

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Applications – Fiscal Year 2024

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds to build resilience across the middle of the food supply chain. Funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

“Middle of the Supply Chain” refers to many activities that occur post growing and harvesting to the point that the product reaches the market including but not limited to aggregation, transportation, processing and manufacturing, including value-added products, and distribution.

KEY DATES

APPLICATION OPENS: FEBRUARY 7, 2024
APPLICATION WEBINAR: FEBRUARY 20, 2024
APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 10, 2024 AT 4:00 PM

PROGRAM DETAILS

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/ADaRC/Grants/Resilient-Food-Systems-Infrastructure-Program>



**DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE**

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CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS

Cyrena Thibodeau, Cyrena.Thibodeau@ct.gov, 860-295-3094

INFORMATION SESSION

A grant webinar will be held **Tuesday, February 20 from 1:00-2:30 PM**. Please register in advance [HERE](#) or on our grant webpage. Additional grant assistance for applicants will be available and discussed at the webinar. A recording will be made available for all interested applicants at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/ADaRC/Grants/Resilient-Food-Systems-Infrastructure-Program>

SUBMISSION

Applications are accepted through Cognito Forms. A login name and password are not required. https://www.cognitoforms.com/CTDoAg/_2024CTResilientFoodSystemInfrastructureGrantProgramApplication

SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant’s responsibility to follow all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this Request for Applications (RFA). The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) will accept the last validated submission through Cognito Forms prior to the posted deadline.

We cannot accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline. Cognito Forms will prevent applications from being submitted after the posted deadline.

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM PURPOSE & ELIGIBILITY

1.1 Program Purpose

The purpose of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program is to build and establish resilience in the middle of the food supply chain; to provide more and better markets to small farms and food businesses; to support the development of value-added products for consumers, fair prices, and fair wages; and create new and safe job opportunities.

RFSI seeks to expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of food products grown in Connecticut.

Middle of the Supply Chain

The food supply chain involves the following stages:

1. Production
2. Processing
3. Aggregation and Distribution, and
4. Markets and Consumers.

RFSI proposals must support the middle of the supply chain, which refers to stages two (2), processing and three (3), aggregation and distribution.

This program supports food system crops and products that are intentionally produced for human consumption. The program aims to:

- Expand capacity for processing, aggregation, and distribution of agricultural products to create more and better markets for producers;
- Modernize manufacturing, tracking, storage, distribution, and information technology systems;
- Enhance worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment or facility improvements;
- Improve the capacity and efficiency of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements;
- Improve operations through training opportunities including through multi-lingual training opportunities;
- Support construction of a new, middle of the supply chain-related facility;
- Modernize or expand an existing facility (including expansion and modifications to existing buildings and/or construction of new buildings at existing facilities);
- Construction of wastewater or greywater management structures, etc.;
- Modernize processing and manufacturing equipment, storage equipment, transportation-related equipment; and
- Develop, customize, or install equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality, and/or meets one or more of [USDA's climate action goals](#).

This is the first of two grant programs that will be offered through the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Program:

Round One: Infrastructure Grant Program – February 7, 2024 – April 10, 2024

Awards from \$100,000 to \$250,000

Match Requirement: 50%, or 25% for qualifying applicants

Projects must benefit more than one producer or organization.

Round Two: Equipment Grant Program – February 2025 – April 2025

Max Award: \$100,000

Match Requirement: There is no required match.

Projects can benefit single producer or organization only.

Ineligible products including meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, or dietary supplements. Some commodities are excluded because they are funded through other, meat and poultry-specific USDA programs.

For more information on the funding source, please visit the [USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service program webpage](#).

1.2 Eligibility

Entities eligible for Infrastructure Grants are:

- **Agricultural producers or processors**, or groups of agricultural producers and processors conducting middle of the supply chain activities;
- **Nonprofit organizations** operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities;
- **For-profit entities** operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities whose activities are primarily focused for the benefit of local and regional producers and that meet [the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards](#);
- **Local government entities** operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities;
- **Tribal governments** operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities;
- **Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals** bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers through middle-of-the-supply-chain activities.

All applicant businesses and organizations and project beneficiaries must be domestically owned and physically located in Connecticut.

