![USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture logo]

Farmers Market Promotion Program

Fiscal Year 2025 Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-25-0005

Publication Date: May 09, 2025

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM Eastern Time on June 27, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

Federal Agency: Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

Funding Opportunity Title: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-25-0005

Assistance Listing Number: 10.175

Type of Federal Assistance: *Grant Agreements* will be used to provide federal awards to successful applicants.

Type of Application: *New applications* will be evaluated competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in *section 6.0 Application Review Information*.

Application Deadline: Friday, June 27, 2025, through Grants.gov at 11:59 pm Eastern Time. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the 2025 fiscal year (FY) Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). FMPP's purpose is to support the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer markets to increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

FMPP is a part of the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) umbrella program. AMS welcomes applications that meet LAMP goals (see *section 3.1*) to support the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products.

AMS will competitively award grants to eligible applicants for projects that meet the purpose of this grant program. To be competitive, applications must meet all program standards, be of high quality, and include cost share of 25% of the federal amount requested, as required by statute. All applications will undergo review according to merit and evaluation procedures described in detail in *section 6.* This announcement provides information regarding eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, details on cost sharing requirements, and the forms and instructions needed to apply for an award.

In 2024, AMS funded 60 (35%) of the 173 eligible applications received awarding a total of $14,212,274.68.

1.2 2025 HIGHLIGHTS AND CHANGES

Below are highlights of major changes to the program since last year:
- This Request for Applications (RFA) was reorganized following the recent changes to the Uniform Guidance, Appendix I to Part 200, Title 2. The reorganization lists basic program information upfront and the application submission requirements at the end.

- This RFA was updated to remove the following:

  o Language encouraging applications that "…benefit smaller farms and ranches, historically underserved farmers and ranchers, or new and beginning farmers and ranchers, underserved producers, veteran producers, and/or underserved communities…" and to engage and involve those beneficiaries in developing projects and applications;

  o An Expertise and Partners review criterion (*Section 6.2 Review Criteria*), specifically that reflecting this emphasis, namely "particularly including historically underserved entities such as underserved, beginning, and/or limited resource entities;"

  o Language encouraging applicants to consider including goals and activities related to reducing and stabilizing the level of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or adapting to the already occurring climate change…"; and

  o Language in *Section 9.1 Project Definition*, removing definitions related to historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

  o The AMS General Terms and Conditions have been updated to reflect recent changes to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200).

  o A new *section 6.3.1* Risk Review was added to describe the factors AMS uses to evaluate the risk posed by applicants before making an award.

  o *Section 9.1* has been updated to include the "project" definition.

1.3   AVAILABLE FUNDING

Anticipated Available Funding: $11 million. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, other action may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

Cost Share Requirements: A 25% cash or in-kind contribution is required.

1.4   FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION AND SIZE

AMS expects applicants to complete their projects within the required performance period. AMS encourages applicants to take the full performance period to allow enough time to complete projects. However, a project may be completed before the scheduled performance period end date. The applicant must indicate the start date and end date on Block 17 of the SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance".

Award size varies by project type. Applicants must not request less than the minimum or more than the maximum award amounts. Applicants must justify the requested funding amounts within the "FMPP Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative".

Project Type	Duration (Months)	Start Date	End Date	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Turnkey Projects (Both Types)	24	September 30, 2025	September 29, 2027	$50,000	$100,000
Capacity Building	36	September 30, 2025	September 29, 2028	$50,000	$250,000
Community Development Training and Technical Assistance	36	September 30, 2025	September 29, 2028	$100,000	$500,000

1.5 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- **To submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must:**
  - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
  - Be registered in SAM.gov;
  - Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
  - Maintain an active and current SAM registration.

- **Allow time for Grants.gov Registration Completion:**
  - The organization registration process can take **as long as four weeks**.
  - Complete the registration as early as possible to meet all deadlines. See *section 5.0 Submission Requirements and Deadlines* for more information.

- **Review General Terms and Conditions:**
  - Review the AMS General Terms and Conditions to understand allowable and unallowable costs.

