

# ACER ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## 2022 PROJECT NARRATIVE FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS

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Thoroughly review the applicable Acer Request for Applications (RFA) before completing this form.

### 1. Applicant Organization

Must match box 8 of the SF-424.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Mailing Address:

### 2. Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

This person will be the main contact for any correspondence and is responsible for signing any documentation should the grant be awarded. Must match box 21 of the SF-424.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Mailing Address:  Check if same as above

### 3. Applicant Entity Type

Select each applicable entity type as defined in Section 3.1 of the RFA

State Agency

Research Institution

Tribal Government

### 4. Project Title (Provide a descriptive title. Must match box 15 of the SF-424.):

### 5. Grant Application Project Type (Described in Section 1.3 of the RFA)

Market Development and Promotion

Producer and Landowner Education

### 6. Requested ACER Funds

Insert the total amount (\$) of Federal funds requested. This must match the total amount requested on Line 18a. Estimated Federal Funding of the SF-424.

\$

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Include a summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. This summary should provide a concise outline of the project's outcome(s) and description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal. This summary will be made available to the public.*

## ALIGNMENT AND INTENT

*Clearly state the purpose of the project and Project Type identified in section 1.3 Project Types of the RFA. Describe the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address in relation to the statutory language of the program (7 U.S.C. § 1632c). Include data and/or estimates that describe the extent of the issue, problem, or need.*

List objectives for this project.

*The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) mentioned above and related to the project's approach and work plan. Add objectives as necessary.*

- Objective 1:
- Objective 2:
- Objective 3:

Provide a description of the benefits that are intended to be achieved as a result of engaging in the activities associated with this project, including the number of affected producers or processors.

## TECHNICAL MERIT

### Work Plan

*Provide a Work Plan that describes the activities and timeline associated with each project objective. Include the following information for each objective mentioned in the Alignment and Intent section above: a timeline for each activity and major output including the anticipated date of completion; how and where the activities will take place; required resources; milestone(s) for assessing progress and success; the person(s) responsible for completing the activity, including collaborative arrangements or subcontractors; if conducting training and technical assistance, how participants will be recruited; and how you will help guide program development and delivery.*

Have you received a past Acer grant award?

Yes

No

Have you submitted this project to another Federal grant program?

Yes

No

*If yes to either of the above questions, provide the information below. Provide AMS agreement number for grants received in the past 5 years. Describe how the project is/was different from previous grants or how it supplements the proposed activities; and the results of the current project (if applicable). Include lessons learned, what can be improved, and how these lessons and improvements will be incorporated into this application to effectively and successfully meet program goals.*

Year	Grant Award Program Name, Type of Grant (if applicable) and/or AMS Grant Agreement (if applicable)	Description

## ACHIEVABILITY

*This section includes the outcome indicator evaluation plan.*

### Outcome Indicators

*Complete all applicable project Outcomes and Indicators with baseline and/or estimated realistic target numbers. If an outcome indicator does not apply, check N/A (Not Applicable) and briefly explain below the table why it is not applicable.*

#### Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Maple Syrup and Maple-Sap Products

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
<b>1.1</b>	Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about maple syrup and maple-sap products:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.1a</b>	Of those, the number of adults		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.1b</b>	Of those, the number of children		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.2</b>	Total number of consumers who purchased more maple syrup and maple-sap products		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.2a</b>	Of those, the number of adults		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.2b</b>	Of those, the number of children		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.3</b>	Number of additional maple product customers counted		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.4</b>	Number of additional business transactions executed		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.5</b>	Increased sales measured in		<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.5a</b>	Dollars		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.5b</b>	Percent change		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.5c</b>	combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities		<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 2: Develop New Market Opportunities for Maple Producers and Processors

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Total number of existing market access points that established and/or expanded maple syrup or maple-sap offerings: Of those, the number that were:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1a</b>	Farmers markets		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1b</b>	Roadside stands		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1c</b>	Agritourism		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1d</b>	Grocery stores		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1e</b>	Wholesale markets/buyers		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1f</b>	Restaurants		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1g</b>	Agricultural cooperatives		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1h</b>	Retailers		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1i</b>	Distributors		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1j</b>	Food hubs		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1k</b>	Share-use kitchens		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1l</b>	School food programs		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1m</b>	Community-supported agriculture (CSAs)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1n</b>	Other		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2</b>	Total number of new market access points that established maple syrup or maple-sap offerings: Of those, the number that were:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2a</b>	Farmers markets		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2b</b>	Roadside stands		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2c</b>	Agritourism		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2d</b>	Grocery stores		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2e</b>	Wholesale markets/buyers		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2f</b>	Restaurants		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2g</b>	Agricultural cooperatives		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2h</b>	Retailers		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2i</b>	Distributors		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2j</b>	Food hubs		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2k</b>	Share-use kitchens		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2l</b>	School food programs		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2m</b>	Community-supported agriculture (CSAs)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.2n</b>	Other		<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>2.3</b>	Total number of partnerships and/or collaborations established between maple producers/processors and market access points		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.3a</b>	Of those established, the number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.3b</b>	Of those established, the number of partnerships with underserved organizations		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4</b>	Of the total number of partnerships and collaborations identified in 2.3, the number that reported		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4a</b>	expanded/improved maple infrastructure		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4b</b>	higher profits		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4c</b>	more efficient transportation		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4d</b>	improved marketing channels		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4e</b>	and/or other mid-tier value chain enhancements		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.5</b>	Number of new or existing producers/processors who increased production to meet increased demand in new/additional market access points		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.6</b>	Number of maple producers/processors that increased revenue by pursuing new/increased market opportunities		<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 3: Increase the Number of New Maple Producers and Expand Capacity of Existing Maple Producers