Projects for this round of the infrastructure grants are required to benefit more than one producer or organization. Additional information on this requirement can be found in *1.13 Benefit to More Than One Product or Organization*

1.3 Available Funds

Grant awards will be between **\$100,000- \$250,000** per application. Matching funds are required and are described in detail below. CT DoAg anticipates that approximately \$1.7 million will be available to award to subrecipient projects this round.

There will be a second grant round in 2025 for *equipment only* projects up to \$100,000 that will not require a match.

1.4 Project Length

Projects can be funded for up to 30 months (2 years, 6 months).

Selected projects are anticipated to begin on September 1, 2024 all contracts will end no later than May 24, 2027.

1.5 State Funding Priorities

Projects for this round of the infrastructure grants are required to benefit more than one producer or organization.

Projects that benefit and/or are led by individuals from the following groups will receive additional points in the grant review process:

- Historically underserved farmers as defined by [USDA](#);
- Agricultural operations that qualify as small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, or veteran-owned businesses as defined by the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#)
- Socially disadvantaged farmers as defined by [AB 1348, the Farmer Equity Act of 2017](#); and/or

Projects that don't meet one of the funding priorities below will still be considered. The priorities listed below are *not* in order of priority or preference.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

1. Projects that increase aggregation of farm products through food hubs and informal producer networks, which focuses on, but is not exclusive to, wholesale buyers.
2. Projects that increase the number of and access to processing facilities including commercial kitchens and co-packers, to preserve farm products and create value-added food products.
3. Projects that increase delivery infrastructure (such as vehicles) benefiting multiple farm business with eligible products and cold storage for aggregated produce, dairy, and aquaculture products. (Please note that there will be a smaller no match equipment only round in 2025.)
4. Projects that support underserved communities and demonstrate local support for the project.

1.6 Matching Funds Requirements

Infrastructure grant recipients are required to contribute **50% of the total project cost** as a match to federal funding. This may be as cash, in-kind, or a combination of the two. This applies to all applicants except those who qualify for the reduced match described below.

All applicants will be required to certify their match through submission of a Letter of Match Verification, also available on the RFSI documents tab, for EACH source of match along with their proposal as attachment(s) on Cognito.

Reduced Matching Funds– Historically Underserved Groups

For [historically underserved farmers and ranchers](#), or for other businesses that qualify under [SBA categories of small, disadvantaged business](#), women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business, the required match funding contribution or cost share is reduced to **25% of the project cost**.

Applicants will self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications to being eligible for this reduced match.

For non-profits and cooperatives to qualify for the reduced matching funds the majority (51% or higher) of the board of directors or owners/operators need to meet the criteria.

Other Matching Fund Information

In-kind contributions are defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as a match contribution to the project as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(e). These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used toward satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement to which the applicant is a party.

All matching contributions must be committed or secured at the time an applicant is recommended for an award.

Indirect costs may count toward the Infrastructure Grant applicant’s match.

Program income (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) or any other Federal funds is an ineligible source of match or cost share.

See below examples using 50 and 25 percent match requirements:

RFSI Match Calculator 50 Percent Match Requirement	
Total Project	\$200,000
Federal Funds Requested	\$100,000
Matching Funds/In-kind Amount Required	\$100,000

RFSI Match Calculator 25 Percent Match Requirement	
Total Project	\$133,333.33
Federal Funds Requested	\$100,000
Matching Funds/In-kind Amount Required	\$33,333.33

1.7 Indirect Funds

Applicants can request indirect costs in their proposal. Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses.

If an applicant has a NICRA and wishes to charge that rate, a copy must be submitted as an attachment to the application on Cognito. Otherwise, applicants may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

1.8 Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure

Evidence of Critical Infrastructure is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed Infrastructure Grant project. If this is applicable to the proposed project, applicants must submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission. The letter must indicate 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. States may use the AMS Suggested Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Template Letter.

1.9 Funding Source

Connecticut RFSI awards are funded through the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service. Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117—2), as amended, authorizes the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to make grants and agreements to maintain to improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.

1.10 How To Apply

Applicants must submit a completed application by April 10, 2024 at 4:00 PM using [Cognito Forms](#). More information is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/ADaRC/Grants/Resilient-Food-Systems-Infrastructure-Program>.