- **Ensure File Compatibility:**
  - Use latest version of Adobe Reader that it is compatible with Grants.gov software.

- **File Naming and Size:**
  - Limit file names to 50 characters or less.
  - Avoid special characters in file names ($, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).

- **Attachment Upload:**
  - Use the "Add Attachments" button in Grants.gov for upload.
  - Do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader.

- **File Security and Formatting:**
  - Do not password-protect files.
  - Accept all tracked changes in documents before submission.

- **Accurate Data Entry:**
  - Verify that your UEI number is correctly entered on the SF-424 form cover page.

- **Grants.gov Resources for Support:**
  - [Applicant FAQs](#)
  - [Workspace Overview](#)

By following these steps and recommendations, applicants can reduce errors, meet deadlines, and ensure compliance with submission requirements.

1.6   TIMING TO OBTAIN AND SUBMIT GRANTS.GOV REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Required Action	Timing to Obtain/Submit
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through Grants.Gov	June 27, 2025 – 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Obtaining Your Organization's UEI Number (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Establishing an Active SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	Up to 4 weeks
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 4 weeks

1.7   AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

1.7.1   AMS PROGRAM CONTACTS

After closely reviewing this RFA in its entirety, applicants and other interested parties that have questions are encouraged to contact the FMPP program staff by e-mail at FMLFPPGrants@usda.gov.

AMS provides resources and information on the FMPP website (https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp) that may be helpful to applicants, including [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)](#), [descriptions of funded projects](#), [Project Narrative Guides](#), and required application forms. AMS staff is available to provide timely technical assistance.

> **Farmers Market Promotion Program**
> USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
> 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
> Room 1510-S South Building
> Stop 0264
> Washington, DC 20250-0264
> FMLFPPGrants@usda.gov

1.7.2   GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to [Applicant Support](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

1.8 STAKEHOLDERS INPUT

AMS seeks comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments in developing the next RFA for the program. Email written stakeholder comments within one year of the publication date of this RFA to: AMSGrants@usda.gov. This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not for requesting information or forms. In your email subject line, please state that you are commenting on the **Farmers Market Promotion Program RFA**.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

2.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All applicants must be domestic entities owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Tribal Governments. Eligible applicants include:

Entity Type	Description
Agricultural Business or Cooperative	Business or member-owned entity that provide, hold, deliver, transport, offer, or sell agricultural products or services for member benefit as well as the organization or other business that they represent.
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network or Association	Formal groups of farms that work collectively to offer consumers regular (usually weekly) deliveries of locally-grown farm products during one or more harvest season(s) often on a subscription or membership basis. This includes organizations or other businesses that assist, serve, or represent community-supported agriculture (CSA) or CSA networks.
Economic Development Corporation	Organizations whose missions is to improve, maintain, develop, and/or market or promote a specific geographic area.
Food Council	Food policy council or food and farm system network that represents multiple organizations involved in the production, processing, and consumption of food and local, Tribal or State governments that addresses food and farm-related issues and needs within city, county, State, Tribal region, multicounty region, or other region designated.

Entity Type	Description
Local Government	Any unit of government within a State, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937 , or a public transportation agency; special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.
Nonprofit Corporation	Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the organization or institution's net earnings of which inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
Producer Network or Association	Producer group- or member-owned organizations or businesses that provide, offer, or sell agricultural products or services through a common distribution system for the mutual member benefit the owners, as well as organizations or other businesses that assist, represent, or serve producers or producer networks.
Public Benefit Corporation	Corporation organized to construct or operate a public improvement, the profits from which inure to the benefit of one or more State or to the people therein.
Regional Farmers Market Authority	Entity that establishes and enforces State, regional, or county policies and jurisdiction over State, regional, or county farmers markets. State agencies are eligible if their State's regulatory statutes identify the specific State agency as a regional farmers market authority.
Tribal Government	Governing body or governmental agency of any Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any native village as defined in Section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 85 Stat. 688 (43 U.S.C. § 1602) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

2.2   PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Engagement with partners and collaborators strengthens FMPP projects. Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities.

- A *partner* is in a relationship involving close cooperation with the applicant and shares responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators do not need to meet the eligibility requirements provided in *section 2.1*.

The applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators or may engage with them without funding. For instance, a project may have partners or collaborators who have their own funding or who are contributing to the project financially, such as by providing a cash or in-kind cost share. Regardless of whether there is a financial subcontract or subaward relationship, applications must show evidence of existing community or industry engagement (see *section 4.8*).

Applications should demonstrate a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants.

2.3   LIMIT ON NUMBER OF AWARDS

Applicants may submit more than one application to FMPP in this round of funding. If an applicant is selected as a finalist for more than one award, that applicant is still limited to receive **one** FMPP award per funding cycle. AMS staff will contact the applicant to discuss which application they would like to complete.

If an applicant has an active FMPP award, the applicant must close out the award to be eligible to apply for a new FMPP award. For example, a Capacity Building award recipient must close out that award prior to applying for a Community Development Training and Technical Assistance award. The applicant must submit all required close-out documentation by the application due date mentioned in *section 5.5*. Please refer to the applicable AMS General Award Terms and Conditions, available on the Grants Terms and Conditions webpage, for close-out instructions.

2.3.1   FISCAL SPONSORS/AGENTS

Eligible applicants may use fiscal sponsors/agents in their effort to attain and administer a grant award. Such applicants seeking to implement a project may:

- Apply directly to AMS through Grants.gov and request to use funds to establish a contractual relationship with a fiscal sponsor/agent to perform administrative or financial functions on behalf of the applicant; or

- Use a fiscal sponsor/agent to apply for an award on behalf of the implementing organization. By doing so, the sponsor/agent accepts all financial and legal liabilities for that

grant recipient's grant award at the time the agreement is signed. Fiscal sponsors/agents would submit the application as the applicant organization, and the Authorized Organization Role (AOR) responsible for all grant decisions and activities, including but not limited to implementation, subcontracts, and reporting to AMS. The AOR would be an employee of the fiscal sponsor/agent. Fiscal sponsors/agents are bound by the same requirements mentioned in this RFA as other applicant organizations, including the limit on applications.

An applicant organization cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to another organization (including a fiscal sponsor/agent).

2.3.2   REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS (RFSP) RECIPIENT APPLICANTS

In accordance with the LAMP legislation, current RFSP grant recipients may apply for an FMPP grant on behalf of requesting producers and/or eligible entities (as listed in the Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP) RFA). Active RFSP recipients are eligible to receive more than one FMPP or LFPP project within an award cycle to allow them to apply on behalf of those entities.

Active RFSP recipients applying to FMPP on behalf of their eligible partnerships should indicate on the "FMPP Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative" that they are a current RFSP recipient. They must meet all program requirements (see *section 4* and *5*) and undergo competitive peer review (see *section 6.0*) as do all other FMPP applicants.

If selected for funding, active RFSP recipients signing the grant agreement as the AOR on behalf of their producers and eligible entities accept all financial and legal liabilities for that grant recipient's award at the time the agreement is signed. In addition, they are responsible for all decisions and project activities related to the grant agreement, and accountable for meeting Federal statutory requirements, regulatory requirements, and the terms and conditions of the award. An applicant organization, including RFSP recipient applicants, cannot accept an award and later transfer the award to another organization (including the producer or eligible entity associated with the active RFSP grant).

Alternatively, RFSP recipients wanting to solely provide technical assistance or administrative support to producers and/or eligible entities applying to FMPP, but not serve as the AOR, may provide that directly with no formalized agreement and the eligible entities or producers may apply directly (noting that the project must benefit more than one producer). RFSP recipients could also choose to pursue the contractual relationship mentioned in *section 2.3.1* Fiscal Sponsor/Agents*.*

2.4   COST SHARING

This funding opportunity requires recipients to fund their projects, in part, with cost sharing funds from non-Federal sources in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions equal to 25% of the amount of Federal funds being requested.

Cash contributions are generally defined as an actual cash contribution (not the 'value' of someone's time/effort) from the applicant's general revenue/reserves/savings/line of credit, or 3rd-party partner(s), or other non-Federal grants. The applicant must be able to track and show the source of the cost share funding and that the funding source was dedicated entirely to the grant project and produce

records to that effect (for example, taking the cash cost share in your accounting system, or from your partner, and placing it into a special 'grant project' account).

