Conservation Innovation Grants Caribbean Area

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
Conservation Innovation Grants Caribbean Area
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)
No. USDA-NRCS-PR-CIG-24-NOFO0001376

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: Announcement for Program Funding for NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2024 – Caribbean Area

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: *USDA-NRCS-PR-CIG-24-NOFO0001376*

Assistance Listing: This program is listed in the Assistance Listings (previously referred to as the Catalog of Federal Financial Assistance) on Sam.gov under

10.912, Environmental Quality Incentives Program,

which can be found at*: https://sam.gov/content/home*.

The System for Award Management (SAM) is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners in support of the contract awards, grants, and electronic payment processes.

Notice of Funding Opportunity Summary

NRCS is announcing the availability of Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Caribbean Area Program funding to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applications are accepted from eligible entities (Section C) for projects carried out in the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico (PR) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI)). A total of up to $500,000 is available for the Caribbean Area CIG competition in FY 2024. All non-Foreign, non-federal entities (NFE) and individuals are invited to apply, with the sole exception of federal agencies. Projects may be between one and three years in duration. The maximum award amount for a single award in FY 2024 is $100,000.

For new users of Grants.gov, see Section D. of the full Notice of Funding Opportunity for information about steps required before submitting an application via Grants.gov. **Completing all steps required to start an application can take a significant amount of time, plan accordingly.**

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on *May 15, 2024* For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-

4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

For inquiries specific to the content of the NFO requirements, contact the federal awarding agency contact (section G of this NFO). Please limit questions to those regarding specific information contained in this NFO (such as dates, page numbers, clarification of discrepancies, etc.). Questions related to eligibility, or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

A webinar for CIG applicants is scheduled for April 9, 2024 at 9 a.m. Atlantic Standard Time. Information on how to participate in the webinar will be posted to the HYPERLINK website. Applicants are encouraged to visit the Caribbean Area CIG website to learn more about the CIG program.

The agency anticipates making selections by *June 30*, 2024 and expects to execute awards by *July 30, 2024*. These dates are estimates and are subject to change.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The estimated funding floor for this opportunity is *$25,000* and the estimated funding ceiling is *$100,000*. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. These numbers refer to the total agreement amount, not any specific budget period.

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this NFO is Federal financial assistance. Grants 101 Training is highly recommended for those seeking knowledge about Federal financial assistance. The training is free and available to the public via https://www.cfo.gov/resources/federal-financial-assistance-training/. It consists of five modules covering each of the following topics: 1) laws, regulations, and guidance; 2) financial assistance mechanisms; 3) uniform guidance administrative requirements; 4) cost principles; and 5) risk management and single audit. FPAC agencies also apply Federal financial assistance regulations to certain non-assistance awards (e.g., non-assistance cooperative agreements).

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1) Legislative Authority

The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program is authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP, including CIG, to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). Projects may be funded from two separate authorizations: the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA).

2) Overview

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies in conjunction with agricultural production in the United Caribbean Areas and its territories. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) to agricultural producers, into government technical manuals and guides, or to the private sector. CIG generally funds pilot projects, field demonstrations, and on-farm conservation research. On-farm conservation research is defined as an investigation conducted to answer a specific applied conservation question using a statistically valid design while employing farm-scale equipment on farms, ranches or private forest lands.

The CIG program is not a NRCS producer financial assistance program. Project outcomes should benefit a region of a state or the entire state and not just benefit one farm.

IRA funds may be used and NRCS will prioritize using IRA funds for projects that will implement climate-smart agriculture conservation activities which are targeted to assist agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forestland owners in directly improving soil carbon, reducing nitrogen losses, or reducing, capturing, avoiding, or sequestering carbon dioxide, methane, or nitrous oxide emissions, associated with agricultural production.

Example project types utilizing IRA funds could include:

- Integrating a conservation strategy to reduce tile-drainage nitrate-nitrogen losses from cropping systems and evaluating the agronomic, economic, and environmental benefits compared to traditional management practices. Remote sensing, in-season, site-specific precision nitrogen management technology will be utilized to optimize crop nitrogen management. Cover crops will be used to take up residual nitrogen in the soil after harvest.
- A systems approach to input use efficiency crop management will be demonstrated from on-farm row crop production areas. Smart Nitrogen (N) management practices demonstrated include fertigation, use of enhanced efficiency fertilizers, tools for

prediction of in-season N rate, as well as variable rate N, water and seed. Demonstrations of irrigation scheduling tools and best herbicide management will be included. Social and economic studies of barriers to adoption of the practices demonstrated will be included.

- Apply compost and incorporate the results into a decision support tool and create best management practice guides. Assess environmental, economic, and social benefits to compost application across a variety of soil types, compost types/rates, and production systems. Measure the agronomic, social, and environmental impacts of compost on soil carbon, water holding capacity, and overall soil health.

NRCS is committed to the success of our nation's Historically Underserved (HU) producers, businesses, and partners. HU producers play a vital role in securing a healthy agricultural economy for our country and are momentous leaders in protecting, enhancing, and sustaining our valuable natural resources. NRCS encourages proposal submissions from entities that represent or are composed entirely of HU producers. See Section C. 2 (c) for eligibility information and Section D. 4 (g) for application and submission information.

3) Innovative Conservation Projects or Activities

CIG funds the development and field testing, on-farm research and demonstration, evaluation, or implementation of:

- Innovative approaches to incentivizing conservation adoption, including market-based and conservation finance approaches; and
- Innovative conservation technologies, practices, and systems.

Projects or activities under CIG must comply with all applicable federal, tribal, Caribbean Area, and local laws and regulations throughout the duration of the project; and

- Use a technology or approach that was studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success;
- Demonstrate, evaluate, and verify the effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of natural resource conservation technologies and approaches in the field;
- Adapt and transfer conservation technologies, management, practices, systems, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduce proven conservation technologies and approaches to a geographic area or agricultural sector where that technology or approach is not currently in use.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area using an EQIP contract for an established conservation practice standard are ineligible for CIG funding, except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation.

4) Caribbean Area Component

For FY 2024, NRCS accepts proposals that address one or more of the Caribbean Area priorities listed below.

Proposed projects must be performed in *the Caribbean Area (PR and USVI)*

CIG Priorities for FY 2024:

For FY 2024, NRCS is only accepting proposals that address one or more of the listed priorities:

- **Priority 1: Water Quality**
- **Priority 2: Water harvesting on dry lands**
- **Priority 3: Climate-Smart Agriculture**
- **Priority 4: Conservation in Urban Agricultural Systems**
- **Priority 5: Invasive Species Control**
- **Priority 6: Innovative Local Scale Waste Management Systems**

Each proposal must clearly identify a primary priority.

Priority 1: Water Quality

Water Quality in the Caribbean continues to be a priority resource concern as most major public water sources have been identified with some level of impairment with agriculture and confined animal operations being identified as pollution sources in some of them. Water quantity uncertainties caused by climate change also exacerbate the need for clean water sources in the islands.

Proposals submitted under this priority must propose an innovation to help farmers, ranchers, or foresters to improve water quality as it leaves their farm. Proposals must address one or more of the following sub-priorities:

i. **Field testing of conservation practices** to assess the benefits and/or negative effects on surface and groundwater quality and the practical implementation techniques in the Caribbean. (e.g. Infiltration ditch wastewater treatment effects on surface and groundwater quality).
ii. **Community-level or landscape-level strategies** that help streamline water quality solutions and management plans at the community or watershed scale including community and/or professional capacity building techniques in the territories.
iii. Development of innovative or repurposed **planning tools, guidance documents, or conservation practices implementation scenarios** that help producers manage water in their farms and encourage filtration, infiltration or other effects that affect water quality.
iv. **Field testing of innovative production techniques** that improve water quality and quantity, promote wetland creation, and enhance or improve management.

v. **Evaluation** of enhanced nutrient management technologies, such as demonstration of new cover crop mixes and conservation cover varieties that scavenge nutrients, innovative water management approaches and equipment and technology not readily available in the market for precision agriculture and variable rate application in the Caribbean.
vi. **Leveraging of community resources** that increase cooperation among producers (e.g., water quality automized monitoring systems, joint conservation system, farmer cooperatives) to address and monitor water quality and the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Priority 2: Water harvesting on dry lands

Weather patterns in the Caribbean Area are extremely varied from areas receiving near 200 average annual inches of rain in the rainforest to 40 average annual inches of rain in the USVI where long-term severe drought (D2) experience in 2023 greatly affected agricultural producers. Limited rainfall and limitation of ground water makes crop growing particularly challenging in the USVI. Innovative water harvesting and soil water recharging techniques are a priority considering the need to find alternative sources of water for agricultural applications in the USVI dry lands and drought periods.

Proposals submitted under this priority must propose an innovation to help farmers to improve access to irrigation water in a dry context. Proposals must address one or more of the following sub-priorities:

i. **Field testing of conservation practices** to assess the potential of harvesting water and retaining groundwater within a small farm context (e.g., condensation techniques for irrigation purposes, greywater harvesting, etc.).
ii. Development of innovative or repurposed **planning tools, guidance documents, or new conservation practices implementation scenarios** that help producers have access to water from alternative techniques on dry areas to have more water sources for crop irrigation specially during drought periods in the Islands' context.
iii. **Evaluation** of enhanced water harvesting on dry lands technologies, such as demonstration of new condensation techniques to be replicated in the Caribbean scale and accessibility context.
iv. **Leveraging of community resources** that increase cooperation among producers (e.g., area-wide water harvesting plans) to address and monitor potential water harvesting and soil water recharging application and the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Priority 3: Climate-Smart Agriculture

3a: Producer adaptation to extreme weather events

As climate change intensifies, agricultural producers are facing new obstacles to producing food and fiber while maintaining or improving their natural resource base. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and their indirect effects – such as emergence of new pests, disease outbreaks, increases in soil salinity, severe changes in rainfall patterns, increase water levels/flooding potential, and reduced availability of accessible fuels – have created new challenges.

