sharing contributor organization. For example, if the cost share contribution will be provided by the applicant organization and two partners, a total of 3 cost share verification letters are required.

AMS has posted a [Letter of Verification for Cost Share Template](#) on the grant program’s website. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this template. If an applicant does not use this template, the cost share verification documentation must include the following:

- Project Applicant Name
- Project Title
- Cash Commitment per year (if applicable) and Total Cash Cost Share Contribution
- In-kind Contribution per year (if applicable) and Total In-kind Cost Share. Break down items into categories as applicable:
 - Salaries (employee name, title, duties, pay rate/hour, amount provided per year)
 - Items/Activities (fair market value per unit, how value determined, and amount provided per year)
- Explanation of how each type of contribution will correspond to the budget or be used by the applicant
- Signature of Organization Representative providing the cost share, with typed name and title

Instructions for organizations submitting Letter of Verification for *Cost Share*: Submit *Letter of Verification for Cost Share Funds* on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are “LETTER OF VERIFICATION FOR COST SHARE FUNDS.” All letter(s) must be signed and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under Form SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately.**

4.7 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Required. Applicants **MUST** provide letters of commitment, not just letters of support, from all project partners and collaborators listed in the Project Narrative. More information can be found in [section 2.2](#).

AMS has posted a [Letter of Commitment From Partner and Collaborator Template](#) on the grant program’s website. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this template. If an applicant does not use this template, Letters of Commitment must include the following information:

- Project Applicant Name
- Project Title
- A brief description of the partner entity’s mission and its reason(s) for joining the project
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- The specific role(s) and responsibilities of the participating individuals or partner organizations, as applicable, and any individual time commitment

- A statement that these individuals and the organization(s) agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

Instructions for organizations submitting Letters of Commitment: Submit letters on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top that they are “LETTERS OF COMMITMENT.” Letters must be signed by the partner or collaborator and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately.**

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

4.8 EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed project. Applicants MUST submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that the [critical resources and infrastructure](#) necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, buildings, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission. The letter must describe the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project.

AMS has posted an [Evidence Of Critical Resources And Infrastructure Template Letter](#) on the LFPP application website. We highly encourage you to use this template. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Evidence of Critical Infrastructure must include the following information:

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

Instructions for preparing Letters of Critical Infrastructure: Submit Letters of Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Documents should be clearly labeled “EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE” at the top. The letters must accompany the proposal at the time of the application submission.

Letter(s) must be signed and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under Form SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately.**

4.9 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a NICRA. Applicants must submit a copy of the valid, approved NICRA. See [section 3.7](#) Indirect Costs for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15.

5.0 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

5.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants **MUST** apply for this program electronically via Grants.gov. No other submission method is accepted. AMS urges applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. The [How to Apply for Grants](#) in Grants.gov webpage gives an overview of the application process. This NOFO contains the information needed to complete the required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in [section 5.2](#).

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Assistance Listing number “10.175”, or the LFPP Funding Opportunity Number “USDA-AMS-TM-LFPP-G-26-0004”.

5.2 SUBMISSION AND RECIPIENT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

5.2.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY

Applicants **MUST** have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), an active SAM.gov account, and a Grants.gov account to submit an application. AMS recommends that applicants start the registration process in these systems immediately to allow enough time to meet application submission deadlines.

Registration in these systems collectively may take **more than four weeks** to complete.

The steps below provide details on how to complete each registration.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/help/register/organizations>

1. [Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#): Entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI from SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational UEI" on the SF-424. Getting a UEI requires validation steps in SAM.gov. Applicants are encouraged to start this process as early as possible, and, if applicable, this includes providing guidance to subapplicants on getting their own UEI.
2. [Register with the System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#): In addition to having a UEI number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Current SAM registrants have already been assigned their UEI and can view it within SAM.gov. All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be renewed annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov. Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.**
3. [Create a Grants.gov Account](#): The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the AOR.

- a. Watch the video on how to [Register in Grants.gov](#) and create an institutional profile. Applicants are required to use [Login.gov](#) to sign into [Grants.gov](#). See the [Grants.gov help article](#) for more information on logging in with Login.gov credentials. The Grants.gov validation process also includes a check for an active SAM.gov registration. Applicants without a current SAM.gov registration will be rejected.
4. [Authorize Grants.gov Roles](#): After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, including the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.
5. [Track Role Status](#): After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you to track your status.
6. [Electronic Signature](#): When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

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

Applicants may use the [Grants.gov Workspace](#), a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, an applicant creates individual instances of a workspace.