1.11 Definition of a Project

A project is 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 limited duration with a definitive beginning and end. A project will also have an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Infrastructure Grants will fund projects that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted agricultural products.

1.12 Example Projects

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

1. Expanding processing capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new wholesale/retail product lines;
2. Modernizing equipment or facilities through upgrades, repairs, or retooling; (e.g., adapting product lines for institutional procurement or adding parallel processing capacity);
3. Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, or delivery vehicles;
4. Modernizing manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems;
5. Enhancing worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment or facility improvements;
6. Construction of a new facility;
7. Increasing packaging and labeling capacities that meet compliance requirements under applicable laws (e.g. sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment);
8. Increasing storage space, including cold storage;
9. Develop, customize or install climate-smart equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality, and/or meets one or more of USDA's climate action goals;
10. Modernize equipment or facilities to ensure food safety, including associated Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation, plan development and employee training; and
11. training on the use of all equipment purchased under the grant and associated new processes.

Allowable activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects may include:

1. Hiring term-limited personnel to assist with project implementation activities;
2. Purchasing special purpose equipment: defined in section 8.2 of the AMS General Terms and Conditions. This includes the purchase of special purpose equipment for institutions or others that will benefit multiple producers through middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product;
3. Analyzing potential facility upgrades and changes that meet regulatory requirements, obtaining design and/or architecture services, etc. (to the extent these costs are directly related to the project);
4. Planning for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) or other food safety or worker
 - i. safety measures or equipment recommendations; and
5. Upgrades or new facilities for processing specific agricultural products, such as:
 - On-farm post-harvest processing, preservation, and storage/cold storage;
 - Post-harvest cleaning and grading;
 - Aggregator warehouse and storage, including cooperatives;
 - Purchase of freezing equipment, freezer, or cold storage;
 - Processing, canning, preserving and pasteurization;
 - Preparation and packing;
 - Drying, hulling, shelling, and milling; and
 - Cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, fermenting.

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products;
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program;

- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities through an Infrastructure Grant. However, Infrastructure Grants may build on the successes of prior funding to fund subsequent activities.

1.13 Benefit to More Than One Business or Organization

Applications for grant funds must describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for Connecticut producers and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. We will not award grant funds for projects that primarily benefit a single business or that business’s product, organization, or individual. In addition, grantees cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services.

1.14 Outcome Measures

USDA is required to report on the outcomes of the RFSI program on a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. In an effort to fulfill this requirement, AMS collaborated with stakeholders, including the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to develop a listing of measurable outcomes and indicators that quantifiably measure performance toward fulfilling the program’s purpose. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the RFSI program with all stakeholders, including OMB, U.S. Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

Each project **must** include at least one of the two outcomes listed in **Appendix A: USDA Performance Measures** and at least one of the indicators listed under the selected outcome(s). Progress toward outcomes and indicators selected will be reported in annual and final performance reports.

1.15 Application Review & Award Information

Connecticut RFSI funds will be awarded to applicants through a competitive review process. A committee will review all applications and make recommendations to CT DoAg Commissioner. USDA is the final decision maker on all awards.

Multi-year projects are encouraged, and grants may be awarded for projects up to two (2) years, six (6) months in length. Maximum fund request is capped at \$250,000 with the minimum funding level at \$100,000.

1.16 Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by April 10, 2024, at 4:00 PM.

1.17 Key Dates (subject to change)

February 7, 2024	Applications open for submission
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February 20, 2024	Grant Webinar with Q&A Register HERE
April 10, 2024	Deadline to submit application
May 2024	Applicants notified of preliminary funding decisions
May 2024	Connecticut Department of Agriculture submits State Plan to USDA-AMS
July 2024	Anticipated date of grantees notified of AMS decisions. Adjustments may be required subject to AMS approval.
September 2024	Anticipated contract start date.

