STRATEGIES FOR GRANT FUNDING COMMUNITY-BASED, HOLISTIC FOOD SECURITY WORK

William "Billy" Conners Grants Coordinator



Agenda

- Introduction
- Why Pursue Federal and State Agricultural Grants?
- *De-mystifying* the Grant Process
- Preparing your Organization for Future Grant Opportunities

Why Pursue Federal Agricultural Grants?

- USDA Strategic Plan (FY22-FY26)
 - Strategic Goal 4: "Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans"
 - Food Security is one of six priorities designated federal agricultural funding.
- At least 5 or more recurring + pilot grant programs intended to fund non-profits every year.
 - Some programs have award rates of <u>30% or greater!</u>
- Millions (\$) in funding available to support additional staffing, operational supplies, contractors, administrative costs and more.



NAVIGATING FEDERAL AND STATE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

De-mystifying Programmatic Language

Grant Listings – Key Points

- 1. Find the RFA/NOFO/RFP Document(s)
- 2. Identify Due Dates
- 3. Identify Eligibility and Project Requirements
- 4. Identify Scoring Criteria/Rubric and Priority Points
- 5. Follow the program's desired application format

NOFO/RFA/RFP: Identify Basic Information



First Page(s):

Due Date

Basic Requirements

Opportunity Number

Program Summary

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program

MODIFICATIONS: 10/24/2023 – This RFA has been modified from the original announcement. Edits are indicated using track changes and red font so the public/potential applicants can identify the changes within the solicitation. Edits appear on pages: 1, 2, 7, 9, and 23

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 30, 2023 November 6, 2023 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$4,800,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD \$25,000 - \$400,000 RANGE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-CFP-009982