Proposals submitted under this priority must propose an innovation to help farmers, ranchers, or foresters react and adapt in the short term to the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events and related impacts caused or exacerbated by climate change. Proposals must address one or more of the following sub-priorities:

i. Development of innovative or repurposed **planning tools, guidance documents, or conservation practices implementation scenarios** that help producers manage increased intensity and frequency of weather extremes or other events such as flooding, drought, flash drought, and decreased water supplies.
ii. **Field testing of innovative production techniques** that give producers tools to adapt to extreme weather, such as demonstration of new crop varieties designed to better withstand increased drought or flooding; innovative water management approaches; or energy efficient agricultural operation tools and equipment not readily available in the market.
iii. **Field testing of conservation practices** or implementation scenario validation to assess their benefits/weaknesses in their practical implementation in the Caribbean and the potential implication of climate change in their design requirements. (eg, *Soil Carbon Amendment or Amending Soil Properties With Lime*)
iv. **Community-level or landscape-level strategies** that help multiple local producers respond to extreme weather by exploring solutions at the community or geographic scale.
v. **Communication tools and strategies that help producers interpret local climate related risks** so that science, metrics, and general facts can be applied to on-farm operations. For existing communication tools and strategies, applicants may propose field testing with producers to validate or update the already developed materials with new data and tools to provide producers with more reliable data (rainfall projections, evapotranspiration levels, flood plain level increases, etc). Training approaches should not be the focus of proposals.

3b: Building resilience through emerging production systems for climate smart agriculture

The resilience of traditional agricultural operations in parts of the Caribbean is being challenged by increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events caused and exacerbated by climate change. Innovative management systems and practices, including non-traditional crops or unconventional management practices requiring fewer

inputs/resources, are needed to offer producers options for increasing the resiliency of their operations into the future.

Proposals submitted under this priority area will be focused on developing new production systems that provide long-term, lasting solutions to help landowners build resilience to climate change, increase soil health and maintain viable businesses. Proposals must address one or more of the following sub priorities:

i. **Introduction of new or enhanced cropping systems or non-traditional crops** (e.g., perennial plantings or rotations such as agroforestry, systems that integrate perennial grains into rotation, or transition to xeric farming)
ii. **Introduction of new or enhanced grazing management systems** (e.g. include the integration of diverse forages including grasses and legumes population in grasslands/livestock operation.)
iii. **Introduction of new or enhanced forestry management systems** to increase the use of trees and/or shrubs as bioremediation in high erodible soils. (e.g. to reduce soluble nutrients for high erodible areas).
iv. **Improved operation management**, such as innovations in fertilizer management that show potential to mitigate greenhouse gases. (e.g. innovations and/or validations of new fertilizing technologies, such as Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizers (EEFs), which will promote reduction salt-based fertilizer usage, that are identified as a source of most nutrient contamination in soil and water)
v. **Leveraging of community resources** that increase cooperation among producers (e.g., shared grazing or water storage and management systems) to increase resilience of individual operations.
vi. **Integration of traditional, cultural or indigenous farming knowledge** into cropping systems, such as multi-story cropping, three sisters cropping system and introduction of native plants.

All projects awarded under this priority **must include at least a partial budget analysis to demonstrate how management changes and conservation improvements impact a farmer's bottom line**. Applicants are encouraged to use farmer surveys to gauge the intangible advantages and drawbacks of producer implementation of climate-smart agricultural innovations.

Applicants are encouraged to **measure the climate mitigation effects of activities implemented through their projects** (e.g., potential decrease in carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, or methane). Applicants who choose to propose measurement or modeling of greenhouse gas impacts as part of a project must use quantification methodologies that align with the USDA report titled *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Agriculture and Forestry: Methods for Entity-Scale Inventory*. Applicants are encouraged to **include evaluations demonstrating the full extent of project benefits to both producers and the environment**, such as a full life cycle analysis or nutrient cycling measurements.

Priority 4: Conservation in Urban Agricultural Systems

It is estimated that 83 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas. In recent years, demand and supply of urban farming has increased along with interest in local foods and resilient food systems. With this increase in urban food production comes conservation challenges and opportunities.

Proposals submitted under this priority must address the conservation of natural resources on private lands within urban areas and small agricultural systems.

Proposals must address one or more of the following sub priorities:

i. **Demonstration of the natural resource impacts or economic benefits** (e.g., air and water quality indicators, groundwater or aquifer recharge, runoff management/reduction, community health indicators like food access metrics, or reduction in related urban planning and infrastructure costs for maintaining agricultural land) that result from increased conservation implementation in urban agricultural systems.
ii. **Projects that show conservation benefits with the implementation of alley cropping, multistory cropping, urban forestry, or integrated/mixed systems**. Examples include increasing wildlife and pollinator populations through improvements in urban forests, expanded use of water resources by combining aquaculture with plant production, integrating new crops to decrease nutrient and pesticide needs, increase water catchment and management, and improved air quality through expansion of urban agriculture.
iii. **Development and evaluation of the effectiveness of innovative management systems or emerging and innovative technologies** that can improve efficiency and effectiveness of natural resource conservation on urban farms within the Caribbean settings.
iv. **Interpreting existing conservation practices** (i.e., conservation practices typically used in rural agricultural landscapes) that may not render effectively to smaller and urban production systems. Projects within this sub-priority may:

    - **demonstrate how to improve conservation planning in urban or small acreage settings, or**
    - **demonstrate how to modify or adjust conservation practices in urban or small acreage settings.**

Proposals submitted under this priority must address a natural resource concern and not be solely focused on urban agricultural production issues. In addition, proposals may not qualify if they address urban agriculture on public lands or natural resource issues under the purview of municipal regulations (e.g., wastewater treatment).

Priority 5: Invasive Species Control

Combating invasive species is a complex, multi-scale challenge for the Caribbean producers and landowners. For example, the increase in herbicide-resistant invasive

weeds in tropical settings, forest pests, and unwanted overgrow has resulted in some producers reverting to conventional practices that are energy and chemical intense, consequently losing ground on the expansion of no-till farming and other sustainable agricultural methods. Grasslands are being lost to woody encroachment and invasives such as Prosopis, and Mimosa, and *Paspalum fasciculatum* (Venezolana grass), impacting productive lands, changing nutrient and hydrological cycles, and increasing risks to wildlife. Invasions are exacerbated by the impacts of climate changes such as drought, changes in weather patterns, or extreme weather events, altering fire and drought cycles throughout the Caribbean.

This priority area addresses invasive species on private agricultural, grassland, and forest landscapes. The development of lasting solutions is challenging and depends on the invasive species present and the local habitat, among other factors. In some cases, engaging community groups involving both public and private land managers is essential to successfully limit or manage invasions. In other instances, private landowners and producers need options to detect and fight invasives on their own land, such as awareness and scouting, new spray programs, innovative rotations, or new cultivars that outcompete or suppress weeds.

Proposals submitted under this priority area **must propose innovations for private landowners to more effectively prevent, detect, or combat invasive species to maintain healthy and productive working lands**. Innovations should help prevent, control, or eliminate pest invasions or help restore land and prevent reinvasion. Each project must fit into at least one of the following three sub priorities:

i. **Innovative strategic approaches** - Approaches should be designed to have a high probability of eradication potential and be strategically designed to remove risk of species reintroduction, chemical reduction, and targeting refuge locations and vector pathways.
ii. **Reimagination of existing strategies** - Proposals that combine or integrate new ideas with existing tactics to address invasive species with high transferability regionally
iii. **Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)** - Proposals that support proactive invasive species management, particularly addressing invasive species with broad ecological niches that are expanding their range due to climate change.

Successful proposals are likely to create or enhance effective collaborations between private landowners and public land managers or community groups to collectively address invasive species in a joint watershed or region. Please note, species that already have dedicated NRCS funding, such as feral pigs will not be considered.

Priority 6: Innovative Local Scale Waste Management Systems

Agricultural operation's waste management systems are particularly challenging in the Caribbean considering the waste management infrastructure and land application

limitations. Innovative waste management practices that reduce and reuse manure and farming operation by-products are a priority considering waste land limitations, reduce labor force access and uncertainties caused by climate change in the islands.

Proposals submitted under this priority must propose an innovation to help farmers, ranchers, or foresters to manage their farming by-product, animal waste or natural animal mortality in the Caribbean context. Proposals must address one or more of the following sub-priorities:

i. **Field testing of conservation practices** to assess the benefits and/or negative effects on farming management of waste and the practical implementation techniques in the Caribbean. (e.g. Small scale anaerobic digesters, non-conventional farming by-product/waste/mortality composting techniques, etc).
ii. **Community-level strategies** that support waste management at a regional level including Comprehensive Waste Management Plans at the community or area scale including community and/or professional capacity building techniques in the territories.
iii. Development of innovative or repurposed **planning tools, guidance documents, or new conservation practices implementation scenarios** that help producers manage waste and/or mortality in their farms reducing management and land requirements of typical waste management technique in the Islands.
iv. **Evaluation** of enhanced waste management technologies, such as demonstration of new waste/animal mortality treatment or composting that can be replicated in the Caribbean scale and accessibility context.
v. **Leveraging of community resources** that increase cooperation among producers (e.g., joint area-wide waste management system, farmer cooperatives) to address and monitor waste treatment and application and the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Proposed projects must be performed in Puerto Rico and/or US Virgin Islands

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding

a. Estimated Funding

NRCS Caribbean Area expects to award approximately *$500,000* through this opportunity. However, the agency retains the discretion to award a larger or lesser amount.

b. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be between one and three years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of *September 1, 2024*.

c. Number of Awards

The agency expects to make *5* award(s).

2. **Type of Award**

   a. **Type of Federal Award**
   The agency plans to award grant agreement(s) pursuant to this opportunity.

   b. **Procurement Contracts**
   The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this NFO.

   c. **Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications**
   Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants**

   Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted, or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.206(d)).

   All U.S. non-Foreign, non-Federal entities and individuals are eligible to apply for projects carried out in the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and/or US Virgin Islands). US Federal agencies are not eligible to apply to this opportunity or impart their work to non-federal portion of the budget.

   Individuals that are business owner/operators cannot apply as individuals.

2. **Other**

   Any award made pursuant to this NFO will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as “partnerships” or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner” parties. In all but exceptional cases, it must be reflected in the award as an awardee/sub awardee relationship.

   An applicant organization may submit more than one application for different projects or proposing different approaches. In the case of applications submitted as

revisions or corrections to a previously submitted application under this NFO, the agency will consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline.