SECTION 2: APPLICATION

2.1 APPLICATION

A complete application will include:

- 1) Cognito Project Information Page and the following as attachments on Cognito
- 2) Infrastructure Grant Proposal Template - Required
- 3) Match Verification Letter(s)- Required
- 4) Up to three (3) Letter of Support- Optional
- 5) Critical Resource Infrastructure Letter (Required if applicable)
- 6) Collaborating Organization Letter(s) (Required if applicable)

Project Information Page – This information will appear on the Cognito application:

- **Project Title:** Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less, with a unique and descriptive title.
- **Applicant Organization:** Legal name of the organization that will serve as lead for the project and will receive and oversee the use of grant funds. The name listed must match the organization’s federal tax return.
- **Applicant Mailing and Physical Address:** Physical and mailing address (if different) for the applicant.
- **Description of Applicant Organization:** Briefly describe the applicant organization, the services it provides, and/or the purpose of the organization.
- **Award Requested:** The total amount of RFSI funds requested for the project should be entered into the “Award Requested” box on the Project Information Page. This number must match the amount listed under the Grant Funding Subtotal on the Budget Form. Funds requested must range from \$100,000 to \$250,000; requests outside of this range may result in disqualification.
- **Cash Match and In-Kind Match Contributions:** Matching funds, including cash match and in-kind contributions, are required for RFSI Infrastructure Grant projects. Please see the Matching Funds Requirement section for more information.
- **Funding Priorities:** Using the checkboxes, select one or more of the RFSI funding priorities (listed in Section 1.5 of this document.)
- **DoAg Demographic Data Questions** (Optional).

Following is a summary of the narrative and budget questions that will be on the Infrastructure Grant Proposal Template. The form is available under the documents and forms tab on the grant webpage.

Preview of the application narrative questions. You MUST complete and submit the provided template. Failure to utilize the provided template (for download on the grant webpage) will disqualify your application from consideration.

- **Applicant Organization:** Legal name of the organization that will serve as lead for the project and will receive and oversee the use of grant funds. The name listed must match the organization’s federal tax return.
- **Entity Type:** Input the entity type that best describes the applicant Ex. Agriculture producer or processors, non-profit organization, local government, tribal government, institution.
- **UEI:** Unique Entity Identifier (UEI formerly known as DUNS): Enter the applicant’s UEI number, if known. To obtain a UEI, please visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) (<https://sam.gov/content/home>). If awarded RFSI

funds, recipients will need to obtain a UEI before a grant agreement can be executed.

- **Phone Number:**
- **Email Address**
- **Applicant Mailing and Physical Address:** Physical and mailing address (if different) for the applicant.
- **Primary Point of Contact:** List the person who will be the main contact for any correspondence and is responsible for signing any documentation should the grant be awarded.
- **Distressed Communities Index:** [Using the Distressed Communities Index Map](https://eig.org/distressed-communities/2022-dci-interactive-map/?view=county) (<https://eig.org/distressed-communities/2022-dci-interactive-map/?view=county>), provide the community distress score for the county(ies) and zip code(s) benefiting from the proposed project.
- **Project Title:** Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less, with a unique and descriptive title.
- **Duration of Project:** Provide the start date and end date for the proposed project. The start and end dates must be between September 1, 2024, and May 24, 2027.
- **Executive Summary:** Include a project summary of 250 words or fewer suitable for dissemination to the public. A Project Summary provides a very brief (one sentence, if possible) description of the proposed project. A Project Summary includes: 1. The name of the applicant organization that, if awarded a grant, will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the state; 2. The project's purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes; and 3. A description of the general tasks/activities to be completed during the project period to fulfill these goals.
- **Applicant Project Type:** Using the checkboxes, select the applicable project type from the list provided. Applicants may select more than one project type.
- **Provide the Specific Issue, Problem, or Need** That the project will address within the text box, identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.
- **Project Objectives:** Provide a list of the objectives that this project hopes to achieve. Indicate the objective number and provide a description of the objective(s).
- **Project Beneficiaries**
 - Estimate the number of project beneficiaries. The number cited should be a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals that could realistically be directly impacted by the results of the project. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the number of beneficiaries is trackable and reportable within the project duration.
 - Using the checkboxes, select all applicable beneficiaries from those listed. Check all that apply.
- **Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs** (not a scored question): Indicate if this project been submitted for funding to a federal or state grant program other than the RFSI and/or if a federal or state grant program other than the RFSI is funding the project currently. If yes, please describe the following in the provided text box:
 - The name(s) of the other grant program and the agreement number(s).
 - How the RFSI project differs from, or builds upon, the other proposed or funded projects.
 - The mechanisms in place to ensure the RFSI project does not duplicate costs or activities for the other project(s).
- **External Project Support:** Within the text box, name the stakeholders (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project) who support the need for this project and describe

why they support the project.