Cost sharing must be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Refer to 2 CFR § 200.306 for additional Federal requirements and definitions, including the basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions are generally defined as the value of goods or services provided by the contributor for the benefit of the grant project, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a Tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as an in-kind contribution to the project as described in 2 CFR § 200.306(e).

Any cost share amount exceeding the requirement will be considered voluntary and must be documented and secured at the time of the award. There is no competitive advantage for an applicant to provide a cost share that exceeds the required amount. If the project is selected for funding, any exceeding amount will be considered voluntary and must be documented and secured at the time an applicant is recommended for the award.

Cost share contributions (either cash or in-kind) cannot be used for this program if they are already being used toward satisfying a cost share requirement under any other Federal grant agreement.

All cost sharing contributions **must be committed or secured** at the time an applicant is selected for an award. An award will not be issued unless all cost sharing funds over the life of the grant are secured. Additional anticipated cost sharing funds not in place by the time the project starts **cannot be counted** toward the cost sharing requirement.

Applicants must indicate the total amount of cost share and how it will specifically align with their requested funding when completing the fiscal plan and resources section of the "FMPP Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative" or "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative". Additionally, applicants must submit signed letters verifying the cost share for EACH cash and/or in-kind resource (see *section 4.7*)

Indirect costs may count toward non-Federal cost share (see *section 3.7.1*).

Applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind (as defined in 2CFR § 200.306(b)(5)) or program income as cost share. Program income is defined as income directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance (2 CFR § 200.1). Unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Award (NOA) provisions section, AMS authorizes the use of program income through the additive method (2 CFR § 200.307(e)(2)). Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the project and under the conditions of the award.

3.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

3.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) is authorized by subtitle A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 ([7 U.S.C. § 1627c](#)), as amended. The program is implemented in accordance with 2 CFR 200—Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and 2 CFR Chapter IV relating to the Department of Agriculture. LAMP supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products. The primary goals are to:

- Connect the regional food economy by bringing farmers, businesses and communities together.
- Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies for value-added agricultural products and local and regional food system infrastructure.
- Strengthen capacity and development of regional food system development through community collaboration and expansion of mid-tier value chains.
- Improve income and job opportunities for producers and food businesses.
- Simplify the application and the reporting processes for the program.

The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), the Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Program and the Regional Food Partnership Program (RFSP) are implemented under LAMP. FMPP, LFPP and RSFP are administered by AMS and VAPG is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service under Rural Development (RD). This RFA is for FMPP.

3.2 PURPOSE

FMPP funds [projects](#) that develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. The program focuses on:

- Supporting and promoting domestic [direct producer-to-consumer](#) (including direct producer-to-retail, direct producer-to-restaurant, and direct producer-to-institutional marketing) marketing such as farmers markets, roadside stands, agritourism activities, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, or online sales;
- Encouraging the development of [value-added agricultural products](#);
- Developing marketing strategies for producers of local food and value-added products;
- Facilitating regional food chain coordination development;
- Promoting new business opportunities and marketing strategies to reduce on-farm food waste;
- Responding to changing technology needs in direct producer-to-consumer marketing; and
- Covering expenses related to costs incurred in obtaining food safety certification and improvements to food safety practices and equipment.

3.3 PROJECT TYPES

FMPP offers four project types: **Capacity Building** (CB), **Community Development Training and Technical Assistance** (CTA), **Turnkey Marketing and Promotion,** and **Turnkey Recruitment and Training**. Each application must select only one project type.