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.225

The Council is authorized under the National Trails System Act (the Act) and	1. Approve meeting minutes: 2. Discuss implementation of the	an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
	comprehensive plan for the PNT; and	Dated: January 10, 2024.
Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The	3. Discuss and identify future PNT	Cikena Reid,
purpose of the Council is to advise and make recommendations to the Secretary	Advisory Council activity. The agenda will include time for	USDA Committee Management Officer.
of Agriculture, through the Chief of the	individuals to make oral statements of	[FR Doc. 2024-00785 Filed 1-16-24; 8:45 am]
Forest Service, on matters relating to the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail	three minutes or less. Individuals wishing to make an oral statement	BILLING CODE 3411-15-P
is described in the Act. MTES: One virtual half-day meeting will	should make a request in writing at least three days prior to the meeting date to	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
e held on February 13, 2024, 10 a.m.– n.m., Pacific standard time (PST).	be scheduled on the agenda. Written comments may be submitted to the	Rural Business-Cooperative Service
Written and Oral Comments: Anyone wishing to provide virtual oral	Forest Service up to 14 days after the meeting date listed under DATES.	[Docket No. RBS-23-BUSINESS-0026]
omments must pre-register by 11:59 om, PST on February 6, 2024, Written	Please contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, by	Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Value-Added Producer Grants for
ublic comments will be accepted up to	or before the deadline, for all questions related to the meeting. All comments,	Fiscal Year 2024
11:59 p.m. PST on February 6, 2024. Comments submitted after this date will be provided to the Forest Service, but	including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and	AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.
the Council may not have adequate time	are available for public inspection and	ACTION: Notice of funding opportunity.
to consider those comments prior to the	copying. The public may inspect	SUMMARY: The Rural Business-
meeting.	comments received upon request.	Cooperative Service (RBCS or the
All council meetings are subject to	Meeting Accommodations: The meeting location is compliant with the	Agency), a Rural Development (RD)
cancellation. For status of the meeting	Americans with Disabilities Act, and the	agency of the United States Department
prior to attendance, please contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER	USDA provides reasonable	of Agriculture (USDA), announces
INFORMATION CONTACT.	accommodation to individuals with	acceptance of applications under the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG)
ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held	disabilities where appropriate. If you are	program for Fiscal Year (FY)2024.
virtually via Zoom or the internet and	a person requiring reasonable	subject to the availability of funding.
the public may join using the link	accommodation, please make requests in advance for sign language	This Notice is being issued prior to the
posted on the PNT Advisory Council	interpretation, assistive listening	FY 2024 appropriations act to allow
meetings web page: https://	devices, or other reasonable	Applicants sufficient time to leverage
www.fs.usda.gov/detail/pnt/working-	accommodation to the person listed	financing, prepare and submit their
together/advisory-committees/ ?cid=fseprd505622. Council information	under the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	applications, and give the Agency time
and meeting details can be found at the	CONTACT section, or contact USDA's	to process applications within FY 2024
following website: https://	TARGET Center at [202] 720-2600	Based on FY 2023 appropriated fundin the Agency estimates that
www.fs.usda.gov/detail/pnt/working-	(voice and TTY) or USDA through the	approximately \$30 million will be mad
together/advisory-committees/	Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.	available for FY 2024, Successful
?cid=fseprd505622 or by contacting the	Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other	applications will be selected by the
person listed under FOR FURTHER	than English.	Agency for funding and subsequently
INFORMATION CONTACT.	USDA programs are prohibited from	awarded to the extent that funding may
Written Comments: Written comments	discriminating based on race, color,	ultimately be made available through
must be sent by email to jeffrey.kitchens@usda.gov or via mail	national origin, religion, sex, gender	appropriations. Applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred
(i.e., postmarked) to Jeff Kitchens, 63095	identity (including gender expression),	developing their applications.
Deschutes Market Road, Bend, OR	sexual orientation, disability, age,	DATES: Electronic applications e-filed
97701. The Forest Service strongly	marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance	through https://www.grants.gov must h
prefers comments be submitted	program, political beliefs, or reprisal or	filed by 11:39 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) of
electronically.	retaliation for prior civil rights sctivity.	April 11, 2024.
Oral Comments: Persons or	in any program or activity conducted or	Complete paper applications must b
organizations wishing to make oral comments must pre-register by 11:59	funded by USDA (not all bases apply to	submitted by close of business on Apri
p.m. PST, February 6, 2024, and	all programs). Remedies and complaint	16, 2024 in the USDA RD State Office
speakers can only register for one	filing deadlines vary by program or	of the State where the project is locate
speaking slot. Oral comments must be	incident.	Paper applications must be postmarke
sent by email to jeffrey.kitchens@	Equal opportunity practices in	and mailed, shipped or sent overnight hand carried or emailed by this date.
usda.gov or via mail (i.e., postmarked)	accordance with USDA's policies will be followed in all appointments to the	Late applications are not eligible for
to Jeff Kitchens, 63095 Deschutes	Council. To ensure that the	grant funding under this Notice.
Market Road, Bend, OR 97701.	recommendations of the Council have	ADDRESSES: This funding announceme
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff	taken into account the needs of the	will also be announced on
Kitchens, Designated Federal Officer	diverse groups served by USDA,	www.grants.gov. Electronic application
(DFO), by email at jeffrey.kitchens@	membership shall include to the extent	are to be submitted through

duals with demonstrated ent minorities, women, th disabilities USDA is to the USDA RD State Office located in

Example 1: Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program

Example 2: Value-Added Producer Grant Program

NOFO/RFA/RFP: Identify Eligibility, Project Requirements

B. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria below for **Planning Project applications**, listed in priority order of importance to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of people with low incomes through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities with low incomes in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;

Example 1: Eligibility Requirements

(i) Planning grants. A planning grant is used to fund development of a defined program of economic planning activities to determine the viability of a potential value-added venture, specifically for paying a qualified consultant to conduct and develop a feasibility study, business plan, and/or marketing plan associated with the processing and/or marketing of a valueadded agricultural product.

(ii) Working Capital Grants. This type of grant provides funds to operate a value-added project, specifically to pay the eligible project expenses directly related to the processing and/or marketing of the value-added products

Example 2: Project Types

<u>Control-F to Find:</u> Eligibility Match Requirements Program Priorities

Acceptable Project Types

NOFO/RFA/RFP: Identify Scoring Criteria

- Every <u>Federal</u> Grant Program is required to disclose its evaluation and/or scoring criteria.
- READ BETWEEN THE I INFS!
- Consider Priority Points, Funding Baskets, Awarding Agency's Desired Project Types.

Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria below for Planning Project applications, listed in priority order of importance to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

- 1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of people with low incomes through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities with low incomes in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers:
- 2. How significant are the food security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project; is there an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs; How specifically will the community named in this description benefit from the proposed project;
- The appropriateness of the goals, objectives and outcomes of the project and how these will be achieved to invest in building the capacity of the applicant and its partners in food security efforts and policies. Proposed project activities are designed to address one or more of the following outcomes, which will be given equal weight: (i) Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system; (ii) Support the development of entrepreneurial projects; (iii) Innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; (iv) Long-term activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations; or (v) Develop new resources and strategies to help reduce food insecurity in the community and prevent foods insecurity in the future.
- 4. The relevance of the organization's experience that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. Applicant organizations demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in communities with low incomes or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in outreach to low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard; and
- 5. The timeline for accomplishing project goals, objectives and outcomes is realistic and achievable

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria for Community Food Projects below, listed in priority order of importance, to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. The appropriateness of the goals, purposes, and outcomes of the project and how these goals will be achieved to invest in building the assets of the community, and the capacities of the applicant and its low-income partners. Evidence that members of communities with low incomes are engaged in planning and implementing solutions to advance food security in their community

2924 Federal Register / Vol. 89, No. 11 / Wednesday, January 17, 2024 / Notices

along with a justifiable basis for these projections. See the application template for more information. All http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/ state-offices. Fax submittals will not be accepted. USDA RD State Offices should template for more information. All Applicants must reference and summarize third-party data and other information that specifically supports value-added projects; discuss the value-added process being proposed; identify the potential markets and distribution channels; address the value to be added to the raw commodity through the value-added process: provide the cost be contacted if there are any questions about eligibility or submission uirements. Applicants should ntact USDA RD State Offices well in advance of the application deadline to discuss the project and to ask any questions about the application process. to the raw commodity through the value-added process; provide the cost and availability of inputs, indicate the Applicant's experience in marketing the proposed or similar product; provide business financial statements; and, supply any other relevant information that supports the visibility of the project. Working capital Applicants should demonstrate that hasso outcomess will E. Application Review Information 1. Criteria. The Agency will only core applications in which the Applicant and project are eligible, which are complete and sufficiently responsive to program requirements, and in which the Agency agrees on the likelihood of financial feasibility for working capital requests. Applications will be scored in accordance with the procedures and criteria specified in 7 CFR 4284.942, and with tiered scoring demonstrate that these outcomes will result from the project and include supportable projections of increase in producers, and of jobs resulting from the maximum number of points Planning grant Applicants should describe the expected results, and the reasons supporting those expectations. Points will be avanded as follows: CFR 4284.942, and with liered scoring thresholds as specified below. For each criterion, Applicants must show how the project has merit and why it is likely to be successful. The justification for each criterion must be included in the each criterion must be included in the body of the application, including summarizations of any fossibility studies, and business and marketing plans. Scoring information must be rewill identifiable in the application 7 rewill identifiable in the application 7 CER 4280-942(a). If Applicants do not address all parts of the criterion, or do not sufficiently communicate relevant modes information, the application will (1) b bonn we arrive a structure in the application does not address the criterion. (2) 1 to 5 points will be awarded if the application does not address each of the following: technological feasibility, operational efficiency, profitability, and a structure in actionability. operational efficiency, profibility, and overall economic sustainability. (3) 6 to 12 points will be awarded if the application and disease technological profibility, and overall economic sustainability, that does not reference third-party information that supports the success of the project. (4) 14 to 22 points will be awarded if the application addresses technological profibility, and overall economic sustainability, which is supported by project information, the application will score lower. The VAPG is a competitive program and, therefore, scoring will be score lower. The VAPG is a competitive program and, Hernforn, scoring will be prepared and, Hernforn, scoring will be responses. Simply addressing the criteria will not gamme higher access. The total maximum number of points that can be avareded for an application is 100. For this Notice, the total consideration for finding is 50 points. The Agency application toolkit provides additional instructions to help you to respond to the criteria below. profitability, and overall economic sustainability, which is supported by third-party information demonstrating a secondabilitheoid of success. If 11 christian and the support of the support addressed, supported by third-party information demonstrating a high likelihood of access. (b) Qualifications of grouper personnel dynamics and information of the support physical support of the support of the physical support of the support of the information and the support of the support information with the responsible for managing and completing the proposed (a) Nature of the proposed venture (graduated score 0-30 points). For both planning and working capital grants, Applicants must discuss the technological feasibility of the project, as well as operational efficiency. as well as operational efficiency, profitability, and overall economic sustainability resulting from the project. Applicants must also demonstrate the potential for expansion of the customer base for the agricultural commodity or managing and completing the propos tasks in the work plan, including the roles and activities that owners, staff, value-added product, and the expected value-added product, and the expected tasks in the work plan, including the roles and activities that orwares, staff, or the start structure of the start structure and the structure of of the raw agricultural commodity to the may perform, and show that these project. Working capital Applicant individuals have the necessary autifications and expertise, including of bosh task will result from the project. those hiered to do market or tessibility