- **Performance Measures:** Using the format provided within the application (shown in Appendix A), provide expected numbers based on the project’s scope of work. Input zero (0) if not applicable to the specific project.

Preview budget questions. You MUST complete and submit the provided template. Failure to utilize the provided template (for download on the grant webpage) will disqualify your application from consideration.

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 to be performed to the costs incurred. Refer to Appendix B: Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table for Infrastructure Grants for more information.

Please be sure to list and justify all expenses to be covered with matching funds separately and the source of the matching funds. If applicable, ensure that the proposal includes Critical Resources and Infrastructure letter(s) to support the application information.

Matching Funds: All eligible entities must provide a 50 percent match OR a 25 percent graduated match of the total project cost. See the Matching Funds Requirement section for more information. Applicants must submit written and signed verification of match commitment from any party, including the eligible entity, which will contribute a match of non-federal resources to this project.

Graduated Match Self-Certification: To qualify for the 25 percent graduated match, the applicant must meet the definition of one of the provided groups. Select the applicable checkbox(es) as well as the certification checkbox at the bottom.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Expense Category	Funds Requested	Match Value	Match Type
Personnel	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contractual	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct Costs Sub-Total	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Budget	\$0.00	\$0.00	

- A. **Personnel:** Estimate the total cost of salary and wages for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization. In the description column, list the title of each employee, the approximate time spent on the project (or number of hours or percent full time equivalent) and the individual's activities in support of project goals.
- B. **Fringe Benefits:** Estimate the total cost of fringe benefits for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization in accordance with the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy. In the description column, list the approximate fringe benefit rate and types of benefits included in the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy.
- C. **Travel:** Estimate the total cost of project-related travel for all individuals except contractual personnel. Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by the General Services Administration (GSA), including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at the GSA website (<http://www.gsa.gov>).
- D. **Special Purpose Equipment:** Estimate the total cost to purchase any special purpose equipment necessary to achieve project objectives. Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the award and how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Equipment is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit. "Special purpose equipment" is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Activities that strengthen middle of the supply chain resiliency shall be considered allowable technical activities in defining special purpose equipment for the purpose of the RFSI. "General purpose equipment" is not limited to research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Rental of general purpose equipment must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this award.
- E. **Supplies:** Estimate the total cost to purchase supplies necessary to achieve project objectives. List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and enhance the mid-supply chain and infrastructure efforts of this program. General use office supplies (paper, printer ink, pens, etc.), facilities costs (telephone, internet, etc.), and administrative costs are considered indirect costs and should not be included under this category.
- F. **Construction:** Estimate the total cost of construction necessary to the project. Describe costs including administrative and legal expenses, structures, relocation expenses and payments, architectural and engineering fees, project inspection fees, site work, demolition and removal, construction, and miscellaneous expenses related to modernizing or expanding a new or existing facility. Describe the need for construction costs. For projects involving construction, include any design and/or construction documents. If a project is selected for funding, the grantee will be required to follow all applicable federal regulations regarding the construction activities.
- G. **Contractual:** Estimate the total cost of work on the project that will be performed by individuals or organizations other than the applicant (e.g., consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.). Provide a list of contractors/consultants, detailing the name, hourly/flat rate fee structure, and overall cost of the services performed. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants. Provide for each of the real or anticipated contractors listed a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and

outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include timelines for each activity. Descriptions should have adequate detail to determine the appropriateness and allowability of all contractual costs. For contractual costs greater than \$10,000, provide a breakdown of costs requested. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a General Schedule (GS)-15 step 10 federal employee in the area where work will be performed, provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs of the contractor/consultant, or other expenses.

- H. **Other** :Estimate the total cost of all other project-related expenses. Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost per unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, costs associated with meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection. If the budget includes meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs. Within the justification, describe the purpose of each item listed and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).
- I. **Indirect Costs**: Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that, therefore, cannot be readily and reliably identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses. If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), it is required to use this amount, and a copy of the NICRA must be submitted with the application via the Upload feature on the Budget page. Otherwise, applicants may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See the Indirect Costs section for further guidance.

APPENDIX A: Performance Measures

RFSI projects must include at least one outcome and one indicator from the table below. All outcomes and indicators selected must be achieved within the grant duration.

