

Indigenous Animals Harvesting and Meat Processing Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2023 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-TM-IAHMP-G-23-0018

Publication Date: April 19, 2023

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on July 19, 2023

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Indigenous Animals Harvesting and Meat Processing Grant Program (Indigenous Animals Grants (IAG))

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-IAHMP-G-23-0018

Announcement Type: Initial

Assistance Listing Number: 10.384

Dates: Applications must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time July 19, 2023, through www.Grants.gov. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Indigenous Animals Harvesting and Meat Processing Grant Program (Indigenous Animals Grants or IAG). The Indigenous Animals Grants are administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), an agency within USDA Rural Development, in partnership with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and in consultation with the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR). This program is designed to support the priorities tribal nations have articulated to USDA throughout consultations in 2021 and 2022, including but not limited to support for traditional harvesting methods, indigenous animals, and community animal protein processing operations. Funding of this program will address needs for local animal protein processing capacity in tribal communities and tribal foods supply chains. The primary purpose of all projects must be to expand or enhance animal protein processing capacity in Indian Country. Applicants may also propose other related activities in their project plans.

USDA aims to fund a portfolio of projects representing geographic diversity, indigenous animal diversity, model diversity (mobile processing, multi-tribal, etc.), and scale diversity that reflects priorities tribal nations have identified as necessary to support indigenous foods, processing practices, and food systems. Outcomes of these projects will also provide valuable data to USDA on species which are uncommon in other federal meat and poultry programs.

Up to \$50 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act will be available to fund projects under this Indigenous Animals Grants solicitation. There is no minimum or maximum funding level for grant applications.

Construction, renovation, project-specific staff expenses, working capital, and equipment are eligible for funding. Land purchases, technical assistance, and planning grants are not eligible.

Eligible applicants for the Indigenous Animals Grants must be the tribal governments of an Indian tribe as defined by the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (List Act) of 1994 (Pub. L. No. 103-454), their wholly owned arms and instrumentalities, or joint or multi-tribal government entities.

This announcement provides additional eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an award.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application must include the documents in the checklist located below. Failure to submit all required documents will result in your application being deemed ineligible for the grant program. Please review [section 4.2](#) for more information and details on the required documents and supporting information.

Document	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424	Maximum period of performance is 36 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Narrative Application	Grant Purpose and Project Details. Narrative is limited to 20 pages, not including application template and Supporting Documents.
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424A	Budget Document (Required for Non-Construction projects only)
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424C	Budget Information – Construction Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> SF424D	Assurances for Construction Projects
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Information	Environmental checklist, or information covered in the checklist
<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA (PDF Attachment)	Approved NICRA with the federal government (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Documents	See section 4.2 for more information on required supporting documents.

TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- To do business with the Federal Government and to submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must—
 - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
 - Be registered in SAM.gov (System for Award Management), the Government's primary registrant database;
 - Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
 - Maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.
- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this Request for Applications (RFA) and follow all the instructions.
- Thoroughly review the guidelines and policies as outlined in this notice to ensure the application is received and eligible for consideration, and to understand allowable and unallowable costs.

- Apply for the correct grant program.
 - Assistance Listing Number “**10.384**” and Funding Opportunity Number “**USDA-AMS-TM-IAHMP-G-23-0018**”
- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader). Acceptable file types include .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, .png, .gif, .xls, .xlsx, .txt, .ppt, and .pptx. If you would like to submit another file type, please contact the program office first for approval.
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct UEI number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
 - <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>
 - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

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1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Indigenous Animals Harvesting and Meat Processing Program (Indigenous Animals Grants) is authorized by Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) ([Pub. L. No. 117—2](#)), which funds “loans and grants and other assistance to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.”

1.2 PURPOSE

Indigenous Animals Grants are part of the broader [Biden-Harris Administration \\$1 billion investment](#) to help expand independent processing capacity while also increasing competitiveness and equity in the food system. This administration has supported investment in tribal meat processing supply chains, including through the provision of direct technical assistance to Indian Country. This grant program seeks to improve the viability of tribal nations’ food sovereignty initiatives and supply chain resiliency by developing and expanding animal protein processing activities related to indigenous animals. Additionally, this grant program is being made pursuant to the United States’ government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes to further their self-governance goals of maintaining and improving food and agriculture supply chain resiliency.

Based on input from several tribal consultations, USDA identified an urgent need to support tribal animal protein processing activities, including but not limited to support for traditional harvesting methods and indigenous animals. Thus, this program intends to fund projects which invest in tribal nations’ supply chain resiliency, indigenous animals, restoring local indigenous food systems, and indigenous processing methods, and expanding local capacity for the harvesting, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution (communal or commercial) of meat, poultry, seafood, and other animals that provide culturally appropriate food and food security to tribal communities.

USDA intends to fund a variety of projects that represent geographic diversity, indigenous animal diversity, model diversity, and scale diversity to reflect and learn from a variety of targeted project types that are specifically of interest throughout Indian Country. Indigenous animals include seafood, bison, and other animals native to North America. Diverse models include mobile harvesting units, multi-tribal facilities, and projects that address food insecurity through communal distribution or commercial market channels.

