



# **FSA Program Outreach and Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreements**

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2021  
FSA Program Outreach and Technical  
Assistance  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)**

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**No. USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104**

## Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

### SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Federal Awarding Agency Name:** U.S. Department of Agriculture – Farm Service Agency

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** Outreach Education and Technical Assistance for Farm Service Agency Programs, Functions and Activities

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA-FSA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001104

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA):** This program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance numbers:

- 10.132 Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2
- 10.171 Organic Certification Cost-Share Program
- 10.056 Farm Storage Facility Loans
- 10.111 Tree Assistance Program
- 10.112 Price Loss Coverage
- 10.089 Livestock Forage Disaster Program
- 10.054 Emergency Conservation Program
- 10.129 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus
- 10.051 Commodity Loans & Loan Deficiency Program
- 10.113 Agriculture Risk Coverage Program
- 10.110 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program
- 10.133 Quality Loss Adjustment Program
- 10.406 Farm Operating Loans
- 10.451 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
- 10.407 Farm Ownership Loans
- 10.421 Indian Tribes & Tribal Corporation Loans
- \*Heirs Relending Program (Rule has not been finalized yet)
- \*Farm Enrollment (How to get a Farm Number)
- \*Urban Agriculture County Committees
  - \*CFDA numbers being assigned

### Notice of Funding Opportunity Summary

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) seeks proposals to support and further expand Farm Service Agency (FSA)'s existing program outreach and education efforts to socially disadvantaged applicants (SDA), specifically farmers and ranchers. The mission of the Farm Service Agency is equitably serving all farmers and ranchers through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. However, FSA is aware that all farmers and ranchers may not be optimally aware of FSA programs. Therefore, this opportunity is intended to provide additional outreach to SDA farmers and ranchers in areas and communities where additional outreach would be beneficial. With the complex nature of some of FSA's programs,

FSA intends this NFO to focus additional outreach and education to producers in areas who could benefit from additional outreach in order to (1) increase access and participation of SDAs in FSA programs and services and (2) improve technical assistance related to FSA farm and farm loan programs. Priority will be given to projects that include focus on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2); see section E.1. for information about the review and selection process. Awards will range in amounts from \$20,000 to \$99,999 for a duration between six (6) months and one (1) year. The estimated total program funding available is \$2 million. Additional information is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/cooperativeagreements).

For new users of Grants.gov, see Section D.1. for information about steps required before submitting an application via Grants.gov.

### **Key Dates**

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 5, 2021. For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts. Questions regarding this notice of funding opportunity (NFO) may be submitted until April 20, 2021. Responses to questions posed will be posted on Grants.gov approximately one week before the application due date.

The agency anticipates making award selections by June 21, 2021 and anticipates executing awards by September 1, 2021. Applications with a focus on the CFAP 2 program will be on a faster track to address the timelier needs of that program.

### **Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts**

The estimated funding floor for this opportunity is \$20,000 and the estimated funding ceiling is \$99,999. 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/grants-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

The authorizing statute for this opportunity is section 607(b)(4) of the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4)).

The mission of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is equitably serving all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. FSA supports the delivery of farm credit, and administers disaster assistance, livestock, specialty crop, commodity, and some USDA conservation programs. FSA delivers its programs through a network of 2,124 county-based Service Centers, 50 State Offices, and an area office in Puerto Rico.

FSA county and state offices provide outreach and education for producers which typically involve public meetings and workshops with individual producers seeking additional information or to enroll in a program. However, additional targeted outreach efforts are needed for educating socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers on FSA programs and services. Socially disadvantaged groups are defined as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include: American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and in the case of FSA loan farm programs, women. Due to FSA's staffing and budget declines over the years, full time outreach staff was not always available to address the lack of SDA involvement in FSA programs. Therefore, this NFO is intended to provide targeted, focused, specific outreach to socially disadvantaged producers in areas and communities where outreach efforts have not been effective in the past and where participation in FSA programs is historically lower for socially disadvantaged producers. The goal is to increase minority participation in FSA programs through outreach education and technical assistance efforts.