Awards made pursuant to this NFO are not Farm Bill incentive contracts; therefore, the awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation in 16 USC Chapter 58. However, any agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a project awarded under this NFO must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Part 12 and 7 CFR Part 1400 and have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed award period.

a. CIG Specific Eligibility

All CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers that meet EQIP's eligibility requirements listed in 7 CFR § 1466.6(b)(1) through (3):

- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 CFR Part 12).
- Be a person, legal entity, joint operation, Indian tribe, or native corporation who is engaged in agricultural production or forestry management or has an interest in the agricultural or forestry operation as defined in 7 CFR Part 1400.
- Have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed contract period.

b. EQIP Payment Limitation and Duplicate Payments

The following provisions apply to CIG funding:

- CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements. These grant agreements are not EQIP contracts; thus, CIG awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation found at section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-7, which imposes a $450,000 payment limitation for all payments made to persons or legal entities under an EQIP contract entered into between FY 2019 and FY 2023.
- All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR § 1466.6(b)(1) through (3) noted above. In addition, all CIG payments are subject to the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation. All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must have an AGI that does not exceed $900,000. If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify and maintain records showing that participating producers receiving payments using CIG funding meet the EQIP eligibility and AGI requirements. Section 1704 (a)(3) of the 2018 Farm Bill state the Secretary may waive the AGI limit on a case by case basis, if the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected as a result of such waiver. CIG grantees may request waivers once their project commences.

- Section 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-2, prohibits duplicative payments. Accordingly, direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which an individual or legal entity has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation program (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program, EQIP, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Stewardship Program). If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify that payments to producers using CIG funding are not duplicative.

c. Historically Underserved (HU) Producers

The CIG program provides special consideration to projects substantially involving or benefitting Historically Underserved producers. Historically Underserved producer is defined for this opportunity at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers.

For the FY 2024 Caribbean Area CIG Classic component, at least 10 percent of the total funds available may be set aside for proposals that benefit HU producers. To be eligible for the set aside, applicants must be:

i. A historically underserved producer;
ii. A community-based organization comprised of, representing, or exclusively working with historically underserved producers on a CIG project;
iii. An entity developing an innovative conservation approach or technology specifically targeting historically underserved producers' unique needs and limitations; or
iv. An 1890 or 1994 land grant institution (7 U.S.C. 3222 *et seq.*), Hispanic-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1101a), or other minority-serving institution, such as an historically Black college or university (20 U.S.C. 1061), a tribally controlled college or university (25 U.S.C. 1801), or Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1059g).

To compete for set-aside funds, the applicant must signal their intent by following the instructions in Section D. 4 (g). These applicants must meet all other requirements of this announcement, including addressing at least one CIG priority listed in this notice.

Funds not awarded through this set aside will revert to the pool of non-set aside funds.

d. NRCS Involvement in CIG Projects

The Conservation Innovation Grants program is a competitive program run by the NRCS, therefore NRCS staff should not be involved in the development of

proposals in any way and NRCS should not appear in the application. Therefore, any letters of support from NRCS and any involvement of NRCS in a proposal will be viewed as a conflict of interest and these proposals will be removed from the competition. NRCS staff should not be actively included in the development of any proposal such as asking their direct opinion, advice or feedback directly of the proposal or acquiring a support letter. NRCS staff are allowed to give applicants information on other NRCS programs or basic administrative information regarding the CIG program.

All technical assistance required to carry out a CIG project is the responsibility of the grantee.

NRCS designates an NRCS employee as a technical contact for each grant award. Technical contacts provide oversight activities during the project such as site visits, reviewing performance reports, financial reports, and audits to ensure that standards, objectives, terms, and conditions for the projects are accomplished. Technical Contacts also evaluate project results and work with grantees on any relevant end-of-project efforts to disseminate project results. NRCS employees, however, are not involved in project development or should be substantially involved in carrying out grant activities.

3. Match

This NFO requires applicants to match at least 50 percent of total project costs (includes Federal and non-Federal). For example, if an applicant requests $50,000 in CIG funding, at least $50,000 in non-federal cost-share or matching funds must be committed by the applicant.

Applicants applying under and qualifying for the HU set aside are eligible for a reduced project match of one-third of the total project budget, or 50 percent of the Federal request. For example, an HU-qualifying entity requesting $250,000 in Federal CIG funding would need to provide at least $125,000 in matching funds. In this example, the total project costs would equal $375,000, the federal portion would equal $250,000 and the matching funds would equal $125,000.

Applications that do not include the required level of matching will be ineligible for award. Matching funds may be committed by the applicant, project partners, or both. Match may be achieved with contributions of cash, services, materials, equipment, or third-party in-kind contributions. Recipients with unrecovered indirect costs may also use those to meet matching obligations. Funds from another Federal award cannot be used as match except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to match. Additional details about matching funds can be found at 2 CFR 200.306. Refer to Section D of this NFO for information about any required submittals related to match requirements. While the pace of match may vary throughout the award period, the agency will actively monitor match levels as it receives payment requests to ensure

the total match requirement is met by the award periods of performance end date. Additional details about matching funds are located at 2 CFR 200.306.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. How to submit an application

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (see Section D.2.). Submissions must be received by the time and date due. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation for submission made.

2. Information for New Users of Grants.gov

a. Overview

While a Grants.gov account is not required to download an NFO and related documents, it is required to submit an application. If your organization has never submitted an application via Grants.gov, please be aware that there are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can submit an application. **Completing those steps can take a significant amount of time, plan accordingly.**

b. Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.
For assistance with the registration process, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support, available 24/7, at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Organizations must complete all steps to register (**steps i. through v. below**). Complete organization instructions are included on Grants.gov here: https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration/

Although creating a Grants.gov account online can be completed online in minutes, SAM registrations may take several weeks. Therefore, organizations should begin the process early to ensure they have sufficient time to complete registration and meet required application submission deadlines.

Individuals (those submitting on their own behalf) are not subject to the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or SAM requirement and may begin with step iii., Create a Grants.gov Account, listed below.

c. Steps to Register

i. *Obtain a UEI:* All entities applying for funding must have a UEI issued by SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI in the data entry field labeled "UEI" on the SF-424 form.

ii. *Register with SAM:* All organizations (entities) must register with System for Award Management (SAM) to apply online through Grants.gov. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Part of the SAM registration process includes designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC). **The EBiz POC plays an integral part in the organization's Grants.gov registration and application process.** The individual in that role must authorize all other roles in Grants.gov. For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration/

iii. *Create a Grants.gov Account:* From the Grants.gov webpage (https://www.grants.gov/), click "Register" in the top right-hand corner and follow the on-screen instructions.

iv. *Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account:* A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant submitting on their own behalf. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations, you can have a profile for each organization under one Grants.gov account. In such cases you can log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant profiles. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI for the organization in the UEI field. If you are an individual applicant submitting on your own behalf, you do not need a UEI to add the profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration/add-profile

v. *EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:* After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, you must establish roles for individuals in the organization. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role is critical; it gives an individual permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. Without this role, the organization cannot submit any applications. The request for role assignment will be routed to the organization's EBiz POC for approval. Once approved, the AOR can submit an application online. For more detailed instructions about creating a EBiz POC authorized profile on Grants.gov, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration/ebiz-poc-authorizes-profile-roles

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration/track-profile-role-status

d. Electronic Signature

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role. **This step (step c.v. above) is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

e. Workspace

Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace. An applicant can start an application in Workspace and return to work on it later within Workspace.

Applicants using unreliable internet connections should be aware that the process of completing the Workspace can take some time. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time to prepare and submit the application before the package closing date.

f. Apply for an Opportunity

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview/

If the Apply button in the opportunity is not active (greyed out), the user does not have the appropriate permissions or has an incomplete applicant registration. For additional information, refer to https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/2023/06/08/unlock-the-mystery-of-the-gray-apply-button-four-scenarios/#:~:text=The%20Apply%20button%20will%20be,to%20view%20the%20close%20date.

i. Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

ii. Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the status of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question

mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

- Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

  NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at https://www.grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility

- Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

- Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and UEI. Once it is completed, the information will transfer (i.e., prepopulate) to the other forms.

iii. Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted 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 close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

iv. Track a Workspace Submission: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-training

3. Electronic Application Package

Applicants interested in submitting an application in response to this NFO must submit it via Grants.gov; the agency will not accept applications submitted via email or any other method. No exceptions will be made for applicants experiencing issues with Grants.gov unless a known system wide Grants.gov issue is identified, in which case the deadline will be extended for all applicants, as appropriate. Applicants are urged to submit early to the Grants.gov system.

For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support, available 24/7, at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

Address to Request Application Package
All information necessary to apply for this opportunity is included in the Grants.gov opportunity announcement.

4. **Content and Form of Application Submission**

The agency may choose not to consider applications that fail to comply with the required content, format, and page limits, or those that are incomplete. Do not submit video files or files larger than 10MB. File names of attachments must be limited to 50 characters, may not include special characters (e.g., &,–,*,%,/,#), periods (.), blank spaces or accent marks, and must be unique (i.e., no other attachment may have the same file name). An underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name. Attachments must **NOT** be password protected.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the documents below.

a. **Application Form**

(Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) See Instructions for Completing SF-424 located in the attachments section.

b. **Project Narrative**

Each page must be numbered and have one-inch margins. The text of the project narrative must be single spaced and typed in a standard typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier) with no smaller than 12-point font. The project narrative must not exceed 17 pages, including a mandatory 1-page Cover Page, described below. This page limitation applies to the project narrative only.

The project narrative must cover all activities proposed to be carried out with both the Federal and non-Federal matching funds. Activities related but beyond the scope of the CIG project budget should be described in the background section only.

The project narrative must include the following information, in this order:

i. Cover Page (1 page maximum)

Applications that fail to provide a cover page will be rejected in the first stage of screening.

On a single page, provide the following information in order outlined (See Attachment B for a template):

- The applicant entity name.
- The project title.
- The project duration in years.
- The amount of Federal funding requested.
- The amount of non-Federal cost-share committed (match).
- The name, phone number, and email address for the applicant's technical contact (usually the project director), this person is considered the primary contact for the project by NRCS.
- The name, phone number, and email address for the applicant's administrative contact (usually an individual in a grants office or project manager working under a project director).
- The geographic location of the project.
- The Caribbean Area priority that is addressed by the project. List only one priority from Section A. 4. If the proposal addresses more than one priority, **you must select a primary priority** for your application to be considered under.
- An estimated number of participating producers expected to be involved with the project.
- Include a declaration if the project is competing for the historically underserved set aside (see Section D. 4 (g) for further instructions and qualifications).
- A brief description (1–3 sentences) of the innovation that is the focus of the project—please be concise.
- If relevant, list any NRCS practice standards that this project could potentially inform (if multiple exist, select the top five).

ii. Project Abstract (1 page maximum): Provide a concise project summary (in nontechnical language) that captures the issue or problem the project will address, the project goal, the innovative approach to be employed (including the role of participating partners), the anticipated project results and key deliverables, and the predicted impact to conservation more broadly.

iii. Project goal/objectives: state the main goal of the project and then outline the supporting objectives to reach this goal. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART). Provide supporting information that describes the innovative nature of the project and how this innovation could advance the field of conservation. If the project is addressing innovation of an NRCS conservation practice standard, or proposing a new standard, state this explicitly and identify the standard.

iv. Project background: Describe the issue or problem driving the need for the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been

studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success. Be sure to give enough details to demonstrate to the reviewers why this innovation is compelling.

v. Project design and methods: . Describe clearly the design and methodology of the project. Describe details of the processes that will be used, scientific tests that will be conducted, tools that will be developed, any sampling that will be performed, and background on why these choices were made, especially if different from convention. We encourage new grant writers to consider using a logic model approach to improve clarity of this section. For more on the logic model, see the University of Wisconsin's publication "Developing a logic model: Teaching and training guide" (Ellen Taylor-Powell and Ellen Henert, February 2008).

vi. Project evaluation: Describe the methodology used to evaluate the project and describe how results will be quantified. It should be clear to the reviewers how project objectives relate to the evaluation.

vii. Project deliverables/products: Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that directly relate to the project objectives, outcomes, and benefits that will allow NRCS to monitor project progress and approve payments. The proposal must include a set of technical deliverables that reflect the performance and broader applicability of the project.