1.3 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Tribal Governments of Indian Tribes as defined by the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (List Act) of 1994 (Pub. L. No. 103-454), their wholly owned arms and instrumentalities, and joint or multi-tribal government entities are eligible to apply.

Processing businesses owned by non-tribal-governmental entities, including individual tribal members, are not eligible for funding under this program. Those individuals and businesses may apply to other USDA funding opportunities, such as those published at <https://www.usda.gov/meat>.

Eligible applicants **must be registered** in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) at time of application and must actively **maintain** annual SAM registration from the time of the submission of the application through the term of an award. Please refer to [Section 4.6.1](#) for instructions on how to register your entity in the SAM.

1.4 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Indigenous Animals Grants will support projects that construct, renovate, or improve facilities, purchase and install equipment, address food insecurity or commercial market gaps, and otherwise support tribal food harvesting and value-added infrastructure for animal protein processing activities including through indigenous informed design principles. While Indian Country has long expressed an interest in developing locally-based food systems with the infrastructure to produce, process, and sell or distribute food nearby, tribal communities have not historically been able to access necessary resources for these typically capital-intensive initiatives.

High quality applications will demonstrate feasibility and financial viability or commitment of ongoing support from tribal nations beyond the proposed federal financial assistance. Successful applications will also demonstrate an incorporation of indigenous-informed design principles. These indigenous-informed design principles may include elements of land stewardship, minimizing animal stress during harvest or slaughter, and using all parts of a processed animal to provide for minimal or no by-product waste.

The focus of this program is on indigenous animals such as bison, wild game, and/or seafood. However, USDA will also consider applications for amenable products such as beef, pork, lamb, and poultry, including for a singular or mixed-use projects.

Projects that describe a market-based plan and focus on amenable species should outline a plan to achieve and maintain compliance with Federal food safety regulations. This includes a plan to obtain a Grant of Inspection by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) or from a State inspection program that imposes requirements that are at least equal to federal requirements.

The Indigenous Animals Grants are administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), an agency within USDA Rural Development, in partnership with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and in consultation with the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR).

1.5 PROGRAM PRIORITIES

USDA may prioritize applications which focus on strengthening tribal food access, incorporating indigenous animals, or using indigenous-informed design principles above those which focus primarily on market-based profitability. Those prioritized applications will not be expected to demonstrate plans for profitability but must include a viable sustainability plan to maintain the facility beyond the life of the grant award.

During administrative review, USDA may prioritize funding for projects to maximize meat processing and indigenous animal diversity among awards based on geography, operation size, species, or operating model.

USDA may also prioritize applications which focus predominantly on developing harvesting and processing activities around indigenous animals that are not frequently represented in other USDA grant programs (<https://www.usda.gov/meat>).

1.6 ELIGIBLE SPECIES

Grant applications may propose activities related to:

- [Amenable species](#), including Siluriformes, that fall within the regulatory jurisdiction of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.
- [Non-amenable species](#), including but not limited to bison, reindeer, game meat, etc. Seafood processing, including wild-caught fish, and other ‘exotic’ species that may fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, applicants will follow applicable tribal, local, state or federal laws and regulations for harvesting, hunting and gathering of indigenous animals.

Applicants are not required to become USDA inspected, but applications should identify how they will meet tribal, state, local, or federal food safety laws and regulations based on the proposed channel(s) of food sales or distribution.

See the definitions in [section 8.1](#) for more information on this topic.

1.7 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

USDA has hosted a series of consultations with Indian tribal governments where tribal leaders prioritized food system resource needs and indigenous animals, including a consultation on January 27, 2022, focusing on ‘Creating a Tribal Action Plan for Fairer Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing.’ Consulting officials from USDA Rural Development and the Marketing and Regulatory Programs participated in a robust dialogue to hear concerns and input from elected tribal leaders, their proxies, and tribal organizations. Tribes shared plans, strategies, and opportunities regarding regional intertribal collaboration, small community scaled processing, limiting environmental impacts, mobile meat processing, and processing for bison, seafood and other traditional sources of meat proteins, among other commentary. That input informed the drafting of this request for applications where practicable under USDA authority. These actions adhere to the requirements of [Executive Order 13175](#) as reaffirmed by the Biden-Harris Administration memoranda on *Uniform Standards for Tribal Consultation* and *Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships* and the federal trust and treaty responsibility to Tribal nations.

1.8 ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The primary purpose of all projects must be to expand or enhance indigenous animals and meat processing capacity in Indian Country. Projects can also include other activities as described in the list

below. In the project narrative, applicants must describe how the proposed activities will increase animal protein processing capacity, enhance food safety and sanitation, and increase tribal food security with a focus on fair and equitable community food distribution. Additionally, the application must include the design and the plan to maintain the long-term viability of the animal processing operation. Applicants should demonstrate a connection to developing adequate animal protein processing infrastructure in a location where such infrastructure is currently inadequate for indigenous species or tribal community food security.

Eligible activities will demonstrate the ability to expand or improve harvesting and processing, capacity, packaging and distribution to create more resilient, diverse, and secure indigenous food systems. Applications may also include manufacturing, storage, transportation, wholesaling, community accessibility, or distribution of animal protein.

