



United States Department of Agriculture

**CONSULTATION AND LISTENING SESSION:**

**CREATING A TRIBAL ACTION PLAN FOR FAIRER MEAT, POULTRY,  
AND SEAFOOD PROCESSING**

**DATE:** Thursday, January 27

**TIME:** 3:00-5:00pm ET

**ZOOM REGISTRATION:** <https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsceiqrzMtHnxfTGM--uqrajqoTUEcVyc>

**BACKGROUND:**

On January 3, 2022, the Biden-Harris administration announced an [action plan for a fairer, more resilient](#) meat and poultry supply chain. Of the approximately \$800 million available at USDA, a significant investment could be made to support the development and expansion of Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing infrastructure in Indian Country. What should that look like? What do you need?

USDA seeks to consult with Tribal Leaders and hear from Tribal enterprises on new funding opportunities to *Expand independent processing capacity* and *Support workers and the independent processor industry*. This announcement builds on a July 2021 [Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy](#) to create a fairer, more resilient, and more dynamic economy.

**PROPOSED AREAS FOR TRIBAL FEEDBACK:**

1. What might a **nationwide integrated tribal processing infrastructure** look like?
2. What is your experience with **bottlenecks** to meat, poultry, seafood, and other food processing?
3. What types of meat, poultry, or seafood **processing is your nation pursuing or seeking to pursue**?
4. **Where is your tribe at in developing or managing** a meat, poultry, or seafood processing facility?
5. **What technical assistance and workforce training** would be helpful to facilitate these processing activities?
6. What **workforce challenges and benefits** have you experience in this arena?

7. How is the USDA **inspection process** working for you?
8. Would your tribe and tribal producers most benefit from a **fixed location or mobile processing** facility?
9. What are the **main areas in which you need funding** to be successful in the meat, poultry, seafood, and other food processing?
10. What types of financing, including **loan or grant**, would best support your operation's need and management structure?

#### **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:**

USDA seeks to consult with Tribal Leaders and hear from Tribal enterprises on new funding opportunities across the following areas:

#### ***Expand independent processing capacity***

- **Increase competition and create more options for producers and consumers in the near-term by jump-starting independent processing projects that will increase competition and enhance the resiliency of the food supply chain.** This new processing capacity will build momentum in a currently concentrated market. For example, 50 beef slaughter plants owned by just a handful of companies currently process nearly all the cattle in the United States. USDA will provide gap financing grants totaling up to \$375 million for independent processing plant projects that fill a demonstrated need for more diversified processing capacity.
  - USDA will publish a Request for Proposals for Phase I of this initiative this Spring. Phase I will invest approximately \$150 million to jump-start an estimated 15 projects, focused on deploying financial support for projects with the greatest near-term impact. USDA will deploy an additional \$225 million to support additional projects in Phase II, which will open in Summer 2022. USDA will also ensure these funds truly expand capacity outside the largest meat and poultry processors, funding only independent operations.
- **Strengthen the financing systems for independent processors.** USDA will work with lenders to make more capital available to independent processors that need credit. To address the credit access gap, USDA will deploy up to \$275 million in partnership with lenders that will, in turn, provide loans and other support to businesses at rates and on terms that increase access to long-term, affordable capital. USDA will solicit applications from potential partners by Summer 2022, with an initial focus on lenders that provide financing in underserved communities.
- **Back private lenders that invest in independently owned food processing and distribution infrastructure.** From cold storage to specialized equipment, building a more distributed and resilient food system requires independent producers to have access to food processing and distribution infrastructure that enables them to move their product throughout the supply chain. To assist in the financing of this infrastructure, USDA has [deployed \\$100 million](#) in American Rescue Plan funds, to make more than \$1 billion in guaranteed loans available immediately. Applications for these guaranteed loans will be accepted until funds are expended; more information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

### *Support workers and the independent processor industry*

- **Build a pipeline of well-trained workers and support safe workplaces with fair wages.** New and expanded meat and poultry processing facility capacity will create new job opportunities in rural communities. Building a well-trained workforce and ensuring that meat and poultry processing jobs are safe requires dedicated attention and investment. USDA will dedicate \$100 million to support development of a well-trained workforce, safe workplaces, and good-paying, quality jobs by working closely with partner organizations, including labor unions, with expertise in workforce development and worker health and safety.
- Promote innovation and lower barriers to entry via publicly accessible expert knowledge. Meat and poultry processing is a complex and technical sector that requires strict adherence to a host of environmental, food safety, and worker safety requirements. Creating new business models that support both workers and producers is similarly complex and time-intensive. At the same time, processors need access to new and emerging innovative practices and technologies. USDA will invest an estimated \$50 million in technical assistance and research and development to help independent business owners, entrepreneurs, producers, and other groups, such as cooperatives and worker associations, create new capacity or expand existing capacity.
- Provide \$100 million in reduced overtime inspection costs to help small and very small processing plants keep up with unprecedented demand. With bipartisan support in Congress, USDA [is reducing](#) the financial burden of overtime and holiday inspection fees for small and very small poultry, meat, and egg processing plants, by 30 percent and 75 percent respectively, which provide farmers and ranchers with local alternatives to process livestock and poultry.
- In addition to the above investments from the American Rescue Plan, USDA has made \$32 million in grants to 167 existing meat and poultry processing facilities to help them reach more customers by becoming Federally inspected through the [Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grants Program](#). With this grant funding, meat and poultry processing businesses can cover the costs for improvements, such as expanding existing facilities, modernizing processing equipment, and meeting packaging, labeling, and food safety requirements needed to achieve a Federal Grant of Inspection under the Federal Meat Inspection Act or the Poultry Products Inspection Act, or to operate under a state's Cooperative Interstate Shipment program. These changes will allow these facilities to serve more customers in more markets. An additional round of funding for this program will be made available through a forthcoming Request for Applications.

A link to the full White House statement is available here: [FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Action Plan for a Fairer, More Competitive, and More Resilient Meat and Poultry Supply Chain | The White House](#)

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