

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM PROGRAM

EQUIPMENT ONLY GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Applications – Fiscal Year 2025

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 the activities that occur postharvest, up to the point when the product reaches the market including but not limited to aggregation, transportation, processing and manufacturing, including value-added products, and distribution.



Source: USDA

KEY DATES

APPLICATION OPENS: FEBRUARY 21, 2025

APPLICATION WEBINAR: MARCH 5, 2025

APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 9, 2025, AT 4:00 PM

PROGRAM DETAILS

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



Contents

SECTION 1: PROGRAM SUMMARY & ELIGIBILITY	4
Eligibility Entities	5
SECTION 2: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & EXAMPLES.....	6
SECTION 3: FUNDING & PRIORTIES.....	9
SECTION 4: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS	10
SECTION 5: TIMELINE & AWARD INFORMATION	11
APPENDIX A: Application Review & Scoring Criteria	12
APPENDIX B: Performance Measures.....	13
APPENDIX C: Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Federal Compliance.....	14
APPENDIX D: USDA Definitions.....	16

CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS

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

INFORMATION SESSION

A grant webinar will be held **Wednesday, March 5 from 3:00-4:00 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>

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must submit a completed application by **April 9, 2025, 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>.

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 SUMMARY & ELIGIBILITY

PROGRAM SUMMARY

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 is federally funding through the United States Department of Agriculture authorized by section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117— 2), as amended, and administered by the CT Department of Agriculture.

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

The Equipment Only grant will fund only **special purpose equipment** purchases (and not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs) to meet the goals of the RFSI program. **Special purpose equipment is defined by the USDA as** 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. Items under \$5,000 per unit are considered supplies and not eligible for this grant.

The special purpose equipment must be used for middle of the supply chain activities, such as processing, storage, transportation, aggregation, distribution, or wholesaling and must help the applicant meet one of the following goals:

The **primary goals** of the RFSI program include:

1. Increase market access, i.e. entry into new, bigger, or more profitable markets;
2. Increase production, i.e. increase the number of units moved through the supply chain; and
3. Diversify product offerings, i.e. offer new sizes, flavors, or types of products.

Additionally, applicants have the option to demonstrate how the equipment they plan to purchase with grant funds will help the organization meet one or more of the secondary goals of RFSI program. Meeting one or more of the secondary goals is optional and not a requirement for the project. However, projects that do meet one or more of the secondary goals will receive additional points in the scoring process, as detailed in the scoring criteria in appendix A.

Secondary goals of the RFSI program include:

1. Retain more of the value chain dollar in local communities;
2. Create more economic opportunities for local communities;
3. Promote development of Connecticut value-added products;
4. Improve job quality through increased wages, benefits, and/or worker safety and well-being;
5. Create new and safe job opportunities;
6. Improve the capacity to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements;
7. Increase and diversify processing capacity across the state, with an emphasis on underserved communities;
8. Increase diversity in processing options in terms of business model approaches, geography, and availability to underserved communities;
9. Modernize processing and manufacturing equipment;

10. Develop, customize, or install equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, and/or improves air and/or water quality;
11. Support underserved communities and have demonstrated local support for the project; and
12. Support cooperatives, farmer, and worker-owned enterprises.

Eligibility Entities

Entities eligible 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.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & EXAMPLES

Eligible projects must focus on acquiring equipment that meets the primary goals listed above, with the purpose of expanding capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of locally and regionally (New England + New York) produced food products.

Projects that focus on processing or value-add of agricultural products must utilize local and/or regional ingredients.

Examples of eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

- Equipment that will meet standards needed to enter a new wholesale or retail outlets, such as a food safety component, packaging/labeling component, or quantity target that is required by a new market outlet.
- Value-add equipment that would significantly increase production, allowing for the business to offer more units of product into the marketplace to meet demonstrated need.
- Equipment that enables a new product line, such as a new size of packaging or a new variety of product that wouldn't be able to be offered without the piece of equipment.

Applicants can request multiple pieces of equipment; however, they need to fall within one overarching project which has a set of outcomes that will be reported on. For example, if a project is to expand from making local salsa to making local tomato sauce, the applicant could request funds for a tomato processing equipment and then a pasta sauce canning equipment, as both are required and connected in order to get the final product. If the project was to expand quantity of products to a new market, the applicant could ask for a new delivery vehicle and an electric pallet jack to load into that new delivery vehicle, as both are connected and necessary. However, requesting a new cooler for storing raw produce and also a new milk bottling line would not be aligned with the same overarching project and associated outcomes, as you would be reporting on outcomes for the raw produce and the milk expansion separately.