Applications must include indigenous animals and meat processing activities such as those listed below which clearly demonstrate the ability to expand or enhance animal protein processing capacity in Indian Country.

- Build, expand, or upgrade community indigenous meat, food-sovereignty harvesting/processing facilities (fixed or mobile)
- Purchase, renovation, and modernization of an inoperable or outdated processing facility
- Enhance infrastructure to improve humane handling and humane slaughter
- Purchase and install traditional implements and equipment necessary, with modifications as appropriate, for indigenous slaughter and processing methods
- Expand processing capacities to add species or increase volume
- Purchase or upgrade mobile harvest and/or processing units and supporting equipment
- Purchase or upgrade processing and manufacturing equipment (including cutting equipment, mixers, grinders, breaders, sausage stuffers, smokers, curing equipment, pipes, motors, pumps, and valves)
- Purchase or upgrade cold storage to support the animal protein processing facilities
- Construction of holding pens
- Construction of wastewater management structures
- Costs associated with meeting environmental review requirements and permits will be eligible for reimbursement as pre-award expenses.

Applications may also include secondary activities which relate to the expansion of animal protein processing capacity, such as those listed below.

- Initiate or upgrade waste management and wastewater solutions
- Purchase or upgrade composting or rendering equipment related to the processing of the animal protein
- Develop packaging and labeling capacities (e.g., sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment)
- Develop Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans
- Improve workplace safety and working conditions

- Develop, customize, and 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: <https://www.usda.gov/climate-solutions/climate-adaptation-usda>.
- Develop or improve workforce recruitment, training, apprenticeships, and retention to ensure expansion projects will be adequately staffed and crewed and offer opportunities for advancement to workers.

1.9 EQUIPMENT

Equipment purchases that support indigenous animals’ harvest and meat processing are generally allowable as special purpose equipment. Special purpose equipment purchases may include:

- Processing, aggregation, or storage investments;
- Value chain/supply chain innovation or upgrades, including equipment or technology upgrades or investments to support process adaptations;
- Special purpose vehicles, meaning only those vehicles specifically meant for mobile processing units or to transport animals for the purpose of harvest; and
- Product development, packaging, and marketing of agricultural products.

Purchases over \$5,000 must be approved in writing by USDA, as required by 2 CFR § 439(b)(2). USDA must also monitor equipment until disposition in accordance with federal regulations, including 2 CFR §§ 200.311, 200.313 and 200.314.

1.10 ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Grant recipients may not use funds to:

- Purchase or lease land;
- Purchase personal or other vehicles that are not integral to the indigenous meat processing operation;
- Pay for technical assistance;
- Cover project planning or feasibility study expenses;
- Duplicate activities of a project that has received an award from another Federal award program; or
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding.

1.11 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

All activities funded under this Request for Applications (RFA) must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related applicable Agency regulations at 7 CFR part 1970 (Environmental Policies and Procedures) and related instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, other applicable Federal laws and regulations, and any applicable state, local, or Tribal laws or regulations. A review for NEPA compliance is required prior to the award of grant funds. RBCS

may request additional information from the applicant for the purposes of completing the environmental review.

As part of USDA's Administrative Review (See [section 5.2](#)), you will be asked to submit information to identify potential environmental impacts of your proposed project (see the [environmental checklist](#) for information that will be required). This will allow USDA to determine the necessary steps you will need to take to meet the NEPA and related requirements. USDA can provide free technical assistance resources to help applicants complete the environmental review checklist during the application process.

1.12 BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA ACT

Funding to Non-Federal Entities. Awardees that are Non-Federal Entities, defined pursuant to 2 CFR 200.1 as any State, local government, Indian Tribe, Institution of Higher Education, or nonprofit organization, shall be governed by the requirements of Section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) within the IIJA. Any requests for waiver of these requirements must be submitted pursuant to USDA's guidance available online at <https://www.usda.gov/ocfo/federal-financial-assistance-policy/USDABuyAmericaWaiver>.

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

USDA will use a Grant Agreement to provide a Federal award to successful applicants.

2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

New application. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in [section 5.0](#), Application Review Information.

2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

Up to \$50 million is available to fund projects in fiscal year 2023. Congressional budget action may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. USDA does not guarantee minimum funding levels or a specific number of awards.

There is no minimum or maximum funding level for applications submitted to this program.

There is no cost-share match requirement for applications submitted to this program.

Due to the limited funding availability for this program, USDA asks applicants to consider what is reasonably required to achieve their animal processing goals. USDA may prorate funding awards, if the total amount of funds requested exceeds the total amount of funding available, or to distribute funds equitably across a range of project types, business models, geographies, and animal species. If a project's total cost is more than the amount available through a program grant, the applicant must demonstrate its ability to cover the remainder of the costs with other funds.

2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

The maximum period of performance for this grant is 36 months. The period of performance should be based upon the complexity of the project. Grant funds may only support costs incurred during the period of performance of the award. The period of performance starts when the Grant Agreement is executed. When developing the budget and its accompanying narrative, whether it is for purchase of equipment or for expansion, renovation, and construction, only include activities that will begin after the anticipated award date and can be reasonably completed within the period of performance. USDA expects applicants to complete their projects within the required timeframe.