1. *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
2. *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
 - a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out the webforms, you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local storage device, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: You may need to visit the Adobe Software Compatibility to download the appropriate version of the software. There is no cost for Adobe Reader Software.
 - b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms*: Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
3. *Submit via a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your

application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in [section 4.0](#) are included correctly in the application package when submitting via Grants.gov.

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

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides a [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#) and additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 (except federal holidays) toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, use the contact information described in [section 1.7.1](#).

5.3 ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION DETAILS

AMS will not consider any applications received after the deadline. In addition, AMS will not consider any applications submitted by fax, email, or postal mail, or any applications that don't meet the requirements of this NOFO, such as not being eligible, having an incomplete application, or missing required documents, etc.). See the Late, Nonresponsive, and Incomplete Applications Policy on the [AMS Policies and Procedures](#) page for more information.

Ensure that all components are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. **AMS encourages you to submit your application at least two weeks before the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.**

Grants.gov will automatically record the date and time when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp in an email as proof that the application was submitted on time.

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

5.4 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants **MUST** submit applications electronically via [Grants.gov](#) by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 5, 2026. AMS cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding. See the Late, Nonresponsive, and Incomplete Applications Policy on the [AMS Policies and Procedures](#) page for more information.

5.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#)- Intergovernmental Review ,which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.

6.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

All applications will go through a review process as described in the following subsections.

6.1 INITIAL REVIEW (INITIAL SCREENING)

Each application is initially reviewed for overall completeness, as well as compliance with eligibility and program requirements described in this NOFO. If an application does not meet these requirements, it is removed from consideration. Please see [section 5.3](#) and the *Late, Nonresponsive, and Incomplete Applications Policy* on the [AMS Policies and Procedures](#) page for more information.

Applications that will not be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Those from an organization that does not meet the eligibility criteria.
- Those requesting LFPP funds outside the funding range for the project type selected.
- Those missing the required documentation.
- Those submitted after the deadline.

6.2 REVIEW CRITERIA (TECHNICAL REVIEW)

Applications that pass the initial review screening are evaluated on their overall merit by a panel of independent peer reviewers. AMS attempts to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned applications. Peer review panels evaluate assigned applications using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers score applications and discuss with panel members to arrive at a consensus score. AMS then uses the scores as the basis for selecting applications that will go to administrative review.

Each Planning or Implementation application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements will be reviewed and scored competitively using the criteria listed below.

Each Turnkey application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements will be reviewed and scored competitively on each of the criteria below EXCEPT alignment and intent. Technical Merit, Achievability, Expertise and Partners, and Fiscal Plan and Resources will each carry equal weight, or 25 points each.

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

1. The application provides a clear and concise description of the specific issue, problem, or need addressed by the project, and the objectives for the project with all written instructions and requirements described within the NOFO and the Project Narrative.
2. The application demonstrates how the project helps develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food businesses (including those that are not direct producer-to-consumer markets) that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products and an agricultural local and regional food system infrastructure.

3. The application clearly identifies how it will engage with intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries and how they will benefit. The application demonstrates a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants in partnership activities.
4. The application describes the project’s proposed geographic focus area and why it is the most appropriate place to conduct project activities.

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

1. The application presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable work plan for fulfilling the goals and objectives of the proposed project.
2. The application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project during the award project period.
3. If the project and/or entity was previously funded, the extent to which the previous lessons learned are incorporated into the proposed project.
4. The level of effort attributed to personnel and contractual entities detailed in the application are at a reasonable level to conduct the proposed project.
5. The application work plan contains measurable or quantifiable tasks that relate directly to the objectives of the proposed project.

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

1. The outcomes and indicator(s) are appropriate for the scale and scope of the project, including:
 - a. How indicator numbers were derived with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator; and
 - b. The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to or restrict progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.
2. The proposed project can be easily adapted to other regions, communities, or agricultural systems. *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*
3. The applicant provides a comprehensive plan to distribute the project’s results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties. *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*

Expertise and Partners.....**20 Points**

1. The proposed project represents substantial, effective, diverse and strong qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborators to accomplish the project’s goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:
 - a. Commitment from the key partner and/or collaborators demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;
 - b. The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and names and titles of the individuals who comprise the Project Team; and
 - c. The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project.