Some examples of special purpose equipment include:

- Upgrades or new equipment for specific agricultural products, such as:
 - o Processing, preservation, and storage/cold storage
 - o Post-harvest cleaning and grading
 - o Purchase of freezing equipment, freezer, or cold storage
 - o Processing, canning, preserving and pasteurization
 - o Preparation and packing
 - o Drying, hulling, shelling, and milling
 - o Reverse osmosis systems
 - o Egg packing machines
 - o Flotation tanks
 - o Roasters
 - o Packing and labeling equipment
 - o Cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, fermenting.
- Special purpose vehicles relevant to the scope of work, such as delivery vehicles or refrigerated trucks. If the vehicle is mixed-use, it must be used primarily as a delivery vehicle and not shared between many programs or functions;

Please note that on-farm equipment must be for post-harvest activities, not for crop production activities, including harvest activities.

Additional eligible costs could include:

- Equipment installation, as long as it is included in the equipment quote from the vendor and is not including any construction or additional utility-related (such as upgrading electrical outlets) activities;
- Shipping and handling or delivery charges for the equipment, as long as it is included in the equipment quote and reasonable compared to the price of the equipment.

Expenses can be for equipment or upgrades to equipment within a leased building/space, as long as the landlord allows for improvements or modifications to be made to the space. We require applicants to submit a landlord letter of consent explicitly allowing the equipment installation you are proposing in a leased space.

Applicants will be required to submit a recent quote for all equipment that will be purchased with grant funds. Please note that a quote cannot come from a contractor that will purchase the equipment and conduct additional activities to prepare the site for installation. Please note that grant funds can go towards pieces of equipment that are more than \$100,000; however, the applicant must show how they can pay for the remainder of the equipment cost. For example, if a piece of equipment is \$140,000, the applicant can ask for \$100,000 in grant funds but must include \$40,000 as additional funding that is committed or secured.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible products include meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, or dietary supplements. Funds cannot be used for agricultural production activities/costs, including any growing or harvesting equipment, such as a tractor or irrigation system. However, equipment pertaining to post-harvest activities conducted on the farm, such as processing, preservation, value-add, and storage, are allowable activities.

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

Ineligible costs are anything that is not specialized equipment directly related to the RFSI project. This includes:

- Pre-award costs;
- Solar panels;
- Generators;
- Software, such as IT systems or inventory tracking;
- Contingency (the equipment price in the budget must match the quote provided received);
- Installation by a third party (not done by the equipment vendor and not included in the equipment quote);
- Any contractor or construction costs to prepare a space for the equipment, including utility upgrades or installation costs;
- Staff time or fringe benefits;
- Training costs;
- Supplies, which are valued at less than \$5,000 per unit cost;
- Administrative overhead, sales tax, or indirect costs;

- Purchase of land, new buildings, and new facilities;
- Purchase of general-purpose equipment (e.g. general use motor vehicles, office furniture, office air conditioners, printers, copiers) or lease agreements to own (i.e. lease-to-own or rent-to-own);
- Compensation for injuries or damage to property arising from project activities;
- Activities that have received a federal award from another program;
- Expenses that will be reimbursed in another way;
- Agricultural production expenses, i.e. pre-harvest farming/production or sap collection equipment;
- Retail expenses, i.e. a cooler/display case for a store or farmstand;
- Marketing expenses;
- Waste management systems;
- Sub-awards;
- Costs of doing business or business maintenance costs; and
- Anything that is excluded in the Appendix C.

SECTION 3: FUNDING & PRIORTIES

The amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment (or multiple pieces of equipment) up to \$100,000. No match is required for this grant type.

Awards: \$25,000 to \$100,000

Match Requirement: There is no required match.

Projects Beneficiaries: Single producer or organization or projects benefitting more than one producer or organization

State Funding Priorities

Applications for grant funds that convincingly describe and show evidence (whether in grant narrative and/or attached letters of support/commitment) how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for multiple Connecticut producers and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual may be prioritized.

Projects that primarily benefit a single business or that business's product, organization, or individual are allowed under the equipment only grant, however.

Please see appendix A for the full application scoring criteria.

SECTION 4: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A complete application will include the following documents, all of which can be found on the [RFSI website under documents/forms](#):

- 1) [Cognito Project Information Page](#) and the following as attachments on Cognito
- 2) [Equipment Only Grant Proposal Template](#) – Required *
- 3) Critical Resource Infrastructure Letter (Required if applicable)
- 4) Collaborating Organization Letter(s) (Required if applicable)
- 5) Landlord Letter of Consent (Required if applicable)
- 6) Up to three (3) Letter of Support- Optional

*Please note, this is a fillable PDF form that will need to be downloaded into order to complete. For instructions on how to do this, please watch this [brief recording](#) (available on the [RFSI website](#)) before reaching out for assistance.

Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure (Required if applicable)

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. Please visit the RFSI webpage, navigate to the documents/forms tab and you will find the template under the “other forms” section.

Collaborating Organization Letter (Required if applicable)

Required if there will be other farm businesses or organizations with a direct responsibility in achieving the outcomes of the project. Please visit the RFSI webpage, navigate to the documents/forms tab and you will find the template under the “other forms” section.

Landlord Consent (Required if applicable)

Required if the project is to take place on leased property. Please visit the RFSI webpage, navigate to the documents/forms tab and you will find the template under the “other forms” section.

Letters of Support (Optional)

Applicants may include up to 3 letters of support for their project. Please visit the RFSI webpage, navigate to the documents/forms tab and you will find the template under the “other forms” section.

SECTION 5: TIMELINE & 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.

Project Length

Projects can be funded for up to 18-22 months depending on USDA review times. Selected projects are anticipated to begin on November 1, 2025, all contracts will end no later than May 24, 2027.

Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by **April 9, 2024, at 4:00 PM.**

Key Dates (subject to change)

February 21, 2025	Applications open for submission
March 5, 2025	Grant Webinar with Q&A Register HERE
March 12 – April 4, 2025	Open Office Hours, dates to be announced
April 9, 2025	Deadline to submit application
May 2025	Applicants notified of preliminary funding decisions
May 2025	Connecticut Department of Agriculture submits State Plan to USDA-AMS
July/August 2025	Anticipated date of grantees notified of AMS decisions. Adjustments may be required subject to AMS approval.
October/November 2025	Anticipated contract start date.

Other Grant Programs

For a comprehensive list of DoAg's Grant Programs, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/doag/services/grants>.

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.

APPENDIX A: Application Review & Scoring Criteria

The grant manager will conduct an initial eligibility review which includes ensuring:

- The application is being submitted by an eligible applicant;
- The project is for eligible activities;
- The budget only includes specialized equipment; and
- The application is complete.

Once initial screening is complete, three external reviewers will be assigned to all eligible applications who will provide scores based on the criteria below. Finally, DoAg will send recommended applications to USDA for final review. Please note that USDA retains the right to provide final approval or request changes to scope or budget for all RFSI grant projects.

The following criteria will be used to score applications:

Primary RFSI goal alignment: Applicant clearly demonstrates how the proposed project aligns with RFSI's primary goals of increasing market access, increasing production, and/or diversifying product type(s). (15 points)

Secondary RFSI goal alignment and need: Applicant demonstrates one or more secondary RFSI goals are met with this project, which are optional. (5 points)

Demonstrated need: Project demonstrates a credible community, business, organizational, and/or supply chain need and explains clearly how this equipment will help meet that need. (20 points)

Expected outcomes and scale: Proposed outcomes are relevant to the project, are explained clearly in the proposal, are significant according to the scale of the organization/business and are realistically achievable within the project period. (15 points)

Community Impact: Applicant demonstrates that their project will have meaningful and significant impact on local and/or regional communities and businesses. (10 points)

Project Beneficiaries: Project beneficiaries are clearly identified and include those who have had difficulty accessing markets, specifically veteran farmers/producers, limited resource farmers/producers, and new and beginning farmers or producers. (5 points)

Business Viability and Financial Management: The applicant possesses characteristics of a viable business or organizational model, including diverse markets, partnerships, and systems for internal management. The grant request is commensurate with their size. The application proves how this investment and project aligns with the long-term business model and viability. (10 points)

Budget: The proposed budget is clear and only includes specialized equipment. Recent equipment quotes are provided to support the proposed budget. If the equipment cost is more than the grant maximum award, matching fund amount and source are provided. (10 points)

APPENDIX B: 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.

EXPECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The outcomes and performance measures below provide a framework that allows grant recipients to track and evaluate project activities. Please provide expected numbers based on the projects scope of work. Select N/A if not applicable to the specific project.

OUTCOME 2: CAPACITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS			
Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
2.3	Number of processing equipment units purchased and installed:		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units purchased and installed:		<input type="checkbox"/>

OUTCOME 3: INCREASE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF LOCAL/REGIONAL PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS			
Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
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 C: 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.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Overview: All activities funded under this RFA 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/FY2020GDTermsandConditionsUpdates.pdf>) for additional information.

APPENDIX D: 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) 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.