If the grant activities cannot be completed within the grant agreement's period of performance, the recipient must request written approval to extend the grant agreement's end date (no-cost extension of time) prior to the grant's expiration. The recipient may request a one-time extension of the period of performance of up to 12 months from the end date of the period of performance. The request must be submitted no later than 10 days prior to the ending date of the grant agreement.

It is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled period of performance end date. However, USDA encourages applicants to take the full duration to allow ample time to successfully complete projects. The applicant must indicate the start and end dates in block 17 of the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance."

3.0 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

3.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

USDA AMS offers no-cost technical assistance to applicants to help prepare grant applications through its [Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity - Technical Assistance Program](#) (MPPTA). Applicants are encouraged to contact the MPPTA network of providers for broad-scope technical support from pre-application to post-award grant management, business planning and processing operational resources, and supply chain development expertise, and resources specific to historically underserved USDA stakeholders. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/mppta to connect with these services. While services offered through MPPTA will not include co-drafting grant application elements, MPPTA service providers may be able to offer assistance in activities such as writing a business plan.

Technical assistance includes educational and informational help, either through one-on-one meetings or publicly available resources. Specific forms of assistance may include:

- Business plan development for processed products, strategic planning assistance, financial statement development, cash flow projections, capitalization plans, and distribution and supply chain innovation; and
- Assistance in providing innovative, yet practical, planning for the systematic aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storage, transportation, wholesaling, or distribution of food.

USDA funds a cooperative agreement with the Intertribal Technical Assistance Network (ITAN) to increase access to USDA programs by Indian Tribes. ITAN provides direct assistance, including application assistance. More information is available at <https://www.indianag.org/technicalassistance>.

Tribal Governments are also encouraged to coordinate with USDA’s Regional Food Business Centers, including the National Tribal Food Business Center, when implementing their grant-funded projects. AMS expects to announce the name of the organization(s) selected for this Center in the summer of 2023.

4.0 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

USDA RD accepts electronic applications only. See [section 4.6](#), Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements for more information.

4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

4.2.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required: Form SF-424 is available at Grants.gov. Please read the instructions closely to complete the forms. Below are instructions for frequently asked questions on specific sections of the SF-424.

Box	Instructions
#1 Type of Submission	Application
#2 Type of Application	New
#4 through #7	Not required
#8c Organizational UEI	See section 4.6.1 for UEI instructions.
#8d Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	RBCS, USDA RD
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	10.384
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-IAHMP-G-23-0018
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter geographic area, including Tribal reservations, affected by project.
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project	Provide a short description of the project.
#16a Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
#16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write “All” if the project will be implemented in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Enter proposed dates.
#18a Estimated Funding – Federal	Total Federal amount requested.
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	See section 4.4 Intergovernmental Review.

4.2.2 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required. Applicants are required to prepare and submit a narrative using Project Narrative Application Template. The template and instructions are available on the grant website at <https://www.usda.gov/iag>.

The Project Narrative must be submitted as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted. The Project Narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, **not to exceed twenty (20) 8.5 x 11” pages**, not including the Project Narrative Application Template or Supporting Documents. For example, if the template is 15 pages before you begin entering your project narrative information, your application may be up to 35 pages in length when completed (15 original pages + 20 pages of applicant content).

Prior to submitting an application to Grants.gov, make sure that it is in final form (e.g., if you used the “track changes” function, accept all changes before submitting so that the mark-up is not visible upon final submission).

For projects involving construction, include any design and construction documents.

The design and construction documents, environmental information, organizational and all supporting documents in the subsequent sections do not count against the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative Application.

Complete applications must be submitted in Grants.gov and include the following:

1. **Forms as described in Application Checklist on p. 2.**
2. **Environmental Information.** Please review the environmental checklist available on grants.gov and through usda.gov/IAG to ensure you are providing all relevant environmental documentation so that a NEPA and NHPA Section 106 reviews can be completed. Please contact USDA at iag@usda.gov to assist in determining what documentation must be provided.
3. **Organizational Documents/Articles of Incorporation.** If the applicant is a wholly owned arm or instrumentality of a tribal government, including tribal corporations, the applicant must provide its articles of incorporation, tribal charter, or other organizational/establishing document(s).
4. **Applicant certifications.** By signing and submitting the SF-424 as a part of the grant application package, applicants are certifying that they agree to the following statements:
 - a. Certification that the applicant has not been found or may be found to be unfit to obtain a grant of Federal or state or tribal equivalent inspection because of convictions, in a Federal or State court, of a felony, or multiple misdemeanors involving the acquisition, handling, or distribution of adulterated or misbranded meat or poultry products or fraud in connection with transactions in food, or other factors.
 - b. If proposing to distribute amenable species in commerce, certification that the applicant is or plans to be operating under a grant of federal or state inspection, as applicable. In addition, if inspection services have been suspended in the past five years, disclose the reasons for the suspension and how the action was resolved.
 - c. Certification by the applicant that any equipment required for the project is available,

can be procured and delivered within the proposed project development schedule, barring any unforeseen supply chain disruptions to availability, and will be installed in conformance with manufacturer's specifications and design requirements. This would not be applicable when equipment is not part of the project.