Specific FSA programs and services listed in this NFO are focused on educating socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers about one or more of the following programs and increasing the number of successful program participants: Farm Enrollment for Heirs Property Operators/Landowners; FSA Relending Program; Highly Fractionated Indian Land Program; Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program; Emergency Conservation Program; Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage; Receipt for Service; FSA County and Urban Committees; Guaranteed Operating and Ownership Loan Programs; Direct Operating and Ownership Loan Programs; Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2; Organic Certification Cost-Share Program; Farm Storage Facility Loan; Tree Assistance Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Emergency Conservation Program; Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus; Commodity Loans & Loan Deficiency Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program; Urban Ag County Committees, and Quality Loss Adjustment Program.

The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 was previously made available to producers to sign-up for benefits. A second opportunity will open April 5, 2021 for at least 60 days.

Priority will be given to projects that focus on this program and are able to educate SDAs in a timely manner for them to have the opportunity to meet this latter signup deadline. For further information about this program, see <https://www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/cfap>.

Examples of the type of efforts covered by this NFO include, but are not limited to:

**Outreach** – Workshops, online webinars, in person meetings and other community-level events. Example: Educating heirs on how to obtain a farm number from FSA. The 2018 Farm Bill (Pub. L. 115-334; see <https://www.usda.gov/farmbill>) identified additional alternative ways for heirs to show control of the land without a deed. Extensive outreach is needed to educate heirs, particularly those in Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act states, of how to obtain a farm number, which is needed to participate in all USDA programs.

**Technical assistance:** One-on-one assistance with farmers and ranchers. Training on programs, forms and electronic applications. Example: Assisting producer with paperwork to apply to a FSA program or loan. Example: Developing a phone application for easily applying to a FSA program.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Available Funding**

#### **a. Estimated Funding**

The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is \$2 million.

#### **b. Start Dates and Performance Periods**

Projects may be between six (6) months and one (1) year in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of September 1, 2021. Applications focused on the CFAP 2 program may anticipate an earlier start date to address the timelier needs of that program.

#### **c. Number of Awards**

The agency expects to make between 25 and 50 awards.

### **2. Type of Award**

#### **a. Type of Federal Award**

The agency plans to award cooperative agreements pursuant to this opportunity. The agency will be substantially involved in the work performed under each agreement and will undertake activities such as the following:

- i. Authority to suspend work if specifications or work statements are not met
- ii. Review and approval of one stage of work before another may begin
- iii. Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts beyond existing Federal policy

- iv. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation in training and outreach activities
- v. Project monitoring to permit specified kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of interrelationships with and impacts on other projects
- vi. Highly prescriptive agency requirements that limit recipient discretion
- vii. Review and approval of key personnel
- viii. Direct agency operational involvement or participation during the training or outreach activity

**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 under this NFO. 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)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types:

- a. Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- b. Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- c. Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
- d. Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education

### **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/subawardee relationship.

An applicant organization may not submit more than one application.

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 Chapter 58 of 16 U.S.C. 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.

### 3. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity. There is no competitive advantage to applicants who voluntarily provide a match.

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. 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 takes a significant amount of time.**

For information about the Grants.gov pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html>.

#### b. Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Carefully review the registration steps and gather information requested prior to beginning the registration process to avoid last-minute searches for required information. For assistance with the registration process, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto: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/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Although creating a Grants.gov account online can take only minutes, DUNS and 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.

#### c. Steps to Register:

- i. *Obtain a DUNS Number:* All entities applying for funding must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS Number in the data entry field



labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS Number, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

- ii. *Register with SAM:* All organizations must register with System for Award Management (SAM) in order to apply online 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/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>
- 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 or refer to the detailed instructions here:  
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>
- iv. *Add an Organization Applicant 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. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all of your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the DUNS Number for the organization in the UEI (Unique Entity Identifier) field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:  
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>
- 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/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

- 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.
- 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/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>
- 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/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>
    - *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 DUNS Number. 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/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

## **2. 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. Applicants are urged to submit early to the Grants.gov system.