In addition to project-specific deliverables, CIG grantees are responsible for:

a) Participating in at least one event (e.g., conference or workshop) during the grant period where the grantee presents on the activities of the project.
b) A final factsheet.
c) Closing event—this could be a webinar, field day, training event, etc., used to disseminate project results.

viii. Project outcomes and benefits: Identify the expected results and outcomes of the project and the anticipated impact on conservation and society and any other benefits derived from the project. Forecast the lasting impact of project results. Identify project beneficiaries, (i.e., agricultural producers) by type, region, or sector; historically underserved producers and communities; rural communities; and/or municipalities.

ix. Geographic location and size of project or project area: Identify the geographic location and the estimated size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types, demographics) of the project area. Maps are recommended.

x. EQIP-eligible producer participation: Estimate the number of EQIP eligible producers involved in the project and describe the extent of their involvement. Describe whether these producers have been identified, and if not yet

identified clearly articulate the process that will be carried out to identify and attract producer participation. If competing in the set aside for historically underserved projects, include an estimate on the number of historically underserved producers scheduled to participate in the project.

xi. Project action plan and timeline: Provide a bulleted list of project actions and deliverables relative to timeframes and associated project milestones through to project completion. Applicants should develop their timelines based on a project start date of September 1, 2024.

xii. Project management: Give a description of how the project will be organized and managed, including a list/description of project partners. Include a description of how communication will be structured within the project team to ensure effective project management.

xiii. Technology transfer: Describe how the results will be transferred to producers and stakeholders through communications and outreach activities.

xiv. Graphics, including pictures, charts, graphs, and similar items count towards the 17-page maximum.

The following documents do not count toward the above stated page limit but are required unless otherwise noted.

c. References, Bibliographies, and Citations, if applicable.
Upload the references, bibliographies, and citations under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

d. Team Qualifications

Provide brief descriptions of key technical and administrative personnel qualifications, their experience managing Federal awards, and their anticipated contributions to the project. *Do not include resumes or curriculum vitae* (CVs). Each individual's description should be no more than a ½ of page. Upload the team qualifications under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

e. Assessment of Environmental Impacts.

If implementation of the proposal is anticipated to have physical, chemical, or biological impacts on the environment, please describe the impacts and their extent. Upload the Assessment of Environmental Impacts under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity

Application Package. The description of the potential environmental impacts must address both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. The length of the description should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the natural environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Natural environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other resources protected by law, regulation, executive order, and agency policy. NRCS may choose not to approve funding for projects that may result in unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.

See Section F. 2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements for specific details as it relates to environmental impacts.

f. Declaration of previous CIG projects involvement and past performance.

If the applicant has previously received a CIG award (either at the National or State levels), list the following for each award and give a short summary of the completed project's results and impact. If the project is ongoing, provide the anticipated results. Each description should be no more than a half page:

- Project title
- CIG agreement number
- Award funding amount
- Year of award expiration

Upload the declaration under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

g. Historically Underserved Producers (2 page maximum), if applying for the HU set aside.

An applicant seeking to apply to the HU set aside must identify as such on the cover page of their application as well as identify which HU category (Section C. 2 (c) i - iv) applies to their proposal. These proposals will be assessed by an additional set of criteria (Section E. 3) and therefore require additional information to assess their proposals. These criteria should be addressed in this section of the project application. Please see sections on eligibility (Section C. 2 c) and match (Section C. 3) as well if you are applying to the HU set aside.

Upload the historically underserved producers set aside under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

h. Standard Form (SF)-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs

Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 2 should reflect the applicant's matching funds. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF-424A located in the attachments section. Refer to Section D of this opportunity for information regarding indirect costs. Errors in the SF-424A regarding classifying costs may be negotiated after selection.

i. Budget Narrative and Table

In a separate document titled "Budget Narrative," explain and justify all requested budget items and costs. The budget narrative must be in text format as well as contain a detailed table (further guidance and an example can be found in Attachment C and Attachment G). It should be readable and on letter-size (8.5 x 11 inch), printable pages. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the reviewers can readily understand what expenses are incurred to support the project each year. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. The pages included as the budget narrative to not count toward the page limit. Errors in the budget narrative regarding classifying costs may be negotiated after selection. Refer to the Budget Narrative Guidance located at the end of this document regarding procurement standards when including contracts for goods or services. **Sole-source contracting is prohibited without proper justification.** See Procurement Standards located at 2 CFR 200.317-327.

i. Build America, Buy American. "Buy America" preference applies to Federal financial assistance awards that include construction components, even if it is funded by both Federal and non-Federal funds under the award. Subawards should conform to the terms and conditions of the Federal award from which they flow. A Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to a construction project. Refer to the General Terms and Conditions for additional information: https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html

ii. Indirect Costs Recovery. If requesting indirect costs, provide the calculation specifying the amounts used in applying the base (the base specified in the applicable rate agreement) by the applicable rate. The calculation can be displayed in different formats but must capture the

components (i.e., amounts used in determining the base and the rate applied to the base).

A. To be eligible to recover any indirect costs under a Federal award, recipients must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f) and described below. For-profit entities (if eligible to apply) must obtain a NICRA from their cognizant agency. USDA will not accept an indirect cost agreement that is not a NICRA, for example, those negotiated or approved by the Defense Contract Audit Agency or the Defense Contract Management Agency.

   A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application (see section D(3)(n)). Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. For applicants negotiating a NICRA, provide a copy of the indirect cost rate proposal submitted to the cognizant agency. See section D(3)(n) below for how to submit a NICRA as part of the application.

B. Any non-Federal entity (except State and local governments that receive more than $35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) 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 percent de minimis indirect cost rate, simply indicate in your budget narrative that the recipient elects to use the de minimis rate. Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means 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). MTDC excludes 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 only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

C. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, 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 once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

D. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency.

iii. Indirect Costs Limitations.

A. Applicants not subject to a statutory limitation, which have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA.

B. Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

C. Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

iv. Match.

Matching must be committed at the time of application submission. The budget narrative must show the amounts and sources of match (including both cash and in-kind contributions). All matching funds must be identified in the SF-424A of the application.

For third-party contributions, a letter of commitment is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor, (2) the name of the applicant organization, (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) the dollar amount of the contribution, (5) a description of the work that will be done that clearly lines up to the budget narrative, and (6) a State statement that the contributor will pay the contribution no later than the end of the award period. The agency may conduct reference checks to ensure that organizations identified are supportive and involved with the project. Letters should be addressed to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact in Section G of this NFO and uploaded under Other Attachments (listed separately under Optional Forms) in Grants.gov. An example commitment letter can be found in Attachment D.

Applications without signed written commitments covering the full value of the matching contribution are deemed incomplete.

Refer to the Budget Narrative Guidance located in the attachments section for information about making contract vs. subaward determinations.

j. Grants.gov Lobbying Form

Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant, or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the State statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

k. Applicant Contact Information

Provide contact information for the roles identified in the Applicant Contact Information template, located in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity. Upload the contact information under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

l. Statement of Current and Pending Support

Submit a Statement of Current and Pending Support for each key personnel who will participate in the project. For your convenience, a template is available for your use in in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity. Upload the State statement under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

m. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, must be submitted **only** if you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying. See 2 CFR 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

n. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if applicable

If charging indirect costs using a NICRA (including for match), upload the NICRA under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

o. Letters of Support

Letters of support are not required but are welcomed. Letters of support are provided by individuals or entities who want to express their enthusiasm for the project. Letters of support can also be written by partners or sub awardees to confirm their intent to participate in the project. NRCS staff

cannot be written into the proposal nor should NRCS letters of support be included.

Letters of support must be signed by the authorized organizational representative of the organization and must include the project name and name, address, and telephone number of the organization. The agency may conduct reference checks to ensure that organizations identified are supportive of the project. Upload letters of support under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

p. Letters of Intent

Letters of intent are not required and should not be submitted.

q. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

In accordance with 2 CFR 400.2, applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in, or a tangible personal benefit from, an applicant considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a Caribbean Area, local government, or Indian tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of the relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving a related organization.

Applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to the USDA awarding agency or pass-through entity. Include the name of the individual, the name of the entity with which the individual has a conflict, the nature of the financial or other interest, the value of the interest, a description of how the interest relates to your application. Upload disclosures under Other Attachments (listed separately under Optional Forms) in Grants.gov. **If no conflict exists, no submission is required.**

r. Post Award Documentation: N/A

s. Unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Entities must obtain a UEI and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. A description of each is below. Entities are strongly encouraged to apply early for their SAM registration.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: To register, go to: https://www.sam.gov. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding UEI or SAM issues.

5. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence

All applications must be received by Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) by the established due date in the Key Dates section of the Summary Information of this NFO. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov.

Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date will be considered late and will not be considered for funding. An application is considered on time at 11:59.59 pm ET, but it is late at 12:00 am ET.

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process; be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive:

- an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application.

- an email with the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number serving as proof of timely submission.

When the agency successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will also provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application. Proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any issues. See Section D. 2. for Grants.gov contact information.

Applicants using unreliable internet connections should be aware that the process of completing the Workspace can take some time. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time to prepare and submit the application before the package closing date.

6. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." When completing the SF-424, check block c, "Program is not covered by E.O. 12372."

7. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law and approved in writing by the agency in advance of incurring such costs:

a. Profit and management fees. Any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award related direct and indirect costs only.
b. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project.
c. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award, including time spent applying for this opportunity.
d. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto.
e. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives.
f. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities.
g. Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee.
h. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land and for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life. See 2 CFR 200.439 for additional information.
i. Meals may be charged to an award only if they are necessary for the performance of the project. For instance, meals (normally only lunch) that are a necessary part of the costs of meetings and conferences (i.e., required attendance and continuity of a meeting), the primary purpose of which is the

dissemination of information, are allowable, as are costs of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category. They are considered to be per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established travel policies subject to statutory limitations or in accordance with Federal travel policies.

j. Costs normally charged as indirect costs may not be charged as direct costs without proper justification and agency approval. Proper justification includes documentation that the costs meet the criteria for allowability (see 2 CFR 200.403). Examples of such costs include rent, utilities, depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.
k. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work. All costs must be reasonable to be allowable (2 CFR 200.403), and 2 CFR 200.404 defines a reasonable cost as one if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. Salaries determined not to be reasonable compared to the level of work will be unallowable.
l. Software produced by non-domestic entities. Project budgets must not include costs (both Federal costs and match) for software development by non-domestic entities if it will be utilized by the Federal government or hosted on Federal systems.
m. Refer to Section D for applicable indirect cost restrictions, if any.

This list is not exhaustive. For additional information please refer to 2 CFR Part 200, subpart E, Cost Principals.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria may be eliminated from competition. In that event, the agency will send notification of elimination to the applicant. The agency intends to select and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to select without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions it identifies. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised

application by a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Proposals that pass the initial screening are then evaluated using a two-part process:

- Technical peer review panels composed of subject matter experts evaluate the proposals. Proposals are evaluated against the CIG Proposal Merit Criteria. The technical peer review panels forward their recommendations to the Caribbean Area Director.
- The Caribbean Area Director makes the final award selections based on the recommendations of the peer review panels.

Technical peer review panels will be nominated by the approving official. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Caribbean Area Director. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division.

2. Merit/Technical Criteria

The technical peer review panels use the following criteria, using a 100-point scale, to evaluate applications. These criteria will be applied to the whole project, including federal and non-federally funded parts:

a. Purpose, Approach, and Goals (25 points)

i. The purpose of the project is clearly explained, the goals and objectives are clearly stated, and the rationale is explicit for why the innovative approach or technology is needed.

ii. The design and implementation of the project is based on sound methodology and demonstrated technology;

iii. The project outcomes are stated, measurable, and likely to be achieved; and

iv. Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered, and a significant level of improvement will be achieved.

b. Innovative Technology or Approach (25 points)

i. The project is regionally or locally innovative to the criteria for innovation (see section A. 3; and

ii. The application describes the compelling need for the innovative technology or approach.

c. Project Management (25 points)

i. Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable;

ii. Project staff has necessary technical and administrative expertise;

iii. The budget is adequately explained and justified, and expenses are allowable, allocable, and reasonable; and

iv. Proposal includes robust partnership with entities that can substantially assist with delivery of project outcomes with clear project management structure and team communication laid out.

d. Benefits and Transferability (25 points)

i. An evaluation plan is documented that clearly lays out how project work will be assessed, and the results transferred:
ii. There is potential for producers and landowners to use or participate in the innovative technology(s) or approach(s);
iii. There is potential for organizations to benefit from the innovative approach or methods, including (if appropriate) the development of materials such as technical standards, technical notes, handbooks, technology tools, etc.;
iv. There is potential to transfer the approach or technology to a broader audience or to other geographic areas or agricultural sectors; and
v. There is potential for successful transfer, through planned project activities, to historically underserved producers and communities; rural communities; and/or municipalities.

Partner matching contributions are considered an eligibility criterion as described in Section C 3 of this notice and therefore are not listed in the merit criteria.

3. Historically Underserved Criteria

To confirm eligibility for the HU set aside and understand the project impact to HU communities, proposals competing for the HU set aside are evaluated against additional criteria to assess the extent to which such proposals will successfully engage and benefit HU producers. The HU criteria are:

a. Description. The HU community served by the project is identified and the proposal includes a clear explanation of how the project will address any existing or historical barrier(s) that has/have impacted the participation or success of the identified HU community.
b. Commitment. The applicant and partner organizations demonstrate a strong commitment to serving HU producers. The organization or its members or partners have a history of working with HU producers or have explained why the team is well suited to working with HU producers.
c. Capacity Building. The proposal includes a clear description of how the project is designed to impart lasting benefits on the HU community.
d. Community Involvement. The designated HU community is involved in project processes or decision making.
e. Measurement. Indicators and metrics of success are included that specifically measure the project's benefits to HU producers.

4. Administrative and Risk Criteria

Notice of selection after merit/technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following notification of selection for funding (see Section F), the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division's staff conducts a final administrative and risk review of those applications. The administrative review includes, but is not limited to, a check to ensure that NFO

requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted via Grants.gov by the established deadline), and proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and necessary. During this process, it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs).

In addition, to comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.206, the agency will follow, at a minimum, the risk review process described below (additional steps may be taken).

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 USC 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

An applicant must meet the following standards to be considered for award:

a. **Financial Stability**

   The applicant maintains an adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis in order to successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.

b. **Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200**

   The applicant has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track federal funds. It has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.

c. **History of Performance**

   If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards (items a. through c. above). The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR 200.208.

5. **Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)**

   a. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity

and performance system accessible through SAM, the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS. FAPIIS is a federal database intended to serve as a government-wide source of information about the prior performance and compliance of federal procurement contractors, grantees, and cooperative agreement holders (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

b. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered.

c. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.206, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Reimbursement of pre-award costs require written agency prior approval. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized official for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the award decision via email correspondence.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and the General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website: https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html.

Projects performed pursuant to this opportunity may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If applicable, NRCS must work with awardees to complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. In addition, prior to any ground-disturbing activities related to NRCS funding, the awardee must work with NRCS staff to complete an environmental evaluation (EE) related to those activities. Awardees may be required to prepare or pay for preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), should any environmental review find that an EA or EIS is required.

In addition, a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 review and consultation by an NRCS Caribbean Area office with consulting parties (such as the pertinent PR and/or USVI Historic Preservation Officer and federally recognized Indian Tribes) may be required prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact cultural resources. NHPA Section 106, its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and other related authorities, require Federal agencies to determine if a project has the potential to cause an effect to historic properties and, if so, if they are adverse and how the effects may be addressed. The NHPA review and compliance in accordance with Section 106 of NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 must be completed by NRCS and applicants may be required to pay for any cultural resource surveys needed for NRCS to assess project effects. More information on the applicant's role in the NHPA Section 106 process can be found on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website at https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/section-106-applicant-toolkit.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is also required for projects that may affect listed or proposed species or destroy or modify critical habitat. The ESA consultation in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 402 must be completed by NRCS prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact species or habitat protected under the ESA. More information on the Section 7 consultation process can be found at https://www.fws.gov/service/esa-section-7-consultation.

3. Patents, Inventions, and Copyrights

Allocation of rights to patents, inventions, and copyrights shall be in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty-free license for federal use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically. With regard to copyright, the grant recipient may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under an award. USDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.

All tools produced must meet the accessibility of Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) requirements as specified in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

(P.L. 105-220). Specifically, subsection 508(a)(1) requires that when the federal government procures EIT, it must allow federal employees and individuals of the public with disabilities comparable access to and use of information and data that is provided to federal employees and individuals of the public without disabilities. All EIT that is subject to the 36 CFR 1194 standards will have a Section 508 acceptance test and will be validated upon acceptance. All maintenance for EIT that requires upgrades, modifications, installations, and purchases will adhere to the Section 508 standards and 36 CFR 1194. Get in touch with the administrative contact of this NFO with specific questions with regard to the applicability of this section.

4. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website: https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than $500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2 CFR Part 200 —Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any sub awardees must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170 unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

Reporting details are included in the fully executed grant agreement. Reporting will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, annual financial status reports, and final reports.

5. Audit Requirements

As required in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. States, local governments, Federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. FPAC agencies also require for-profit organizations that meet the expenditure threshold to comply with the single audit requirements and submit their audit reports directly to the funding agency.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this opportunity, contact the following individual with the opportunity number in the subject line:

Name: *Alberto Aviles*
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center

Email: *alberto.aviles@usda.gov* with a copy to NFO.FPAC@USDA.GOV

To protect the integrity of the competitive process, applicants must not contact agency program staff with questions.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact identified above via email with the opportunity number in the subject line.
2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.
3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

   Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

4. **Government Obligation**

   The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

5. **National Component**

   The USDA NRCS CIG program has two components – the "National Competition" and the "Caribbean Area Competition." This announcement is for the "Caribbean Area Competition" component. More information about the National Competition is available here.

6. Any award made pursuant to this NFO may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and 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.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at https://www.usda.gov/oascr/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Contents

1. SF-424 PREPARATION 1
2. SF-424A PREPARATION 9

ATTACHMENT 1: SF424A SAMPLE

If applying to an opportunity on Grants.gov, complete the forms in the opportunity package. For all other applications, use the forms available on Grants.gov: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

FBAC-BC GRANTS AND AGREEEMENTS WEBSITE
https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/apply-to-a-funding-opportunity/index.html

1. SF-424 PREPARATION

Instructions for new agreement applications only. Separate instructions apply to amendments.

Applicants must review these instructions to ensure that the form is completed correctly. This will reduce the likelihood that the form will need to be returned for correction and potentially delay execution of any resultant agreement.

Columns one and two below correlate to the blocks on the Form SF-425. Column 3 includes the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form instructions, and the final column includes FPAC Agency specific guidance to be used to complete the form.