- d. Certification by the applicant that land is available for the project, either owned, including in trust, or leased by the applicant for the term of the grant.
- e. Certification by the applicant that the project will be constructed in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, agreements, permits, codes and standards.
- f. Certification by the applicant that the harvesting, gathering and processing of indigenous animals will comply with Tribal, local, state or federal laws, as applicable.
- g. Applicant certifies and acknowledges that:
 - i. The Agency will check the Do Not Pay System to verify that the applicant entity: has an active entity registration in the System for Award Management; has not been debarred or suspended; and is not listed on the Treasury Offset Program; and
 - ii. The applicant is responsible for resolving any issues that are reported in the Do Not Pay System. If issues are not resolved by the time the Agency makes program awards, the Agency may proceed to award funds to other eligible applicants.

5. **Supporting Documents:**

- a. **Design and Construction documents:** For projects involving construction, include any design and construction documents relevant to the proposed project, if applicable. If selected for funding, USDA will follow the construction planning and performing development regulation at 7 CFR 4280.125.
- b. **Letters of Support from relevant stakeholders.** These include but are not limited to food sovereignty partners and initiatives, Tribal Elders and cultural leaders, Tribal leaders, economic development and other partner organizations, beneficiary tribal citizens, beneficiary producers (fisheries, herd managers, ranchers, et al.), potential market buyers, and institutions of higher education. All letters should include the following:
 - i. Identify the stakeholder producing the letter and their connection to the project activities,
 - ii. Describe the sustained community impact that will be supported by the proposed startup or expansion activities to be carried out under the grant, and
 - iii. Provide further information relative to the project's impact on the long-term needs and goals of the community.

Your application may **not be reviewed/considered for funding** if it is:

- Received by Grants.gov after the submission deadline.
- Submitted via any method other than through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).
- Submitted to the wrong grant program.
- Not responsive to the requirements of this RFA (eligibility, incomplete application, not providing all required documents, etc.) following the curing period described in [section 5.2](#), Step 1.

4.2.3 EVIDENCE OF LAND AND OTHER KEY RESOURCES

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the resources and infrastructure necessary for the completion of the proposed project. Land and other necessary resources must be in place at the time of application submission. If any critical resources are not in working condition, such as water sources or facilities slated for renovation, then the project plan must clearly describe how the proposed activities will upgrade those components to working condition by the time the project ends.

In the project narrative form, applicants must describe how the project will remain viable after the end of the grant project or period of performance. USDA expects that such applicants will describe a plan for generating income through commercial sales, subsidizing tribal government services/functionality, or some combination of the two.

4.2.4 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

This agreement is required if the applicant has a NICRA. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15.

4.3 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. USDA encourages applicants to submit applications at least two weeks prior to the application deadline to meet all certification and registration requirements.

Only applications submitted and validated by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 19, 2023, on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be accepted.

4.4 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This program is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.

4.5 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

4.5.1 INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”—defined at 2 CFR § 200.1) are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

In accordance with [2 CFR § 200.414](#), any non-Federal entity that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology must be

used consistently for all Federal awards until a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDCs are defined in [2 CFR § 200.1](#) as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDCs exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved *N/CRA* with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For cognizant agency assignments, see [2 CFR § 200.1](#).

4.5.2 SUBAWARD RESTRICTION

The applicant is expected to perform a major portion of the project; however, subawards or subcontracts with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources for the purposes of the proposed project that are not otherwise available within the applicant organization are allowable; provided, however, that such arrangements are to be described in the application and are subject to the prior approval of the agency.

4.5.3 RETROACTIVE EXPENSES

Award funds may not be used to pay costs incurred prior to the date the Financial Assistance Agreement is executed. Reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred up to 90 days prior to award may be allowed with Agency approval.

4.6 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

4.6.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

1. [Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\) Number](#): All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational UEI" on the SF-424 form.
2. [Register with the System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#): In addition to having a UEI number, entities applying online through Grants.gov must register with the SAM.gov. Each current

SAM.gov registrant has already been assigned a UEI number and can view it within SAM.gov. All organizations must register with SAM.gov to apply for a grant. Failure to register with the SAM.gov will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**

3. [Create a Grants.gov Account](#): The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM.gov. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need designation as the Authorized Organization Role (AOR).
4. [Authorize Grants.gov Roles](#): After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, including the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.
5. [Track Role Status](#): After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you to track your status.
6. [Electronic Signature](#): When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

4.6.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV

Applicants may use the [Grants.gov Workspace](#), a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, an applicant creates individual instances of a workspace.

- 1) *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
 - a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out the webforms, you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other standard forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local storage device, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader. NOTE: You may need to visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software. There is no cost for Adobe Reader Software.

- b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
 - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First:* The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace:* Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the application deadline** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for USDA required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in [section 4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission](#) are included.