For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto: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.

## **3. 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.

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

### **a. 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 ten (10) pages. This page limitation applies to the project narrative only.

Include the following in the Project Narrative:

- i. **Priority:** If project will focus on CFAP 2 program, note that at the

- beginning of the Project Narrative.
- ii. Project Team and Institutional background. Describes the applicant organization or institution in terms of its location, demographics, mission, relationship to the service area and SDAs and past successes in the project area. Describe the project team’s experience working with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Identify any collaborating institution and their involvement in the project.
- iii. Problem statement/needs assessment. Documents the problem or need with hard data, linking it to the goal identified in Section A. of this NFO. Identify the area and programs of focus. What is the situation that is causing concern? Identify the method for determining the situation at-hand. Were the specific SDAs to benefit from the project consulted? Which socially disadvantaged groups will benefit from the project?
- iv. Program goals and objectives. Identifies anticipated outcomes and benefits in measurable terms. How is the situation expected to change as a result of the award?
- v. Methods/implementation. Describes the activities that directly support the achievement of the objectives. Include a timeline in this section as well as a description of staffing needs.
- vi. Evaluation plan. Presents a plan for determining the success of the project at interim points and at the end of the project. Include documentation of measurable results and detail any assessments the organization will conduct as part of the agreement.

The following documents do not count toward the above stated page limit.

- b. **Application Form:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) See Instructions for Completing SF 424 located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.
- c. **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 voluntary matching funds, if provided. This form is the summary budget for the project; include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF-424A located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov. Refer to Section D of this opportunity for information regarding indirect costs.
- d. **Budget Narrative.**
  - i. In a separate document titled “Budget Narrative,” explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. 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. See Budget Narrative Guidance located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov. The pages included as the budget narrative do not count toward the page limit.

ii. As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD 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.

iii. All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. (Accepting the 10 percent *de minimis* rate as a condition of award constitutes establishing an approved rate.)
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.
- See the Budget Narrative Guidance in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov or item 7. of this section for further details about indirect costs.

e. **Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** 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 in connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A- Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

- f. **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if applicable). If charging indirect costs (including for cost share), upload the agreement under Other Attachments in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package. See Section D. for information regarding indirect costs.
  
- g. **Unique entity identifier/DUNS 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 (DUNS number) 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 DUNS 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 DUNS number and SAM registration.

**DUNS Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. Applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711.

**System for Award Management (SAM) Registration:** SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. 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 DUNS or SAM issues.

The Government intends to replace the D-U-N-S® number with a “new, non-proprietary identifier” requested in, and assigned by SAM.gov. This new identifier is being called the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), or the Entity ID. See [Planned UEI Updates in Grant Application Forms](#) for UEI updates.

#### **4. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence**

Applicants must submit applications via Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on May 5, 2021. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late (an application is considered on time at 11:59.59 pm ET, but it is late at 12:00 am ET). Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered.

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.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any issues. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part G. for Grants.gov contact information.

For applications successfully transmitted to Grants.gov before the deadline: The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive:

- an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov;
- an email with the official date/time stamp (this stamp is used to determine if the application was received prior to the deadline) and Grants.gov

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.

#### **5. Intergovernmental Review**

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

#### **6. 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. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project:

- b. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award, including time spent applying for this opportunity;
- c. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto;
- d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- e. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- f. 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; and
- g. Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces, the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces, and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.
- h. Management fees and profit. Any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award related direct and indirect costs only;
- i. Meals: 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.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact listed in this NFO.