Block	Field Name	SF-424 Instructions (V4.0)	FPAC Agency Guidance
1	Type of Submission	Select one type of submission in accordance with agency instructions. • Pre-application • Application • Changed/Corrected Application - Check if this submission is to change or correct a previously submitted application. Unless requested by the agency, applicants may not use this form to submit changes after the closing date. Required.	Select “Application” if this is the first application submitted. If updating an application recently submitted, choose Changed/Corrected Application.
2	Type of Application	Select one type of application in accordance with agency instructions.	Applicants should generally select “New”. If, however, the applicable Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) allows the

		• New - An application that is being submitted to an agency for the first time. • Continuation - An extension for an additional funding/budget period for a project with a projected completion date. This can include renewals. • Revision - Any change in the federal government's financial obligation or contingent liability from an existing obligation. If a revision, enter the appropriate letter(s). More than one may be selected. A: Increase Award B: Decrease Award C: Increase Duration D: Decrease Duration E: Other (specify) AC: Increase Award, Increase Duration AD: Increase Award, Decrease Duration BC: Decrease Award, Increase Duration BD: Decrease Award, Decrease Duration Required.	submission of renewals or supplements (see section B of the NFO) and the application meets the NFO description of one of these categories, then choose “Continuation or Revision” and the appropriate letter(s).
3	Date Received	Enter date if form is submitted through other means as instructed by the Federal agency. The date received is completed electronically if submitted via Grants.gov. Required.	Not completed by applicant. This is a required field and will be populated automatically by Grants.gov.
4	Applicant Identifier	Enter the entity identifier assigned by the Federal agency, if any, or the applicant’s control number if applicable. Optional.	Optional/not required.
5a	Federal Entity Identifier	Enter the number assigned to your organization by the federal agency, if any. Optional.	Leave blank.
5b	Federal Award Identifier	For new applications, leave blank. For a continuation or revision to an existing award, enter the previously assigned federal award identifier number. If a changed/corrected application, enter the federal identifier in accordance with agency instructions.	Leave blank if you are submitting a new application (item 2). If submitting another type (e.g., renewal or supplement), enter the assigned Award Identifying Number (block 1 on the Notice of Grant and Agreement Award). If submitting a changed/corrected application in Grants.gov, include the Grants.gov tracking number for previously submitted

		Optional.	application.
6	Date Received by State	Leave this field blank. This date will be assigned by the state, if applicable. Optional.	Leave blank.
7	State Application Identifier	Leave this field blank. This identifier will be assigned by the state, if applicable. Optional.	Leave blank.
8a	Applicant Legal Name	Enter the legal name of the applicant that will undertake the assistance activity. This is the organization that has registered with the System for Award Management (SAM). Information on registering with SAM may be obtained by visiting SAM.gov. Required.	This name must be consistent with the name as registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). If the name in SAM is not correct, update it accordingly. If you are applying as an individual, use your legal name as in the Social Security system.
8b	Applicant Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN)	Enter the employer or taxpayer identification number (EIN or TIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization is not in the US, enter 44-4444444. Required.	This number must be consistent with the number in the applicant's SAM registration. If you are applying as an individual, use your Social Security number.
8c	Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Enter the organization's UEI received from SAM. The UEI is a unique 12-character organization identifier. Information on registering with System for Award Management (SAM.gov) may be obtained by visiting the Grants.gov website. Required.	As of April 2022, the SAM-assigned UEI replaces the DUNS. If you are applying as an individual, this field must be 00000000INDV.
8d	Applicant Address	Enter address: Street 1 (required); City (required); County/Parish, State (required if country is US); Province; Country (required); 9-digit ZIP/Postal Code (required if country is US). If +4 does not exist for the address, enter "0000". Required.	This address must be consistent with the address in the applicant's SAM registration.
8e	Applicant Organizational Unit	Enter the name of the primary organizational unit, department, or division that will undertake the assistance activity. Optional.	Not required.
8f	Applicant Contact Information	Enter the first and last name (required), prefix, middle name, suffix, and title. Enter organizational affiliation if affiliated with an organization other than that in 7.a. Telephone	This does not necessarily need to be the person with authority to sign the application. It is a point of contact for agency staff to contact regarding the application.

		number and email (required); fax number. Required.	
9	Type of Applicant 1	Select a minimum of one applicant type or select up to three applicant types in accordance with agency instructions. If “Other” is selected, then specify Other Type of Applicant in text box. A. State Government B. County Government C. City or Township Government D. Special District Government E. Regional Organization F. U.S. Territory or Possession G. Independent School District H. Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education I. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Federally Recognized) J. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Other than Federally Recognized) K. Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organization L. Public/Indian Housing M. Nonprofit N. Private Institution of Higher Education O. Individual P. For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business) Q. Small Business R. Hispanic-serving Institution S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) T. Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs) U. Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions V. Non-US Entity W. Other (specify) Required.	The selection must be consistent with the entity type listed in the applicant’s SAM registration.

10	Name of Federal Agency	Enter the name of the federal agency from which assistance is being requested with this application. This information is pre-populated if submitting through Grants.gov. Required.	Enter the applicable agency if not automatically populated: • FSA-Farm Service Agency • RMA-Risk Management Agency • NRCS-Natural Resource Conservation Service • FBC-Farm Production and Conservation Business Center
11	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number/Federal Assistance Listing and Title a.k.a. Federal Assistance Listing	Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number and title of the program under which assistance is requested, as found in the program announcement, if applicable. This information is pre-populated if using Grants.gov. Required.	If not automatically populated, leave blank.
12	Funding Opportunity Number and Title	Enter the Funding Opportunity Number and title of the opportunity under which assistance is requested as found in the program announcement. This information is pre-populated if using Grants.gov. Required.	If not automatically populated, enter the opportunity number and title. If unknown leave blank.
13	Competition Identification Number and Title	Enter the competition identification number and title of the competition under which assistance is requested, if applicable. These fields are pre-populated by Grants.gov if provided by the federal agency. Optional.	Leave blank.
14	Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.)	This data element is intended for use only by programs for which the area(s) affected are likely to be different from the place(s) of performance reported on the SF-424 Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form. Add attachment to enter additional areas, if needed. Optional.	Leave blank.
15	Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Enter a brief descriptive title of the project. Supporting documents may be attached if specified in agency instructions. Optional.	Enter a concise but informative title for the project (maximum of 200 characters).
16a	Congressional District of Applicant	16a. Enter the applicant’s congressional district. Required.	Enter the Congressional district based on the physical address of the applicant as listed in the applicant’s SAM registration. District numbers can be found at

			http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/.
16b	Congressional District(s) of Program/Project	16b. Enter the primary district affected by the program or project. Enter in the following format: 2-character state abbreviation – 3 characters district number, e.g., CA-005 for California 5th district, CA-012 for California 12th district, NC-103 for North Carolina's 103rd district. If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter "all" for the district number, e.g., MD-all for all congressional districts in Maryland. If nationwide, i.e., all districts within all states are affected, enter US-all. If the program/project is outside the US, enter 00.000. This optional data element is intended for use only by programs for which the area(s) affected are likely to be different than place(s) of performance reported on the SF-424 Project/Performance Site Location(s) form. Attach an additional list of program/project congressional districts, if needed. Required.	District numbers can be found at http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/. If an additional list of program/project congressional districts is to be attached to a Grants.gov opportunity, upload it under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Package.
17a	Proposed Project Start Date	Enter the proposed start date of the project. Required.	If applying in response to a Grants.gov opportunity, refer to section B of the NFO.
17b	Proposed Project End Date	Enter the proposed end date of the project. Required.	If applying in response to a Grants.gov opportunity, refer to section B of the NFO.
18a-g	Estimated Funding	Enter the amount requested, or to be contributed during the first funding/budget period by each contributor. Value of in-kind contributions should be included on appropriate lines, as applicable. If the action will result in a dollar change to an existing award, indicate only the amount of the change. For decreases, enclose the amounts in parentheses. For zero funding, enter 0. Required.	Enter the project's total amount of funding for each category below. These values must be consistent with the values on the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative. Only include amounts for items b. through f. to meet the required cost-share/match, if any, identified in the NFO. a. Federal: enter the amount of Federal funds being requested. b. Applicant: enter cost share/match being provided by the applicant itself. Do not include cost share/match being provided by commitments from other sources; those amounts are to be included in items c., d., and e, as applicable. c. State: enter the amount of any cost share/match

			being provided by a State government entity. d. Local: enter the amount of any cost share/match being provided by a Local government entity. e. Other: enter the amount of any cost share/match being provided by a source other than those listed above. f. Program Income: enter the amount of program income (if any) used for meeting cost share/match requirements (see 2 CFR 200.80 and 200.307). g. Total: This field is automatically calculated. It is the sum of all amounts in the categories (items a. through f.) above.
19	Executive Order 12372	Applicants should contact the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. Select the appropriate box. If "A." is selected, enter the date the application was submitted to the State. Required.	Select the applicable response as to whether or not the application is subject to State review under state laws or procedures. Executive Order 12372 can be found athttps://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html. The Intergovernmental Review Single Point of Contact list can be found at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.
20	Federal Debt Delinquency	Select the appropriate box. This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. Categories of federal debt include but may not be limited to delinquent audit disallowances, loans, and taxes. If yes, include an explanation in an attachment. Required.	No additional instructions
21	Certification and Signature	To be signed and dated by the authorized representative of the applicant organization. Enter the first and last name (required), prefix, middle name, and suffix. Enter title, telephone number, fax number, and email. Fax number is not required. A copy of the governing body's authorization for you to sign this application as the official representative must be on file in the applicant's office. (Certain federal agencies may require that this authorization be submitted as part of the application.) If the application is submitted via Grants.gov, the	If not submitted through Grants.gov, the authorized representative must click the box. and provide either an ink signature or digital signature/digital certificate (cannot be a script font).

		signature of the authorized representative and the date signed are completed upon submission. Required.	

2. SF-424A PREPARATION

Applicants must review these instructions to ensure the form is completed correctly. This will reduce the likelihood that the form will need to be returned for correction and potentially delay execution of any resultant agreement.