- 4) *Track a Workspace:* After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email support@grants.gov. Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the individuals mentioned in [section 7.2 Agency Contacts](#).

4.6.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in [section 4.3 Submission Date and Time](#). Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When USDA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections. Applicants with slow internet connectivity, such as with dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting an application to Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

5.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

5.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application will be reviewed competitively using the following criteria and scoring:

Alignment and Intent **25 Points**

- 1) The project prioritizes processing capacity and/or activities related to traditional or Native slaughter and harvest methods for animals, as well as processing of species indigenous to North America.
- 2) The project includes indigenous informed design principles, such as land stewardship, minimizing stress to the animal, and minimizing waste and environmental impacts, and by using all parts of the animal whenever possible.
- 3) The application describes the targeted tribal food system and describes the project's objectives and their relevance to specific challenges facing that food system, including its community food needs and/or market opportunities.
- 4) The application describes the project's proposed geographic focus area and why it is an appropriate place to conduct the project activities.
- 5) The application explains how it will add value to animal protein products supporting tribal food sovereignty, either in strengthening market access through commercial sales or in strengthening community access to finished meat or other animal product(s).
- 6) The application identifies the intended benefits of the project and specifies how partners will be involved in achieving them.
- 7) The project enhances worker experience and safety through payment of living wages, provision of worker training, and/or promotion of safe working conditions.
- 8) The application demonstrates a commitment to developing and implementing food safety measures, including regulatory compliance for market-based projects.
- 9) The application complies with all written instructions and requirements described within the RFA and Project Narrative Application.

Technical Merit **20 Points**

- 1) The application presents a clear, well-conceived, complete, and suitable overall work plan to advance indigenous animals meat processing and harvesting.
- 2) The planning and design of projects demonstrates a complete and viable plan for construction and/or retrofitting activities.
- 3) The application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project objectives during the award project period.
- 4) The application meets tribal, state, or federal food safety regulatory standards based on their sales or distribution models.

Achievability **15 Points**

- 1) The proposed activities are relevant for the scale and scope of the project including:

- a. How each activity contributes to achieving the outcome, with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each activity; and
 - b. The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to or restrict progress toward the applicable activities, including action steps for addressing identified restrictive factors.
- 2) The applicant provides a plan for measuring performance against goals, especially during the three-year performance cycle for the grant, and beyond. Include measurable progress indicators and data, such as increases in animal processing capacity.

Expertise and Technical Management 15 Points

- 1) The proposed project demonstrates the applicant’s level of experience to manage the project.
- 2) The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and the individuals (names and titles) who comprise the Project Team.
- 3) The application narrative details a clear commitment to assume responsibility to support and continue project activities and/or maintain expanded operations after the grant period ends.

Fiscal Plan, Financial Viability, and Resources 10 Points

- 1) The application Budget Narrative/Justification provides a clear, detailed description for each budget line item, and:
 - a. The budget is consistent and well justified with the size and scope of the project activities;
 - b. All budget items are directly linked to activities included in the application; and
 - c. The budget relates logically to the Project Narrative describing the project.
- 2) The extent to which the applicant describes how its project will achieve financial viability either through profitability or assurance of ongoing tribal support, technical feasibility, and readiness.
- 3) Narrative and/or data to demonstrate product demand and reliability of supply for ongoing feasibility (including consideration of other facilities which either compete for commercial sales or provide protein sources to the same community).

Community Impact & Support 15 points

- 1) The application describes the tribal community impact and support of the proposed project, describing how the outcomes will significantly benefit the community served.
- 2) The application quantifies the project impact to the target tribal community(ies) served by population size, food markets, and ongoing local tribal food sovereignty initiatives.
- 3) The application describes strategies to generate additional community support.
- 4) The applicant must submit letters of support from relevant stakeholders. These may include but are not limited to food sovereignty partners and initiatives, Tribal Elders and cultural leaders, Tribal leaders, economic development and other partner organizations, beneficiary tribal citizens, beneficiary producers (fisheries, herd managers, ranchers, et al.), potential market buyers, and institutions of higher education. All letters should include the following:
 - a. Identify the stakeholder producing the letter and its connection to the project activities,
 - b. Describe the sustained community impact that will be supported by the proposed startup or expansion activities to be carried out under the grant, and

- c. Provide further information relative to the project's impact on the long-term needs and goals of the community.

Indigenous Animals Grant Diversity Points: During Administrative Agency Review, through the provision of 10 Diversity Points and discretion, USDA may prioritize funding to projects to maximize meat processing and indigenous animal diversity among awards based on regional geography, operation size, tribal population level, species, business model, and the use of indigenous animals harvest or processing activities.

5.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Initial Application Qualification Screening and Curing Process

USDA's Office of Tribal Relations will conduct an initial review to confirm Tribal status, and AMS will conduct an initial review for overall application completeness, as well as compliance with eligibility and program requirements as set forth in this RFA. AMS also reserves the right to ask applicants for clarifying information and additional verification of assertions in the application.