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Number of producers, processors, private landowners, or other stakeholders that gained knowledge about maple production or maple business improvement methods		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.2</b>	Number of producers or processors that adopted new maple production or maple business improvement methods		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.3</b>	Number of producers/processors that learned about new or improved quality management procedures. Of those, the number that:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.3a</b>	Implemented these procedures		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4</b>	Number of:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4a</b>	Landowners		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4b</b>	Lessors		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4c</b>	Free-access individuals		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4d</b>	Students reported with an intent to enter the maple market		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5</b>	Number of		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5a</b>	Private landowners		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5b</b>	Lessors		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5c</b>	Free-access individuals		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5d</b>	Students		<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>3.5e</b>	Other producers that initiated maple sugaring activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6</b>	Number of		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6a</b>	Private landowners		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6b</b>	Lessors		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6c</b>	Free-access individuals		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6d</b>	Students		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6e</b>	Other producers that established long-term partnerships to maintain maple sugaring activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.7</b>	Number of producers/processors that expanded their maple product line		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.8</b>	Number of producers that increased production		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.9</b>	Number of maple producers that reported increased		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.9a</b>	Maple syrup production (gallons)		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.9b</b>	Sales		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.9c</b>	Price/gallon, and/or		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.9d</b>	Cost-savings		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.10</b>	Number of maple-related jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.10a</b>	Created		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.10b</b>	Maintained		<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 4: Expand Maple Research and Development

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Number of research goals accomplished		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2</b>	For research conclusions, the number that:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2a</b>	yielded findings that supported continued research		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2b</b>	yielded findings that led to completion of study		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2c</b>	yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process, or technology		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.3</b>	Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders that engaged with research results		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.4</b>	Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals. For each published research output, the:		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.4a</b>	number of views/reads of published research/ data		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.4b</b>	number of citations counted		<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 5: Promote Natural Resource Sustainability in the Maple Syrup Industry

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Number</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about natural resource sustainability, best practices, tools, or technologies		<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2	Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt sustainability-related best practices, tools, or technologies		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Number of producers that adopted new tools, technologies, or best practices focused on reducing energy use, plastics, waste, chemical use, or other sustainable outcomes		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Number of additional taps managed using sustainable best practices, tools, or technologies		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Of the producers identified in 5.3, the number of producers reporting:		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5a	increased dollar returns per tap		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5b	reduced input costs per tap		<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

### Outcome Indicator Measurement

For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

Outcome and Indicator # <i>i.e., 3.i., 6.a., 6.b.</i>	How did you derive the estimated numbers? <i>i.e., documented background or baseline information, recent research and data, etc.</i>	How and when do you intend to evaluate? <i>i.e., surveys, 3rd party assessment</i>	Anticipated key factors predicted to contribute to and restrict outcome <i>Including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors</i>

### Dissemination of Project Results

Describe how you will disseminate project's results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may be interested in the project's results or implementing a similar project.

## EXPERTISE AND PARTNERS

### Key Staff (Applicant Personnel and External Partner/Collaborators)

List key staff, including applicant personnel and external project partners and collaborators (see section 3.2 in the RFA for definitions) that comprise the Project Team, their role, their relevant experience, and past successes in developing and operating projects similar to those to be conducted under this project. Applicant must include Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations to support the information (see section 4.2.5 in the RFA).

Key Staff <i>Name and Title</i>	Role	Relevant Experience and Past Successes

Key Staff <i>Name and Title</i>	Role	Relevant Experience and Past Successes

### Project Management Plan

*Describe your management plan 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.*

### Project Sustainability

*Describe how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project’s period of performance (without grant funds) if the project need is expected to extend beyond the grant period.*

## PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

**Required:** Provide a one- to two-page resume or summary of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and for each of the other major project participants. Longer resumes will be disregarded.

## FISCAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

**Required:** The Fiscal Plan and Resources requirement includes a Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative. The Budget Spreadsheet must show the relevant expenditure categories in the far-left column. Relevant cost categories include:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Special Purpose Equipment
- Supplies
- Contracts/Consultants
- Other
- Indirect Costs
- Program Income

*The Budget Spreadsheet must have columns showing the dollar amount of Federal funds requested. Provide separate Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and cumulative budgets.*

*The Budget Narrative must break down and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section 8 of the **AMS General Terms and Conditions** for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.*



## BUDGET AND NARRATIVE

The budget must show the total cost for the project and describe how category costs listed in the budget are derived. The budget justification must provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. The budget must show a relationship between work planned and performed to the costs incurred.

Refer to RFA Section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities for more information on allowable and unallowable expenses.

### Budget Summary

Expense Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Federal Funds
Personnel (add rows to list each)				
Fringe Benefits (add rows to list each)				
Travel				
Special Purpose Equipment				
Supplies				
Contracts/Consultants				
Other (Specify)				
Program income				
Direct Costs Subtotal				
Indirect Costs				
Total Budget (direct + indirect)				

### Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative must break down and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section 8 of the **AMS General Terms and Conditions** for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.

## LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

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

AMS highly encourages you to use the Suggested Partner Organization Template Letter on the ACER program's application website. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Commitment must, at a minimum, include the following:

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

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: Acer does not require Congressional letters of support nor do such letters carry additional weight during the evaluation process.

## NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a NICRA. Refer to section **4.6.1 Indirect Costs** in the RFA 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.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

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

## PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reading and utilizing this document to prepare an application, reviewing which items are allowable, and understanding the terms and conditions of the grant award.