SECTION A – BUDGET SUMMARY			
Column	**Field Name**	**Form SF-424A Instructions (V1.0)**	**FPAC Agency Guidance**
1(a)	Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter the name of the activity or function. At least one is required.	FPAC agencies do not require the project budget be broken down into separate programs, functions, or activities on this form. That level of detail, if desired, is reserved for the Budget Narrative which is a related, but separate document. Enter "Federal" in 1(a) and, if cost-share/match is required, enter "Non-Federal" in 2(a). Leave the remaining rows blank.
1(b)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number. At least one is required.	If not automatically populated, leave blank. Leave the remaining rows blank.
1(c-d)	Estimated Unobligated Funds: Federal and Non-Federal	For new applications, leave Column (c) and (d) blank. For each line entry in Columns (a) and (b), enter in Columns (e), (f), and (g) the appropriate amounts of funds needed to support the project for the first funding period (usually a year). For continuing grant program applications, submit these forms before the end of each funding period as required by the grantor agency. Enter in Columns (c) and (d) the estimated amounts of funds which will remain unobligated at the end of the grant funding period only if the federal grantor agency instructions provide for this. Otherwise, leave these columns blank. Enter in columns (e) and (f) the amounts of funds needed for the upcoming period. The amount(s) in Column (g) should be the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). For supplemental grants and changes to existing grants, do not use Columns (c) and (d). Enter in Column (e) the amount of the increase or	Leave all rows of columns (c) and (d) blank.

		decrease of federal funds and enter in Column (f) the amount of the increase or decrease of non-federal funds. In Column (g) enter the new total budgeted amounts plus or minus, as appropriate, the amounts shown in Columns (e) and (f). The amount(s) in Column (go) should not equal the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). Conditionally required.	
1(e)	New or Revised Budget: Federal	For new applications, leave Column (c) and (d) blank. For each line entry in Columns (a) and (b), enter in Columns (e), (f), and (g) the appropriate amounts of funds needed to support the project for the first funding period (usually a year). For continuing grant program applications, submit these forms before the end of each funding period as required by the grantor agency. Enter in Columns (c) and (d) the estimated amounts of funds which will remain unobligated at the end of the grant funding period only if the federal grantor agency instructions provide for this. Otherwise, leave these columns blank. Enter in columns (e) and (f) the amounts of funds needed for the upcoming period. The amount(s) in Column (g) should be the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). For supplemental grants and changes to existing grants, do not use Columns (c) and (d). Enter in Column (e) the amount of the increase or decrease of federal funds and enter in Column (f) the amount of the increase or decrease of non-federal funds. In Column (g) enter the new total budgeted amounts plus or minus, as appropriate, the amounts shown in Columns (e) and (f). The amount(s) in Column (g) should not equal the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). Conditionally required.	Enter the total amount of the Federal funds requested in Row 1, column (e). Leave the remaining rows column (e) blank. This amount must be consistent with the amount in Block 18a of the SF-424.
1(f)	New or Revised Budget: Non-Federal	For new applications, leave Column (c) and (d) blank. For each line entry in Columns (a) and (b), enter in Columns (e), (f), and (g) the appropriate amounts of funds needed to support the project for the first funding period (usually a year).	Enter the total amount of the required Non-Federal cost share/match, if applicable, in Row 2, column (f) and leave the remaining rows of column (f) blank. This amount must be consistent with the total amount of Blocks 18b through 18f of the SF-424.

		For continuing grant program applications, submit these forms before the end of each funding period as required by the grantor agency. Enter in Columns (c) and (d) the estimated amounts of funds which will remain unobligated at the end of the grant funding period only if the federal grantor agency instructions provide for this. Otherwise, leave these columns blank. Enter in columns (e) and (f) the amounts of funds needed for the upcoming period. The amount(s) in Column (g) should be the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). For supplemental grants and changes to existing grants, do not use Columns (c) and (d). Enter in Column (e) the amount of the increase or decrease of federal funds and enter in Column (f) the amount of the increase or decrease of non-federal funds. In Column (g) enter the new total budgeted amounts plus or minus, as appropriate, the amounts shown in Columns (e) and (f). The amount(s) in Column (go) should not equal the sum of the amounts in Columns (e) and (f). Conditionally required.	
1(g)	Total	Total for Row 1(a) – 1(f). If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	This auto-calculates and must be consistent with the total amount in Block 18(a) of the SF424.
5	Totals	Total for each column. IF using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	This auto-calculates. Block 5(g) is the total proposed application budget.
SECTION B – BUDGET CATEGORIES			
6(1-2)	Grant Program Function or Activity 1 - 2	In the column headings (1) through (4), enter the titles of the same programs, functions, and activities shown on Lines 1-4, column (a), Section A. When additional sheets are prepared for Section A, provide similar column headings on each sheet. For each Grant Program, Function or Activity, fill in the total requirements for funds (both federal and non-federal) by object class categories. If using the Budget Information form through Grants.gov, the Grant Program, Function,	The form will auto-populate "Federal" in the heading of Column 1. See the Budget Narrative Guidance https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/apply-to-a-funding-opportunity/index.html for guidance on what types of costs to include in each category. The form will auto-populate "Non-Federal" in the heading of Column 2. See the Budget Narrative Guidance https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-

		or Activity is pre-populated by the Grant Program Function or Activity from column (A) in Section A – Budget Summary. Required.	agreements/apply-to-a-funding-opportunity/index.html for guidance on what types of costs to include in each category.
6(3-4)	Grant Program Function or Activity 3 - 4	In the column headings (3) through (4), enter the titles of the same programs, functions, and activities shown on Lines 3-4, column (a), Section A. When additional sheets are prepared for Section A, provide similar column headings on each sheet. For each Grant Program, Function or Activity, fill in the total requirements for funds (both federal and non-federal) by object class categories. If using the Budget Information form through Grants.gov, the Grant Program, Function, or Activity is pre-populated by the Grant Program Function or Activity from column (A) in Section A – Budget Summary. Required.	Leave all rows of this entire column blank.
6(a)	Personnel	Enter funds required for purpose/column heading from the selected program. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	Refer to Budget Narrative Guidance. This is an attachment to the NFO or is available at https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/apply-to-a-funding-opportunity/index.html.
6(b)	Fringe Benefits		
6(c)	Travel		
6(d)	Equipment		
6(e)	Supplies		
6(f)	Contractual		
6(g)	Construction		
6(h)	Other		
6(i)	Total Direct Charges (sum of 6(a) thru 6(h))	Sum of 6(a) thru 6(h). If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	This auto-calculates.
6(j)	Indirect Charges	Enter the amount of indirect costs. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	Refer to Budget Narrative Guidance, which is included as an attachment to the NFO or is available at https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/apply-to-a-funding-opportunity/index.html .

6(k)	TOTALS (sum of 6(i) thru 6(j))	Enter the total of amounts on Lines 6i and 6j. (This amount is auto calculated if using Grants.gov.) For all applications for new grants and continuation grants, the total amount in column (5), Line 6k, should be the same as the total amount shown in Section A, Column (g), Line 5. For supplemental grants and changes to grants, the total amount of the increase or decrease as shown in Columns (1)-(4), Line 6k should be the same as the sum of the amounts in Section A, Columns (e) and (f) on Line 5. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	Row 6(k) of Columns (1) and (2) will auto-populate; all other columns should be blank. The total must be consistent with the Federal total in Section A (row 5 columns (e) and (f). All costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles. All costs must be allowable (2 CFR 200.403), allocable to the agreement (2 CFR 200.405), and reasonable in amount (2 CFR 200.404).
7	Program Income	Enter the estimated amount of total income, if any, expected to be generated from this project. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	If your project does not expect program income to be generated, leave this blank. Program income (see 2 CFR 200.1) means gross income earned by the non-Federal entity that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance except as provided in § 200.307(f). Program income includes but is not limited to income from fees for services performed, the use or rental or real or personal property acquired under Federal awards, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under a Federal award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and principal and interest on loans made with Federal award funds. This is the amount expected but may not necessarily be what is achievable under a resultant agreement.
SECTION C – NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES			
8(a)	Grant Program Function or Activity 1	Name of the grant program from which funds will be derived. Defaults to the corresponding program name in section A; but may be overwritten if called for by the instructions for this funding opportunity. Required.	This will auto-populate.
8(b-d)	Grant Program Function or Activity 2 - 4	Enter resources provided by the applicant for the selected program. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	Leave blank.

8(e)	(e) Total of Non-Federal Resources for Grant Program sum of line (a) through (d)	Total Sum of 8(b) thru 8(d). Required.	Leave blank.
12(b) thru 12(e)	Total (sum of lines 8-11)	Total for each column. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	
SECTION D – FORECASTED CASH NEEDS			
13	Federal Total for 1st Year	Sum of Federal 1st Quarter – 4th Quarter Forecasted Cash Needs. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	Per agency guidance leave blank.
	Federal Forecasted Cash Needs for 1st Quarter – 4th Quarter	Enter the forecasted cash needs from federal sources for each quarter of the first program year. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	Leave blank.
14	Non-Federal for 1st Year	Sum of Non-Federal 1st Quarter – 4th Quarter Forecasted Cash Needs. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	Per agency guidance leave blank.
	Non-Federal Forecasted Cash Needs for 1st Quarter – 4th Quarter	Enter the forecasted cash needs from non-federal sources for each quarter of the first program year. If not applicable, leave blank. Optional.	Leave blank.
15	TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	Total for each column. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	Per agency guidance leave blank.
	Total Forecasted 1st Year	Total Sum of 1st Year Federal and Non-Federal Forecasted Cash Needs. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Required.	
	Total Forecasted 1st Quarter – 4th Quarter	Total each Quarter Federal and Non-Federal Forecasted Cash Needs. If using electronic form, these numbers are auto calculated. Optional.	Leave blank.
SECTION E – BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT			
16(a)	Grant Program	Name of the grant program from which funds will be derived. Defaults to the corresponding program name in section A; but may be	This will auto-populate.

		overwritten if called for by the instructions for this funding opportunity. Required.	
16(b-d)	First Future Funding Period (year) – Third Future Funding Period (year)	Enter the estimated federal funds that will be required in each of the additional funding years for the selected program. Optional.	Leave blank.
16(e)	Fourth Future Funding Period (year)	Enter the estimated federal funds that will be required in the fourth funding year for the selected program. Optional.	Leave blank.
20	Total (sum of lines 16-19)	Total Sum of Estimated Federal Funds needed for balance of project per year. Auto calculated. Required.	Leave blank.
SECTION F – OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION			
21	Direct Charges	Use this space to explain amounts for individual direct object class cost categories that may appear to be out of the ordinary or to explain the details as required by the Federal grantor agency.	Leave blank.
22	Indirect Charges	Enter the type of indirect rate (provisional, predetermined, final or fixed) that will be in effect during the funding period, the estimated amount of the base to which the rate is applied, and the total indirect expense.	
23	Remarks	Provide any other explanations or comments deemed necessary.	

ATTACHMENT 1: SF424A SAMPLE

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Number: 4040-0006
Expiration Date: 02/28/2022

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Federal		$	$	$ 113,850.00	$	$ 113,850.00
2. Non-Federal					38,500.00	38,500.00
3.						
4.						
5. Totals		$	$	$ 113,850.00	$ 38,500.00	$ 152,350.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total
	(1) Federal	(2) Non-Federal	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Personnel	$ 80,000.00	$ 28,000.00	$	$	$ 108,000.00
b. Fringe Benefits	20,000.00	7,000.00			27,000.00
c. Travel	3,000.00				3,000.00
d. Equipment					
e. Supplies	500.00				500.00
f. Contractual					
g. Construction					
h. Other					
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	103,500.00	35,000.00			$ 138,500.00
j. Indirect Charges	10,350.00	3,500.00			$ 13,850.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	$ 113,850.00	$ 38,500.00	$	$	$ 152,350.00
7. Program Income	$	$	$	$	$

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SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES

(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e)TOTALS
8. Federal	$	$	$	$
9. Non-Federal				
10.				
11.				
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	$	$	$	$

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS

	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	$	$	$	$	$
14. Non-Federal	$				
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	$	$	$	$	$

SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT

(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (YEARS)			
	(b)First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Federal	$	$	$	$
17. Non-Federal				
18.				
19.				
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	$	$	$	$

SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION

21. Direct Charges:

22. Indirect Charges:

23. Remarks:

APPENDIX C - Budget Narrative Guidance

All costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles. All costs (both Federal and any required non-Federal cost-sharing/match) that are part of an award must be:

- allowable (2 CFR 200.403),
- allocable to the agreement (2 CFR 200.405), and
- reasonable in amount (2 CFR 200.404).