#### 7. Indirect costs limitations:



- a. A non-profit organization or institution of higher education awarded a cooperative agreement will be limited to a 10 percent indirect cost rate in accordance with the agency's annual appropriations act. The 10 percent indirect cost rate applies to both federal and non-federal funds. Other types of entities are not subject to this statutory limitation.
- b. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost 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). A State, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.
- c. 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. 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. A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. However, if an applicant with a current NICRA is subject to the statutory limitation, indirect costs must be calculated as follows. First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by the total of all direct costs to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the amount of indirect cost to include on the budget.
- d. Entities that are eligible for the *de minimis* rate who already have a *de minimis* rate agreement must use the rate and base specified in the agreement, which is modified total direct costs (MTDC) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1 and also excluding the amount of each subaward exceeding \$25,000. Note that MTDC excludes certain costs from the base to which the rate is applied. A copy of the applicant's de minimis rate agreement must be provided with the application. If a recipient is eligible to use the de minimis rate, but does not have a de minimis rate agreement, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10 percent of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.
- e. If voluntarily reduced or waived, the recipient may choose to apply any unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share or match. 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 recipient's approved negotiated indirect cost rate (2 CFR 200.306(c)).

## **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 make a selection 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. Once funding decisions are made, the agency may contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Following the screening process described above, FSA will use a two-tiered approach for the evaluation of applications. First, all applications identified as addressing CFAP 2 will be evaluated for award. Next the remaining applications will compete for the remaining funds and evaluated for award. The selection and award execution of the CFAP 2 program will be on a faster track to address the timelier needs of the program. If a project addresses programs beyond CFAP 2, FSA reserves the right to include applications not funded under the CFAP 2 evaluation process as part of the second evaluation process.

With respect to the evaluation process, merit/technical reviews of all applications will be conducted by a technical review board nominated by the approving official. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the FSA Associate Administrator. Reviews will be conducted in a multi-phase review process in which an interagency staff panel from FPAC agencies will make recommendations to the deciding official. Interagency reviewers will be selected based upon knowledge, skills, training and experience in relevant fields.

### **2. Merit/Technical Criteria**

Applications for cooperative agreements will be evaluated and scored using the following uniform evaluation plan.

#### **a. Purpose and Benefits (30 points).**

This criterion is used to assess the basis of the issue and the benefit of the project. Elements considered include the quality of the hard data used to identify the issue, area of focus, the SDAs to benefit, and the FSA programs being covered.

#### **b. Proposed Approach (30 points).**

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected results, and evaluation plan. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or outreach provided to the SDAs and the likely success of the methods used, feasibility of the time allotted to

accomplish the goals, identification of anticipated barriers and plan to overcome such barriers, and on the potential increased involvement of SDAs in FSA programs as a result of the project.

**c. Organizational and Project Team Capability (30 points).**

This criterion relates to the capability to perform the project. Elements include the commitment to the project, the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, established relationships with identified SDAs, locality of the organization to area being served, feasibility to carry out the project including an understanding of the FSA programs.

**d. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).**

This criterion relates to how well the total budget supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s), if any; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of the resources.

**3. 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 U.S.C. 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 Subpart 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 that it 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.

#### **4. 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) (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 the designated integrity and performance system, 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.

#### **5. Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 21, 2021 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 1, 2021. Applications focused on the CFAP 2 program will be on a faster track to address the timelier needs of that program.

## **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. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. 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 letter.

### **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 included in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity on Grants.gov.

### **3. Reporting**

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are included in the Related Documents tab of the opportunity on Grants.gov.

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 subawardees 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).

Cooperators must provide the following to the agency:

- Quarterly performance reports that compare accomplishments to the objectives stated in the application, and that must also:
- Identify all tasks completed to date and provide documentation supporting the reported results; (activity participants' names, addresses, contact information, county locations, city, state)
- If the original schedule provided in the work plan is not being met, discuss the problems or delays that may affect completion of the project;
- List objectives for the next reporting period.

## **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT**

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

Name: Melanie Krizmanich  
Grants Management Specialist  
FPAC Business Center  
Mailing Address: Patriots Plaza III, 11-149A, 355 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20319  
Phone Number: (202) 572-5805  
Email: [Melanie.Krizmanich@usda.gov](mailto:Melanie.Krizmanich@usda.gov) with a copy to [FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV](mailto:FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV)

## **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact identified above via email with the NFO number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by April 26 2021. A summary of questions and answers will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this NFO in Grants.gov approximately two weeks before the application due date.
2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto: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.

### **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.ascr.usda.gov/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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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