Step 2: Panel Review

Each application that passes initial screening (Step 1) is evaluated by a panel of independent reviewers. AMS makes every attempt to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned applications. The review panels evaluate their assigned applications using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers confer with other team members to derive a consensus score. The consensus review serves as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on strengths and weaknesses of each application.

Step 3: Agency Review

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top rankings and recommendations. In addition to the rank and scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic diversity, and USDA priorities as outlined in [section 1.5](#). AMS staff will work with top-ranked applicants to negotiate any revisions, such as minor clarifications on budget items or to complete information on project beneficiaries. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies using the guidance provided by [2 CFR § 200.206](#).

AMS in conjunction with RBCS, will review projects for environmental impacts, to determine next steps for the project to achieve compliance under NEPA and NHPA Section 106 as outlined in [section 1.11](#).

The Administrator of RBCS will make the final award decisions based on all of the foregoing scores, reviewed information, and diversity points.

6.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, USDA will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each successful applicant for signature by the appropriate official. Grant Agreements consist of the Federal Award Agreement, Letter of Conditions, and other relevant documents that will be signed by USDA Rural Development and the Authorized Organization Representative of the successful applicant.

The Notice of Award and other documents will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.211](#), and a reference to the terms and conditions outlined in the Notice of Award.

6.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

If an application is not selected for funding, the Applicant will be notified in writing via postal or electronic mail and informed of any review and appeal rights. See [7 CFR part 11](#) for USDA National Appeals Division procedures. Funding of successfully appealed applications will be limited to available funding. USDA anticipates that there will be no available funds for successful appellants once all FY 2023 funds, if available, are awarded and obligated.

6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement, all grant recipients must abide by the Federal Assistance Agreement which references applicable [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

Additional requirements that apply to recipients selected for this program can be found in the Grants and Agreements regulations of the Uniform Guidance on Federal Financial Assistance codified in 2 CFR parts 180, 200, 400, 415, 417, 418, 421; 2 CFR parts 25 and 170; and 48 CFR part 31, and successor regulations to these parts.

All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub awards and executive compensation (see [2 CFR part 170](#)). The recipient must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see [2 CFR 170.200\(b\)](#), unless exempt under [2 CFR 170.110\(b\)](#)).

All grants made under this RFA are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as required by the USDA ([7 CFR part 15, subpart A](#)) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

6.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Project Performance/Reporting. After grant approval and through grant completion, the Applicant will be required to provide the following, as indicated in the Financial Assistance Agreement:

- a) A SF-425, "Federal Financial Report," and a project performance report will be required on a semiannual basis (due 30 working days after the end of each semiannual period). For the

purposes of this grant, semiannual periods end on March 31st and September 30th. The project performance reports shall include the elements described in the Financial Assistance Agreement, including, as appropriate, but not limited to increased or enhanced processing capacity, new market and product development opportunities created, and increased food sovereignty for tribes.

- b) A final project and financial status report within 120 days after the expiration or termination of the grant.
- c) Awardees must comply with FSIS, Cooperative Interstate Shipping (CIS), or tribal or state-based equivalent officials as required to attain and maintain inspection status, if applicable.
- d) Outcome project performance report. One year after project completion, the Applicant must provide a project performance report describing the outcomes in enhancing and/or expanding processing capacity as identified in your IAG Application (Goals and Outcomes) and in the Financial Assistance Agreement. The report is due 60 days after the first full year following the year in which the project was completed.

The Agency will conduct onsite reviews more frequently during construction and at least annually for all projects during the period of performance.

Please note that if Indigenous Animals Grant funds will be utilized for the purchase of equipment or improvements and fixtures to real estate, the Agency will file a Notice of Federal Interest on the subject real estate. Improvements and fixtures must be used for the originally authorized purpose of the grant award. If a situation arises with an awardee, where the original authorized purpose of the grant is no longer feasible, RBCS will work in good faith with the Tribe(s) that own and operate the facility to ensure the improvements and fixtures are used for a comparable purpose. Recipients must not dispose of or encumber their title or other interests in the grant-financed equipment or assets that negatively affects the improvements and fixtures for the originally authorized purpose. RBCS must be notified if a sale or change of total or partial ownership of the improvements and fixtures is under consideration. RBCS will issue disposition instructions in accordance with 2 CFR 200.313(e) and the recipient may be expected to return a proportional amount of funds received from the sale or change of total or partial ownership that negatively affects the improvements and fixtures.

If the improvements and fixtures are going to be sold or undergo a change of total or partial ownership within ten years after receiving the grant, the awardee will notify USDA and the sale will be subject to USDA review to determine if the sale or change of total or partial ownership is consistent with the purposes of the program. After 10 years of receiving the grant, this Agency review provision will not apply.

6.5 PAYMENTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

There are three options for requesting disbursements under the Indigenous Animals Grants Program.

- a) Advance – An advance payment is a payment that USDA makes before funds are disbursed for program purposes. Requests for advance payments must be limited to amounts needed to meet actual and immediate cash needs and must be accompanied by a written justification.