OUTCOME 2: CAPACITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS			
Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
2.1	Number of new facilities constructed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Number of existing facilities improved or expanded:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Number of processing equipment units purchased and installed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	Number of processing equipment units modernized through upgrades, repairs, or retooling:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units purchased and installed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units modernized through upgrades, repairs, or retooling:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7	Number of employees trained on new equipment and processes:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.8	Number of employees that received food safety training:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.9	Number of employees that received worker safety training:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.10	Number of new or improved wastewater management systems:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.11	Number of new or improved information technology systems:		<input type="checkbox"/>

OUTCOME 3: INCREASE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF LOCAL/REGIONAL PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS			
Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
3.1	Number of new jobs created:		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Number of local/regional agricultural producers who benefited from the new or improved processing/aggregation/storage or distribution capacity:		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Number of new local/regional products processed, aggregated, stored or distributed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	Number of new value-added products developed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Number of new market-outlets established:		<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B: Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Federal Compliance

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Advisory Councils	ALL	Unallowable for costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.
Alcoholic Beverages	ALL with exceptions	Unallowable for alcoholic beverages unless the cost is associated with fulfilling the purpose of the grant program and either approved in the application or with prior written approval.
Buildings and Land – Construction	ALL	<p>Unallowable for the acquisition of buildings, facilities, or land or to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architecture fees). This also includes construction and construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing.</p> <p>Allowable for rental costs of land and building space. However, lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) are not allowable. The lease or rental agreement must terminate at the end of the grant cycle.</p> <p>A building is any permanent structure designed or intended for support, enclosure, shelter, or protection of people, animals, or property, and having a permanent roof supported by columns or walls.</p>
Conferences	ALL with exceptions	<p>Allowable if the conference fulfills the purpose of a grant program’s legislated purpose. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal recipient as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers’ fees, costs of meals (see Meals for restrictions), and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences with the exception of entertainment costs that are unallowable. If registration fees are collected, the recipient must report fees as program income (see Program Income).</p> <p>Allowable to rent a building or room for training; however, where appropriate, AMS encourages the use of technologies such as webinars, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing as an alternative to renting a building or a room. The recipient should use the most cost-effective facilities, such as State government conference rooms if renting a building or a room is necessary.</p>
Contingency Provisions	ALL	Unallowable for miscellaneous and similar rainy-day funds for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening. Unallowable for working capital for activities/items not already in place.

Cost Category	Affected AMS Grant Program(s)	Description, Guidance and Exceptions
Contractual/Consultant Costs (Professional Services)	ALL	Allowable subject to limitations. Contractual/consultant costs are expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the recipient in the form of a procurement relationship. Allowable for contractor/consultant employee rates that do not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in the area (for more information, visit the OPM website) and travel that is reasonable and necessary. This does not include fringe benefits, indirect costs, or other expenses. If rates exceed this amount, the recipient is required to justify the allowability of the cost aligning with 2 CFR §§ 200.317-327 .
Contributions or Donations	ALL	Unallowable for contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the recipient to other entities. An NFE using grant funds to purchase food or services to donate to other entities and/or individuals is unallowable.
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Machines	ALL	Unallowable for the purchase/lease of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT equipment.
Entertainment Costs	ALL with exceptions	Unallowable for entertainment costs including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as bands, orchestras, dance groups, tickets to shows, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities). Entertainment costs are defined in 2 CFR § 200.438 . Allowable where the specific cost is considered to meet the requirements of the sponsored program and are authorized in the approved budget or with prior written approval.

Build America, Buy America (BABA)

Overview: Any public infrastructure project funded under RFSI must coordinate with MDAR to ensure adherence to BABA guidance. For such projects, the recipient must comply with the Buy America Sourcing requirements outlined in the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

For-Profit Entities: BABA is not applicable to for-profit entities particularly for infrastructure projects. USDA-Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) will review facilities owned by public entities to determine whether BABA requirements apply, following USDA guidance to exempt de minimis grant awards and other inapplicable activities. All other Infrastructure Grant entities that surpass the \$250,000 threshold of applicable procurement costs must adhere to BABA.

Small Grants Waiver: The small grants waiver will apply to awards with total federal funding below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, which is currently set at \$250,000.

