Welcome
Agenda

• Overview
• Center Responsibilities
• Applicants and Beneficiaries
• Application Details

• [Website Link](https://www.ams.usda.gov/regionalfoodcenters)
Legislative Authority

USDA Regional Food Business Centers are authorized and funded by Division N, Title VII, subtitle B, section 751 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260). Under this section, the Secretary is directed to provide support for agricultural producers, growers, and processors impacted by coronavirus.
Problem

• Our food system has prioritized price and efficiency and small and mid-sized producers often struggle to access markets.
• The pandemic substantially affected farm and food businesses across the country.
• These businesses need tools to capitalize on new opportunities, create jobs, and achieve a more resilient food system.
• Supporting small and mid-sized producers and food businesses will make the food system more resilient, diverse, and competitive.
• Historically underserved producers and food businesses have faced particular barriers to market access.
Program Goals

1. Expand and strengthen regional food systems networks and partnerships in response to hardships and vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. Increase food and farm businesses and financial acumen,
3. Create more, new, and better markets, and increase market awareness and access for small and mid-size producers and processors,
4. Increase the number of local producers that distributors, retailers, and foodservice buyers source from, either directly or through intermediaries.
5. Increase the number of new food and farm businesses and improve the viability of existing businesses, and
6. Increase the revenue of food and farm businesses served.
Rationale

1. Creates opportunities for regional specific solutions.
2. Maximizes investment impact.
3. Complementary to USDA Programs
4. Cooperative agreement model to ensure coordination and substantial USDA involvement.
Responsibilities

1. Coordination
2. Technical Assistance
3. Capacity Building
1) Coordination

- Strategic planning
- Formalizing regional network of supply chain stakeholders
- Coordinating with USDA
- Collaborating with other Regional Food Centers
- Outreach to underserved communities and businesses
Coordination with USDA

- Work closely with USDA AMS and other relevant agencies
- Engage with grant recipients and applicants to build stakeholder capacity to apply for and execute successful projects.
- Be thought partners on, and users of, local and regional food systems research and data
- Collaborate with other USDA staff to ensure their regions are aware of and engaged in all relevant programming and resources.
2) Technical Assistance

- Provide direct technical assistance and value chain coordination.
- Focused on market development, business development, and managing financial resources.
Technical Assistance Beneficiaries

- Producers that focus on direct marketing or accessing local and regional intermediated markets, such as locally focused distributors, food hubs, institutions, restaurants, and retailers.
- Small- and mid-size food processors, distributors, and food hubs.
- USDA grant applicants and recipients, with a priority on small and mid-sized producers and processors.
- State, tribal, and local government agencies.
- Other entities as determined by the Regional Food Business Center and USDA.
Technical Assistance Providers

- Established in and expected to maintain a physical presence in the Regional Food Center’s geographic region (excluding the tribal center, which has nationwide reach).
- Experienced in helping smaller-scale food producers and processors in identifying and navigating third party financial assistance, particularly from federal, state, tribes, and other sources.
- Able to support the wide-ranging needs of stakeholders in the region, including providing local value chain coordination.
3) Capacity Building

- Centers will fund small and mid-sized farm and food businesses through small sub-awards.
  - Focus on emerging regional needs and businesses that are working towards expansion and other investment.
- Business Builder grants up to $100,000
Business Builder Subawards

• May support
  • staff time,
  • business planning activities,
  • software implementation,
  • the purchase of equipment (such as food safety, processing and/or packaging equipment),
  • value chain and supply chain coordination and innovation,
  • product development,
  • marketing, and
  • other associated expenses as outlined in this RFA.
Business Builder Subawards

- May also fund supply chain analysis and strategy development for identified gaps and specialization opportunities.
- Will be issued on a rolling basis with each subaward lasting for no more than two years.
- Centers can make subawards on a noncompetitive basis to an entity that receives technical assistance from that Center to advance the business activities recommended as a result of that assistance.
Applicants and Beneficiaries
Eligible Applicants

• All applications to lead a Regional Food Center must come from an eligible entity representing a partnership. A partnership is an agreement among three or more eligible entities representing at least two of the eligible entity types.

• **Eligible entities** include producer networks or associations, food councils, tribal governments, state agencies or regional authorities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit corporations, and economic development corporations.
Lead Eligible Entity Responsibilities

- Capacity and experience managing a high value and quantity of federal funds
  - Manage 100+ awards a year
  - Manage reporting and financial tracking of subawards
  - Maintain proper financial controls
  - Manage large complex federal agreements and/or grants
  - Facilitate large-scale collaborative projects
Program Beneficiaries

• Small and mid-sized producers, processors, and distributors that sell into all types of markets, including local and regional markets.

• Program is inclusive of all types of agricultural food products, including fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, grains, and dairy.
Applicants will propose geographic regions that reach at least:

- Three states and/or territories, or
- 400-mile radius.

Regions do not need to be geographically contiguous. For example, multiple states and/or territories with similar needs, such as locations outside the lower 48 states, may propose a region serving disparate areas of the U.S.
Geographic Reach

• Priority areas
  • Tribal Center
  • Colonias
  • High need/limited resource areas of the Delta and the Southeast
  • High need areas of Appalachia
• Other areas:
  • Applicants must define priority areas that they will serve within their proposed region that would classify as high need, underserved communities that were particularly affected by the pandemic.
Application Details
## Application Details

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (Months)</th>
<th>Minimum Award</th>
<th>Maximum Award</th>
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<td>60</td>
<td>$15 million</td>
<td>$50 million</td>
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- This program does not have a matching funds requirement.
Application Process

• Read the RFA thoroughly and completely
• Make sure that you are eligible to apply
• Program website - www.ams.usda.gov/regionalfoodcenters
• Questions after reading the RFA? Email RegionalFoodCenters@usda.gov
Obtain Your Unique Entity ID (UEI)

• As of April 4, the Unique Entity ID (UEI) is the authoritative identifier for doing business with the federal government. A DUNS Number is no longer valid for federal award identification.

• The UEI is generated by SAM.gov. If you are registered in SAM.gov (active or not), you already have a UEI that’s viewable at SAM.gov.

• If you are new to SAM.gov and will be registering for the first time, you will get your UEI during SAM.gov registration.
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<th>Required Action</th>
<th>Timing to Obtain/ Submit</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMS Deadline to submit application and all supporting materials</td>
<td>November 22, 2022–11:59 PM (EST)</td>
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<td>Obtain a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)</td>
<td>Up to 2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make sure SAM.gov Account is Active (if you do not already have one)</td>
<td>7-10 business days</td>
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<tr>
<td>** Obtain your Organization’s UEI Number (if you do not already have one</td>
<td>1-2 business days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create your Grants.gov profile and register your organization and authorized</td>
<td>Up to 2 weeks</td>
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Available Technical Assistance

- Questions about eligibility: Refer to the RFA; contact AMS.
- SAM.gov or UEI issues: Contact Customer Response Center
  - 1-866-705-5711 (U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands)
  - 1-800-234-3867 (Alaska and Puerto Rico)
- Grants.gov issues: Email support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.
- Keep a record of any correspondence, including any ID or case number provided.
Available Technical Assistance

Upcoming USDA Regional Food Business Center Office Hours

September 26, 2022 – 2:00 PM Eastern Time

September 30, 2022 – 10:30 AM Eastern Time
For more information:

www.ams.usda.gov/regionalfoodcenters