Project Type	Capacity Building	Community Development Training and Technical Assistance (CTA)	Turnkey Marketing and Promotion	Turnkey Recruitment and Training
Funding Range	$50,000 - $250,000	$100,000 - $500,000	$50,000 - $100,000	$50,000 - $100,000
Duration (months)	36	36	24	24
Description	Support the development of long-term organizational capacity of direct producer-to-consumer markets and improve and expand existing markets.	Support outreach, training and technical assistance to farm and ranch operations serving local markets.	Support marketing and promotion activities through a set of 5 pre-defined activities.	Support vendor and producer recruitment and training activities through a set of 5 pre-defined activities.
Key Considerations	Capacity Building projects should demonstrate a clear benefit to local farmers and ranchers through support of direct market channels.	CTA projects are conducted by established organizations. CTA projects should engage a diverse set of local and regional foods stakeholders, including farmers and ranchers.	Simplified application. Projects conduct a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 specific activities.	Simplified application. Projects conduct a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 specific activities.

3.3.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building projects range from $50,000 to $250,000 to be spent within 36 months (3 years). Capacity Building projects are intended to build long-term organizational capacity to develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Capacity Building projects should demonstrate a direct benefit to farm and ranch operations serving local markets and maximize the involvement of farmers, ranchers, and community organizations. Examples of eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing tools, techniques or practices that can be adopted or replicated by local agriculture markets, including those that provide direct financial support to a network of markets, or other relevant organizations.
- Market analysis and strategic planning for a direct producer-to-consumer market opportunity.
- Local farmer, rancher, or market manager startup training and education. This may include but is not limited to, educating vendors about the eligibility requirements and the process for participating in or applying to accept SNAP, WIC, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program benefits, or other (state or local or nonprofit) benefit programs at farmers markets.
- Farmer's market, roadside stand, CSA, agritourism or online sales activity startup, operation and/or expansion.
- Recruitment, outreach and retention of farmers and ranchers in support of direct producer-to-consumer markets.
- Recruitment, outreach, and retention of new and existing consumers in support of direct producer-to-consumer markets.

3.3.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CTA PROJECTS)

Community Development Training and Technical Assistance (CTA) projects range from $100,000 to $500,000 to be spent within 36 months (3 years). CTA projects are intended to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to farm and ranch operations serving local markets to develop, coordinate and expand direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. CTA projects should engage a variety of local and regional food stakeholders to illustrate a substantive effect on the local and regional food system. Examples of eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and disseminating tools, techniques, or practices that can be adopted or replicated by local agriculture markets.
- Conducting statewide or regional training for farmers, ranchers, or farmers market managers to help them develop or maintain their own direct producer-to-consumer enterprise.
- Assisting farmers and ranchers in advertising and promoting their locally and regionally produced agricultural products, including value-added products, through training and technical assistance.

- As part of a marketing and promotion project, promoting that a market accepts SNAP or other public benefits (such as WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program) to customers and how customers can use those programs at the market or with individual vendors.
- Establishing or expanding producer-to-consumer networks and organizations on a state, regional, or national level, which includes efforts to develop sourcing channels using direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities with corporate, non-profit, and institutional buyers.
- Providing technical support for small- and mid-sized producers to become compliant with regulatory and buyer specifications and standards to increase their direct market opportunities.

3.3.3   TURNKEY MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option ranges from $50,000 to $100,000 to be spent within 24 months (2 years). The Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option offers a streamlined application for common FMPP marketing and promotion activities. Those applying to the Turnkey Marketing and Promotion option agree to conduct specific activities that support the marketing and promotion of direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities for local and regional foods. Applicants must select a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 pre-defined activities listed below. Applicants may not propose other activities under this project type. Doing so may disqualify the application from consideration.

- Identify and analyze new or improved market opportunities.
- Develop or revise a marketing plan.
- Design or purchase marketing and promotion media.
- Implement a marketing plan.
- Evaluate marketing and promotion activities.

Applicants who would otherwise choose Capacity Building or Community Development Training and Technical Assistance project types may apply under the Turnkey track, if they focus on marketing and promotion and meet all other Turnkey requirements, including the lower funding maximum.

Applicants to the Turnkey project type must use the simplified "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative Form". See more information in *section 4.6*.