A thorough budget narrative will aid the administrative review and processing of a recommended award. Amounts included in a budget and budget narrative are estimates; in the event of an award, payments will be based on actual expenditures. The following is guidance for your use in preparing a thorough budget narrative. The guidance follows the order of the budget items.

COST-SHARING/MATCHING: If required, you must provide the information below for the Federal portion of costs and *separately* provide the information below with the same level of detail for the cost-sharing/matching portion, as applicable, as part of the budget narrative.

PERSONNEL – Only include employees of applicant organization

This category includes salaries and wages of personnel of the applicant organization (i.e., employees) that will be working directly on the project. For each individual, identify their role and describe their contributions to the project. Also include their annual salary, percent of effort, and the period of time they will contribute to the project along with the associated funds requested for support. The following format is an appropriate way to provide the information.

Mr. Jones – Project Director. Accountable for assuring that all project activities are carried out in a timely, cost-efficient and responsible manner. He will provide oversight of daily activities and lead and direct the project toward accomplishment of the objectives of the project. He is responsible for the submission of the required reports.

Salary	% effort	Project Duration	Funds Requested
$50,000	25%	12 months	$12,500

FRINGE BENEFITS – Only related to salaries identified under Personnel

Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (e.g., vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Also, see 2 CFR 200.431, Compensation-Fringe Benefits. Provide information about how fringe benefits are determined along with the amount requested.

For instance:	Amt. Requested
Fringe benefits - 25% of salaries and wages ($12,500 @ 25%).	$3,125

TRAVEL

Refer to your organization's travel policy for guidance on how to arrange travel. If your organization lacks a policy, it is expected that you follow the U.S. federal government policy, see http://www.gsa.gov/federaltravelregulation.

For the budget narrative, identify the total funds requested for travel. Provide as much detail as possible including purpose, destination, dates of travel, and number of individuals for each trip. If the dates of travel are not known, specify estimated length of trip. Identify what will be followed (e.g., organizational travel policies or government per diem rates). The following are a few examples of how to provide the information.

- 2 people - travel to Washington D.C. once per year for a two-day meeting [identify purpose of meeting].

  Airfare $800 x 2 for airfare = $1,600
  Airport parking = $64
  Hotel for 3 nights x 2 @ $200 = $1,200
  Meals for 2 days x 2 = $24;
  Rental car for 3 days @ $110/day = $330
  Total for trip: $3,439

- Local travel for project manager is calculated at .50 per mile throughout primary service area x 326 miles/month x 12 months = $1,956.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. List each item of equipment along with the applicable cost. Include justification of its need in accomplishing the goals of the project.

Example: To complete objectives #1 and #2, Refrigerated Trailer is required. XYZ Refrigerated Trailer, Model #123, at $5,555

These costs should only include the costs to purchase new equipment. The cost of renting or leasing equipment is not to be included in this category but instead, include under the Contractual category. If equipment is costly, include a lease vs purchase comparison in the budget narrative in support of route chosen.

SUPPLIES

Supplies is defined in 2 CFR 200.1 as all tangible personal property other than those described in 2 CFR 200.1 Equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Suggest also viewing 2 CFR 200.453, Materials and Supplies Costs, Including Costs of Computing Devices, regarding the allowability of costs.

Indicate general categories of expendable supplies including an amount for each category. Caution: If a category is viewed as too general or the associated amount is too high, further itemization may be requested. Therefore, use good judgement in determining the level of detail to provide.

Example:	General office supplies $50/mo. x 12 mo. =	$600
	Postage $37/mo. x 8 mo. =	$296
	Laptop Computer 1 x $900 =	$900
	Printer 1 x $300 =	$300
	Projector 1 x $900 =	$900
	Copies 8000 copies x .10/copy =	$800

CONTRACTUAL

This category includes consultants, subcontracts, etc.

Consultants -- List the total costs for all consultant services. Identify each consultant, the services he/she will perform, total number of days, rate of pay, travel costs, per diem, and total estimated costs.

Contract -- A contract is defined in 2 CFR 200.1 as a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. The term as used in this part does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-Federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward (see §200.1 Subaward).

Explain the need for each agreement and how their use will support the purpose and goals of the project. For each contract, describe the associated activities, scope of work or services to be provided and how the costs were estimated. If budgeting for a procurement action, document if a solicitation process has occurred or if the contract will be a sole source.

Example:

- ABC Company: Training $250/individual x 3 staff 5 days = $ 750
- Amy White to provide Technical Assistant Services

1FTE @ $25,000 + 20% Fringe Benefits of $5,000 =	$30,000
Travel at 2,000 miles @ .50 per mile =	$ 1,000
Training course	$ 175

Supplies @ $42.50 x 12 months =	$ 510
Telephone @ $40 x 12 months =	$ 480
	$32,165

- John Doe, Consultant $40 per hour x 220 hours for 12 month period = $ 8,800
- To Be Announced Outreach Coordinator Annual salary $30,000 x 10% level of effort/12 months = $ 3,000

CONSTRUCTION

Construction efforts are to be included under this category with the same level of detail as described under the "Other" category below.

OTHER

Costs not fitting under one of the other categories are to be included under this category. The level of detail is to be commensurate with other categories. Subawards should be included in this category. Per 2 CFR 200.1, a subaward is an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

Example: Outreach Workshop

Rental of facilities ($750/2 days)	$1,500
Information technology services	$ 400
Training packets (approx. 125/$40 each)	$5,000
Total	$6,900

Note: Percentage for contingencies is not an allowable cost.

INDIRECT

2 CFR 200.1 defines *Indirect (F&A) costs* as 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. To facilitate equitable distribution of indirect expenses to the cost objectives served, it may be necessary to establish a number of pools of indirect (F&A) costs. Indirect (F&A) cost pools must be distributed to benefitted cost objectives on bases that will produce an equitable result in consideration of relative benefits derived.

This cost category guidance includes several components:

- Calculation (This is to be included as part of the budget narrative)
- Indirect Cost Rates
  - Negotiated Rate
  - 10% De Minimis Rate
- Limitation (i.e., indirect cost cap)

- Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost-sharing/Match
- Voluntarily Reduce/Waive

Calculation.

If indirect costs are requested as part of the proposed budget, you must provide details used in determining the indirect costs requested. For instance, provide the calculation specifying the amounts used in applying the base (the base specified in the applicable rate agreement) by the applicable rate (see indirect cost rate info below as well as Limitation section). The calculation can be displayed in different formats but must capture the components (i.e., amounts used in applying the base and the applicable rate).

EXAMPLE 1: For purposes of this example, the recipient uses the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate (10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)). MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes 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.

	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	$50,000	$50,000
Materials and supplies	3,000	3,000
Equipment	5,500	-0-
Subaward	30,000	25,000
		$78,000 x 10% = $7,800 Indirect Costs

EXAMPLE 2: For purposes of this example, the recipient has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) of 20% with a base of salaries and fringe benefits.

	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	$50,000	$50,000
Fringe Benefits	10,000	10,000
Materials and supplies	3,000	-0-
Equipment	5,500	-0-
Subaward	30,000	-0-
		$60,000 x 20% = $12,000 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs may only be recovered if the non-Federal entity has one of the following indirect cost rates.

1. **Negotiated Rate:** If the organization has a *current* NICRA established with the cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds to the organization), then

provide a copy of the NICRA; expired rates are not acceptable. If unable to obtain a current negotiated rate from the cognizant agency, you are permitted to opt to use the 10% de minimis cost rate (you may only be reimbursed for allowable direct cost). Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs. Along with a copy of the NICRA, include the rate and base as part of the budget narrative.

Example: Rate 24.87% of MTDC - 24.87% applied to the following items: $97,300 of Personnel, $23,352 of Fringe, $110,000 of other, and the first $25,000 of three (3) subawards = $76,015.65 indirect costs

2. **10% De Minimis Cost Rate:** In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), any non-Federal entities, unless excepted, may elect to forgo calculation of an indirect cost rate and request a 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. The 10% de minimis rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC). For this purpose, MTDC means total direct costs related to the award, such as direct labor, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, publications, consultant services and travel costs. MTDC excludes the following costs: equipment, capital expenditures, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of $25,000. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

   If the 10% de minimis option is chosen, it must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time you choose to negotiate for a rate, which you may apply to do at any time. If the organization previously opted for the de minimis rate, a copy of the rate agreement must be provided. If the organization is currently electing the de minimis rate, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10% of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award, as appropriate.

   Example: Rate 10% of MTDC – 10% applied to the following items: $45,000 of Personnel, $10,800 of Fringe, and $59,000 of Other = $11,480 indirect costs

Limitation: Some programs may not allow the recovery of indirect costs. In such instances, the limitation flows down to subcontractors. Refer to the applicable notice of funding opportunity to determine if indirect costs are unallowable.
USDA appropriation acts limit indirect costs to 10 percent for cooperative and contribution agreements with nonprofit entities; for purposes of this limitation "nonprofit entities" includes institutions of higher education. For agreements subject to this limitation first apply the 10 percent indirect cost rate to the agreement's total direct costs; this is shown on line 6.i of the SF424A. Then calculate indirect costs using the rate and the direct cost application base specified in the recipient's NICRA. Use whichever rate results in the lower amount.

If the organization has a NICRA, both the NICRA calculation and the 10% TDC must be completed in order to determine the lesser (i.e., maximum allowed indirect costs) for the applicable project.

Calculation instructions: First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10% by TDC to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the maximum amount of allowable indirect cost, therefore include this amount on the budget.

Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost-sharing/Match: 2 CFR 200.306(c) provides, "Unrecovered indirect costs, including indirect costs on cost sharing or matching may be included as part of cost sharing or matching only with the prior approval of the Federal awarding agency. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the non-Federal entity's approved negotiated indirect cost rate."

Voluntarily Reduce/Waive: A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. If organizations waive indirect cost recovery and request only direct costs, the organization is required to include in the award budget only those types of costs consistently treated as direct costs by the organization.