Resource: 2 CFR Part 184 - BUY AMERICA PREFERENCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-184>

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National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Overview: All activities funded under this RFR must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related applicable agency regulations and instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic

Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), other laws and regulations as outlined therein, and any applicable state, local, or tribal laws. A review for NEPA compliance is required prior to the award of grant funds. If selected for an award, applicants must provide all requested information to support compliance with NEPA, NHPA, ESA, and all other federal environmental laws and regulations. Resource: [A Citizen's Guide to NEPA \(doe.gov\)](#) is a relatively short guide that provides an overview of NEPA requirements.

Refer to the [USDA General Terms and Conditions](#) for the full list of required provisions (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2020GDTermsandConditionsUpdated.pdf>) for additional information.

APPENDIX C: USDA Definitions

Middle-of-the-supply-chain: The food supply chain involves the following stages: 1. Production, 2. Processing, 3. Aggregation/Distribution, and 4. Markets/Retail/Consumers. For the purposes of RFSI, “middle-of-the-supply-chain” refers to the middle stages: 2. Processing and 3. Aggregation/Distribution.

Beginning Farmer or Rancher: An individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

Cooperatives: A business or service organization (1) that is owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its services and (2) whose benefits (services received and earnings allocations) are distributed to the user-owners based on how much they use the cooperative.

Critical Resources: Critical resources and infrastructure can be facilities, land, structure, use of city street/parks, shared-used kitchen, and/or other resources that are essential for the proposed project activities.

Domestically owned: An entity organized in the United States under the law of the State, the states, or under Tribal jurisdiction where the entity operates, and a majority of the entity is owned by US citizens.

Food Access Considerations: Distinct cultural markets, marginalized communities, or defined by USDA as low-income low access.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP): HACCP provides a framework for establishments to conduct science-based process controls that can be validated as effective in eliminating, preventing, or reducing to an acceptable level the food safety hazards that are reasonably likely to occur in an official establishment’s particular production processes.

Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher: Four groups are defined by USDA as “Historically Underserved,” including farmers or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource as described at "Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers" | Natural Resources Conservation Service ([usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov)).

Institutions: These include organizations such schools (K-12; colleges/universities), hospitals, food banks, gleaners, food rescue, workplace cafeterias, prisons, and care centers (senior, preschools).

Intermediaries: Includes aggregators, distributors, food hubs, brokers, auction houses, and wholesale.

Mid-Size Producers: USDA defines small family farms as those with a Gross Cash Farm Income (GCFI) of less than \$350,000; mid-size farms have a GCFI of \$350,000 to \$999,999.

Nonprofit Corporations: 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 inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Small Disadvantaged Business: A business that is small according to SBA’s size standards for its business type and that is 51% or more owned and controlled by one or more disadvantaged persons. The disadvantaged person or persons must be socially disadvantaged and economically disadvantaged. For the purposes of this designation, disadvantaged persons is defined per eCFR :: 13 CFR 124.103 -- "Who is socially disadvantaged?" as “Those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control.” See "Small Disadvantaged Business" ([sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov)) for more information.

Tribal Entities: Tribal Entities is expansive and includes all entities falling under the eligible legal structures, including but not limited to: tribal owned corporations, intertribal non-profits and associations, Alaska Native Corporations, Native entities within the State of Alaska recognized by and eligible to receive services from the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native Hawaiian organizations including Homestead Associations, State recognized tribes/non-profits, and individually-owned Native American entities.

Tribe: means the term as defined in the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-454; 108 Stat. 4791, 4792).

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.
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product.
- 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.
- 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.

Veteran Farmer or Rancher: is a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof, was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for no more than 10 years or who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

Veteran-Owned Small Business: A small business, as defined by the SBA size standard for its business type that has no less than 51% of the business owned and controlled by one or more veterans. For those veterans who are permanently and totally disabled and unable to manage the daily business operations of their business, their business may still qualify if their spouse or appointed, permanent caregiver is assisting in that management. See "Veteran contracting assistance programs" (sba.gov) for more information.

Women-Owned Small Business: A small business according to SBA size standards for its business type that is at least 51% owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens; and have women manage day-to-day operations who also make long term decisions. See "Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract program" (sba.gov) for more information.