3.3.4   TURNKEY RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

The Turnkey Recruitment and Training option ranges from $50,000 to $100,000 to be spent within 24 months (2 years). The Turnkey Recruitment and Training option offers a streamlined application for common FMPP recruitment and training activities for local and regional food system stakeholders. Turnkey applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to farmers and ranchers. Those applying to the Turnkey Recruitment and Training track agree to conduct specific activities that support the development or delivery of vendor and producer recruitment strategies, as well as training opportunities. Applicants must select a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5, pre-defined activities listed below. Applicants may not propose other activities under this project type. Doing so may disqualify the application from consideration.

- Identify and analyze new or improved strategies for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Develop or revise strategies or plans for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Design materials for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Implement plans for vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.
- Evaluate outcomes related to vendor and producer recruitment, training, or both.

Applicants who would otherwise choose Capacity Building or Community Development Training and Technical Assistance project types may apply using the Turnkey option, if they focus on recruitment or training for vendors and producers and meet all other Turnkey requirements, such as the lower funding maximum.

Applicants to the Turnkey project type must use the simplified "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative Form". See more information in *section 4.6.*

3.3.5 PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Projects are not eligible for consideration if the proposed activities:

- Are not focused on direct producer-to-consumer marketing.
- Are for agricultural production related expenses, including crop production and the purchase of farm equipment, tools, materials, supplies and other related costs (section 3.6).
- Include training, labor or other activities related to agricultural production, including harvesting, crop rotation, and planting techniques.
- Benefit only one agricultural producer, vendor, or individual. Applicants must collaborate with others to benefit the larger community.
- Are to buy land, or for construction of a building or structure.
- Intend to register, train, and/or educate customers on Food Assistance Programs (such as SNAP, WIC, etc.), other than providing information about how they can use those benefits at the market.
- Depend upon the completion of another project or the receipt of another grant.
- Include legal fees and other costs associated with establishing a business or organization.
- Duplicate activities that are already funded by another Federal award program, including the Local Food Promotion Program.

For additional information on allowable and unallowable activities, please refer to the AMS General Terms and Conditions as well as the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing these documents should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under *section 1.7.1.*

3.4   PRIORITY CONSIDERATION

AMS will prioritize applications that:

- Benefit underserved communities, including communities that are located in areas of concentrated poverty with limited access to fresh locally or regionally grown food, which AMS has determined to mean the application is for a project located in a low income/low food access (LI/LA) census tract (as defined below), or
- Are used to carry out eligible activities under a partnership agreement in a Regional Food Systems Partnership project (see *section 2.3.2*) and have not received a FMPP award within the past five (5) years.

To qualify for LI/LA priority consideration, the project's implementation address must be in a LI/LA census tract, as defined by the one of the four major layers on the ERS Food Access Research Atlas. "Implementation address" refers to the street address or census tract location within the targeted community where the applicant plans to conduct or deliver approved project activities.

The applicant must provide its census tract(s) for at least one LI/LA address (priority area). If your organization or business is located in and/or primarily serves at least one LI/LA community, your application will be considered under this priority area.

Applicants are not required to meet these priorities to be eligible to apply or receive grant funds. AMS will review the applicant's project narrative responses and consider these priorities during the administrative review process (see *section 6.3*).

3.5   PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To evaluate and report on the outcomes of the FMPP program on a national scale, AMS collects information on performance measures. Each project submitted **must** include target numbers for at least one outcome and at least one of the indicators listed under the selected outcome(s) listed in the Achievability section of the Project Narrative (*section 4.5* or *4.6*). The progress of the one or more outcomes and indicators selected will need to be reported in the Annual Performance Report, and the results will be reported in the Final Performance Report. Please refer to the Grant Performance Measures website for more information.

3.6   ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the AMS General Terms and Conditions.

Applicants that have questions concerning the allowability of costs after reviewing this document should contact AMS staff using the contact information listed under *section 1.7.1*.

3.7   INDIRECT COSTS

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

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414, any applicant that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate, except State and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, may choose to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). The de minimis rate can be used without providing documentation to justify it. An applicant can use the de minimis rate indefinitely or choose to negotiate a rate, which they may do at any time through their cognizant agency (Federal agency that provides the largest amount of funding). As described in 2 CFR § 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either direct or indirect costs, and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC are defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $50,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDCs exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of $50,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For assignments of cognizant agencies, see 2 CFR § 200.1.