- b) Single disbursement– Grant funds will be disbursed in full after the project is completed and documentation is provided to the Agency. If this option is utilized, the Agency will modify and make applicable the construction planning and performing development requirements at 7 CFR 4280.125; or,
- c) Reimbursements– Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis through 90 percent of grant disbursement. The final 10 percent of grant funds will be held until construction or installation of the project is completed and documentation is provided to the Agency. If this option is utilized, the Agency will follow the construction planning and performing development requirements at 7 CFR 4280.125.
 - 1. Recipients may submit requests for reimbursement no more frequently than monthly. Ordinarily, payment will be made within 30 days after receipt of a proper request for reimbursement.
 - 2. Recipients must not request reimbursement for the Federal share of amounts withheld from contractors to ensure satisfactory completion of work until after any such payments have been made to the contractors.
 - 3. Recipients must use SF-271, “Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs,” to request grant reimbursements. Fund requests must at a minimum include documentation of costs and evidence of payment(s), including payment date(s). Failure to provide sufficient documentation of costs and evidence of payment, including payment date, may result in a denial of reimbursement.

6.6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USDA SUPPORT

Proper acknowledgement of an Awardee’s USDA funding in published solicitations (e.g., for state competitions), presentations, press releases, and other communications is critical for the success of our agency’s programs. As required in 2 CFR § 415.2, grant recipients and subrecipients must acknowledge USDA support in all publications written or published with USDA grant or cooperative agreement support.

The following acknowledgment of USDA funding must appear in all published materials or products, in any format (web sites, audiovisuals, etc.), that are substantially based upon or developed under a USDA award:

Funding for [Project or Publication] was made possible by a grant/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

Awardees are strongly encouraged to acknowledge Federal funding in public statements, such as press releases regarding projects and activities.

The Awardee is encouraged to display USDA’s standard infrastructure investment signage, available for download from the Agency, during construction of the Project. Expenditures for such signage shall be a permitted eligible cost of the Project.

7.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

7.1 PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

After closely reviewing this RFA in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact iag@usda.gov.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.usda.gov/iag>

7.2 TEAM LEAD AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

Name: IAG Grants Team

E-Mail: iag@usda.gov

7.3 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

AMS and RBCS provide resources and information on its website <https://usda.gov/iag> that may be helpful to applicants, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and required application forms. AMS staff is available to provide timely technical assistance by contacting iag@usda.gov.

USDA funds a cooperative agreement with the Intertribal Technical Assistance Network (ITAN) to increase access to USDA programs by Indian tribes. ITAN provides direct assistance, including application assistance. More information is available at <https://www.indianag.org/technicalassistance>.

AMS also offers technical assistance to applicants through its [Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity - Technical Assistance Program](#) (MPPTA). This program can assist applicants with navigating USDA grant application and award processes, and successful post-award grant management.

7.4 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#).

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 DEFINITIONS

Amenable species. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act amenable species are cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, and other equines, and fish of the Order Siluriformes. Under the Poultry Inspection Act, amenable species are chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, ratites and squabs.

AMS. Agricultural Marketing Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Diversity of scale, model, and method. Variety of sizes, types of processing plants, and methods of harvest or animal protein processing.

Food sovereignty. Ability of communities to determine the quantity and quality of the food that they consume by controlling how their food is produced and distributed. **FSIS.** Food Safety and Inspection Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Geographic diversity. Distribution of projects across a broad geography such that funding is not concentrated in areas that serve or overly favor a single population or populations.

Harvesting. Field kill, fishing, or hunting, harvesting and/or gathering, slaughter and primary processing of animals, birds, or fish.

Indigenous species (indigenous animals). Species native to North America which may be harvested for meat, poultry or seafood, such as bison or reindeer.

Local and regional food. Food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates and the end consumer is kept to a minimum, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same territory or Tribal Lands or identified intertribal service area.

Nonamenable or non-amenable species. Species that are not regulated as amenable species under the Federal Meat Inspection Act or the Poultry Products Inspection Act, including bison, rabbits, deer, elk, pheasant, quail, and fish other than fish of the Order Siluriformes.

OTR. Office of Tribal Relations, an office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

RBCS. Rural Business-Cooperative Service, an agency of the US Department of Agriculture.

Siluriformes. A group of freshwater fish, such as catfish. The definition includes both wild-caught and farm-raised fish.

(Indian) Tribe. Indian tribe defined by the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (of 1994 (Pub. L. No. 103-454) and documented through the [Federal Register](#).

Tribal Government. The government of an Indian tribe.

USDA inspected facility. Meat and poultry slaughter and processing facilities operating under a grant of federal inspection under the [Federal Meat Inspection Act \(FMIA\)](#) or the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA).

8.2 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large

print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the 711 Relay Service.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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

8.3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) and the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)), as implemented by USDA's regulations ([7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A](#)), govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and RBCS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA Rural Development Business Center, Records and Information Management Branch; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0706; Washington, DC 20250-0706; Telephone: 202-720-2826. To submit a request electronically, please visit the Public Access Link at <https://efoia-pal.usda.gov> or email: RD.FOIA@usda.gov. Further information about the FOIA process is available at www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/freedom-information-act-foia.

8.4 PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. § 3501 et seq](#)), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0503-0028. The time required to compile the necessary information is estimated to average 5 hours for each application question, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.