2. The application describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.
3. The application describes a commitment to collaboration and engagement among partners to ensure high levels of participation or provides a clear and concise plan for how such engagement will occur.
4. The application describes how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project’s period of performance (without grant funds). *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*

Fiscal Plan and Resources **15 Points**

1. The application budget narrative or justification provides a clear, detailed, narrative description for each budget line item including:
 - a. How the budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project; and
 - b. How the budget relates logically to the narrative describing the project.
2. The application provides evidence that critical resources and infrastructure that are necessary for the initiation and completion of the proposed project are currently in place.
3. The applicant demonstrates that its partners’ or collaborators’ contribution of non-Federal cash resources or in-kind contributions is available and obtainable for the project as evidenced through the submitted Letters of Verification for Cost Sharing Funds.

AMS may assign additional points to the overall score for applications that address program priorities as describe in [section 3.4](#) and to provide geographic coverage/variety.

6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (SELECTION PROCESS AND RISK REVIEW)

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel’s top scores applications. In addition to the scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope of this NOFO, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic coverage/variety (including across program years), and program priorities, as described in [section 3.4](#). AMS staff will work with top-scored applicants to negotiate any revisions as necessary. AMS will also assess an organization’s ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these awards using the guidance provided in [section 6.3.1](#).

6.3.1 RISK REVIEW

Prior to making a Federal award, AMS will review the risk of applicants in managing federal funds. AMS will review the applicant’s financial stability, the quality of their management systems and standards, current and prior performance managing federal grants, audit reports and findings, the ability to effectively implement Federal award requirements, and make sure that the applicant has policies and procedures in place to manage a federal award. AMS will review the applicant’s responsibility and qualification records in SAM.gov, USA Spending, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS) along with any comments entered by the applicant. For additional information refer to [2 CFR 200.206](#).

If the applicant is found to present significant risk, AMS may choose not to fund the application or place specific conditions ([2 CFR § 200.208](#)) on the award.

AMS will follow government-wide rules which prevent making awards to applicants that have been suspended or debarred from receiving federal awards.

7.0 AWARD NOTICES

7.1 SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send electronically a NOA to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. The NOA will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The NOA will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.211](#) and reference to the [AMS GT&C](#) and [USDA GT&C](#).

7.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

AMS will contact unsuccessful applicants via email as soon as possible after the LFPP awards are announced. The unsuccessful applicants will receive anonymous consensus review panel comments regarding their application.

8.0 POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the NOA, all AMS recipients must abide by the [AMS GT&C](#) and [USDA GT&C](#), which reference applicable Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

8.2 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recipients must report progress of their project on an annual basis through the electronic submission of performance reports and federal financial reports (SF-425). A final performance and financial report, and applicable closeout documentation must be submitted after the end of the performance period. Additional detail on reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the [AMS GT&C](#) and [USDA GT&C](#). If there are any program or award-specific terms or conditions, those will be identified in the NOA.

8.3 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF USDA SUPPORT

Proper acknowledgment of your USDA-AMS funding in published solicitations (e.g., for state competitions), presentations, press releases, and other communications is critical for the success of the agency's programs. Recipients must meet the acknowledgement requirements outlined in the updated [AMS GT&C](#) and referenced in the [USDA GT&C](#).

9.0 OTHER INFORMATION

9.1 DEFINITIONS

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

Critical Resources and Infrastructure means the physical and the non-physical assets necessary to start and complete a project:

- Critical Infrastructure includes physical assets such as land, structures, or equipment.

- Critical Resources includes non-physical assets such as human capital, community support and partnership, or institutional capacity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Project means a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people. Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end – they have a limited duration. A project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

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

- Has undergone a change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam); or
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product, (such as organically produced products); or
- Is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved product); or

- Is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E-85 fuel; or
- Is aggregated and marketed as a locally produced agricultural food product; and
- As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

9.2 CIVIL RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS/NON-DISCRIMINATION

All recipients must comply, and certify that they will comply, with all applicable Federal discrimination laws, regulations, and policies throughout the duration of their award, as specified in Section 12.2 of the [USDA GT&C](#).

9.3 ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATION

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.

9.4 ACCOMMODATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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.

9.5 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 2055, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0201, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov. For additional information about the applicability of FOIA to documents, correspondence, and any products related to a Federal award, see Section 1.13 of the [USDA GT&C](#).

9.6 PAPERWORK REDUCTION

Agencies are bound by the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. 3501](#)). For more information, see [AMS GT&C](#) Section 22.