analyses, and/or to develop a business operations plan for the value-added westure. Applications must include the qualifications of these individuals are applications of the set of the set of the project managers), as well as those individuals responsible for conducting the various individual tasks in the work individuals responsible for conducting the various individual tasks in the work additional to be hired for the project resultability of any consultants or other professionals to be hired for the project availability of any consultants or other professionals to be hired for the project in multiple VAC projects. It staff or consultants have not been selected at the time of application, specific. consultants have not been selected at the time of applications, specific descriptions of the qualifications required for the optimism to be the demonstrate the strong credentials, education, capabilities, experience, and availability of project personnal that education and the strong credentials, equivalence and the strong credentials than those that demonstrate less potential for access in these areas. Foints will be avaried as follows: built advected the criterion. (2) I to 4 points will be awarded if you do
(2) I to 4 points will be awarded if
qualifications and experience of all staff (2) 1 to 4 points will be avarded if qualifications and experience of all staff qualifications and experience of all staff qualifications of unfilied positions are too provided.
(3) 10 to 1 points will be avarded if due to the staff of the experience relevant to the project.
(3) 10 to 14 points will be avarded if ordering the staff of the staff of the credentials and/or experience, and variability indicating a reasonable in the staff of the staff of the staff or the staff of the staff of the staff or the staff of the credentials of the staff of Providence, near-same and three-party providence and the proprietance can receive a maximum of 1p optimis. Multiple producer applications can receive a maximum of 1p optimis. Commitments to the project will be evaluated based on the number of named and documented independent producers currently involved in the producers currently involved in the producers. (1) Sole Proprietor Applicant (botto commerciproducers Applicant) (botto Applicant) (New Link is cases where Applicant) (New Link is cases where

NOFO/RFA/RFP: Application Format

USDA Dynamic Forms

OR

"Create-your-own" Templates

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM AND LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM

2024 PROJECT NARRATIVE FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS NOT For Turnkev Application Projects

This form is mandatory for all Parmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) project type applications, EXCEPT for the "Turnkey Marketing and Promotion" and "Turnkey Recruitment and Training" applications. The Turnkey applications are full their respective Turnkey robust Parametike Form and, vanisable at the program website. Theroughly review the applicable FMPP or LFPP Request for Applications (RFA) Jedgres completing this form. This form must be attached in it's original form as a fillable PDP is the application package within Grantage with

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Must match box 8 of the SF-424.		
Organization Name		
Email Address:		
Phone Number:		
Fax:		
Mailing Address		
Street:		
City:	State:	Zip:
AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIO	N REPRESENTATIVE (AOR)	
This person is responsible for signing a	y documentation should the grant be awarded. M	Must match box 21 of the SF-424.
Name:		
Email Address:		
Phone Number:		
Fax:		

5.2.4 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Required. Applicants MUST prepare and submit a project narrative that include the six sections below and clearly describes the objectives and goal, type of activities, applicable outcomes indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The Project Narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed thirty (30) 8.5 x 11 pages. The Project Narrative must be submitted as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachments Form" on the application package. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting the application to Grants.gov, make sure no tracked changes, mark-up edits, or comments are visible.

The supporting documents in the subsequent sections do not count against the page limit for the Project Narrative.



PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Preparing For New and Recurring Money

Develop Established, **"Shovel-Ready"** Concepts

How can you best demonstrate to grantors that your project is ready and able to utilize federal money?

Proof-of-concepts

Implementable models

Sustainability after grant funding

Grants = Investments in your organization

Partnerships, Partnerships, **Partnerships!**

How will your organization collaborate with other key players to maximize the impact of grant funding?



Stay Up-To-Date On Grant Opportunities

To be early is to be on-time, to be on time is to be late...



Q&A?

Contact

Njda.grants@ag.nj.gov

