

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM PROGRAM

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

Second Round of Funding

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 16, 2025, AT 4:00 PM

PROGRAM DETAILS



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

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CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS

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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>

SUBMISSION

How to Apply

Applicants must submit a completed application by **April 16, 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 PURPOSE & 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.

Infrastructure Grants will fund projects impacting more than one producer or organization that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted agricultural products. This grant type is subject to the match requirements noted in Section 4, *Application Requirements*.

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 multi-lingual training opportunities;
- Support construction of new middle of the supply chain-related facilities;
- Modernize or expand existing facilities (including expansion and modifications to existing buildings and/or construction of new buildings at existing facilities);
- Support 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](#).

Eligibility

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 primarily benefit local and regional producers and 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, organizations, and project beneficiaries must be domestically owned and physically located in Connecticut.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & EXAMPLES

Benefit to More Than One Business or Organization

Applications for Infrastructure Grant funds must describe how the project will produce measurable outcomes for multiple Connecticut producers and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. DoAg will not award projects that primarily benefit a single business, organization, or individual.

Example Projects

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

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. Development, customization or installation of 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. Modernization of equipment or facilities to ensure food safety, including associated Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation, plan development and employee training; and 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 Appendix D. 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 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.
6. Construction or renovation activities, including:
 - Additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, alterations, or construction on an existing building or facility.
 7. 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.
 8. Special purpose vehicles relevant to the scope of work, such as delivery vehicles or refrigerated trucks.
 9. Repair or update existing equipment.
 10. Rental costs.
 11. Retail related activities can include creating distribution channels to new retail opportunities, or expanding processing and packaging capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new retail product lines.
 12. Project-readiness and pre-development expenses, such as feasibility studies, permits, design, engineering, regulatory. However, these can be no more than 50% of total grant request. The project must include implementation of these plans and the grantee must be able to report on supply chain impact outcomes of the project.
 13. Indirect costs, typically 10%. Please note, if you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), a copy must be submitted with your application.
 14. Shipping costs for equipment/supplies, as long as it is on the quote.

Ineligible products include meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, or dietary supplements.

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.
- Sales Tax.

SECTION 3: FUNDING & FUNDING PRIORTIES

Awards: \$100,000 to \$250,000 (does not include the matching funds)

Match Requirement: 50% or 25% for qualifying applicants

Project Beneficiaries: Must benefit more than one producer or organization

FUNDING PRIORTIES

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.
4. Projects that support underserved communities and demonstrate local support for the project.

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) [Infrastructure Grant Proposal Template](#) – Required *
- 3) Match Verification Letter(s)- Required
- 4) Critical Resource Infrastructure Letter (Required if applicable)
- 5) Collaborating Organization Letter(s) (Required if applicable)
- 6) Landlord Letter of Consent (Required if applicable)
- 7) Up to three (3) Letter of Support- Optional, but strongly recommended

*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.

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, 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

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).

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)

This letter is 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, but strongly recommended)

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 2, 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 11, 2025	Open Office Hours, dates to be announced
April 16, 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 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.

APPLICATION SCORING The following criteria will be used to score applications:

Project impact and expected outcomes: Applicant clearly demonstrates how the proposed project aligns with RFSI's goals of resiliency in the middle of the supply chain and supporting market development. The proposal demonstrates that there is a credible need for the specified project. Proposed outcomes are relevant to the project, are explained clearly in the proposal, are significant according to the scale of the business, and are realistically achievable within the project period. (25 points)

Applicant readiness, timeline, and technical expertise: Applicant demonstrates capacity to implement the project, offers detailed workplan activities, and explains how the project reflects a strategic approach to business need. Applicants details any technical assistance, service provider support, or permitting needed. Applicant shows they can complete the project efficiently and effectively within the grant period. (20 points)

Community impact and project beneficiaries: Applicant demonstrates that their project will have meaningful and significant impact on local and regional communities and businesses. 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. (20 points)

Budget: The proposed budget is detailed, clear, and reflects realistic, well-planned components. Budget narrative supports and further details items in budget table. Where necessary, quotes for equipment or contracted work are provided to support the proposed budget. The budget reflects a thorough and well-researched effort documenting the true costs of the project. All match verification letters are submitted and complete. (15 points)

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

State Priorities: The project clearly demonstrates positive impact on multiple farm businesses. (10 points)

APPENDIX B: Performance Measures

RFSI infrastructure 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 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 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/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.

Special Purpose Equipment: Special purpose 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.

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](https://www.sba.gov)) for more information.