3.7.1   USING INDIRECT COSTS FOR COST SHARING

The maximum indirect costs allowed for a project may be included in different ways:

1. They can be part of the Federal portion of the project budget. For example, if the maximum indirect cost is $8,000, the applicant can include the full amount in the Federal part of the budget.
2. Alternatively, indirect cost can be offered as an In-Kind Cost Share contribution. For example, if the maximum indirect cost is $8,000, the applicant can include the full amount in the In-kind Cost Share part of the budget.
3. The applicant may split the indirect cost allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total amount of indirect costs does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowed. For example, they could include $4,000 in the Federal budget and $4,000 as an in-kind contribution. Alternatively, the applicant may request any other combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect costs allowable.

Refer to 2 CFR §200.413 and §200.414 for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

3.8   SUBAWARDS

The applicant is expected to perform most of the work of the project. However, the applicant may subaward and/or contract (2 CFR 200.331) with partners, collaborators, or other parties that provide additional knowledge, expertise, or resources to complete the proposed project and that are not available within the applicant organization. In all subaward or contract scenarios, the primary applicant will maintain the oversight and reporting responsibility as the AOR. See *section 2.3.1* for more information*.* Using grant funds to competitively "re-grant" funds in mini-grant programs or to activities that are not central to the purpose of the project or for unknown costs is unallowable.

3.9   COORDINATOR MEETING TRAVEL

Recipients are expected to attend an AMS sponsored grant management meetings during the project's period of performance. The proposed budget must include travel funds for an individual identified in the Key Staff section of the Project Narrative. In addition, the application may include travel costs for a second staff member.

Estimate the cost of travel including flight, hotel, per diem, ground transportation to a major city for 3-day, 2-night stay. For previous year, an example of this estimate can be around $1,700 per individual. Location and dates are to be determined with possibility of a virtual conference. If the conference is virtual, recipients will be able to reallocate those funds to another allowable item.

4.0 APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Applicants **MUST** submit the required documentation in the appropriate format as listed in this section.

4.1   APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting an application, applicants must read the RFA in its entirety to fully understand the program's requirements. This application checklist provides the mandatory and, if applicable, documents for an application package.

Mandatory Documents:
- SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (Grants.gov)
- SF-424A – Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (Grants.gov)

☐ Project Abstract Summary (Grants.gov)

☐ Project Narrative Form (*section 4.5* or *4.6*)
  - ☐ Must use required template.
  - ☐ Executive Summary is no more than 250 words.
  - ☐ Ensure it does not exceed the page limit specified in section 4.5 or 4.6.
  - ☐ Ensure the application excludes unallowable costs and activities per section 3.6.
  - ☐ Ensure the federal funds requested do not exceed the maximum or minimum award amount per *section 3.3*.

☐ Signed Letter(s) of Verification for Cost Sharing Funds for each cost share resource per *section 4.7*.

☐ Signed Letter(s) of Commitment from Partners and Collaborators per *section 4.8*.

If applicable, packages

also be required to include the following documents:

☐ Signed Letter(s) Stating Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure per *section 4.9*.

☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) per *section 4.10*.

AMS recommends submitting applications at least **two weeks before the deadline** to account for any issues.

4.2   SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Required. Form SF-424 is available via the application package in Grants.gov. Applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on form SF-424.

Block	Instructions
1 - Type of Submission	Select Application
2 - Type of Application	Select New
4 through 7	Not required
8.c - Organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	Enter applicant UEI for the organization submitting the application.
8.d - Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code
10 - Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
11 - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (Assistance Listing Number)	10.175
12 - Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-25-0005 Ensure you are applying for the correct grant program.
13 - Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
14 - Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, states affected by project
15 - Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Provide a short description of the project.
16a - Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
16b - Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write "All" if the projects will be implemented in more than one location.

Block	Instructions
17 - Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	**Turnkey Projects** – Your performance period cannot be more than 24 months (2 years) in length. • Enter start date: September 30, 2025, and • Enter end date: September 29, 2027. **Capacity Building** and **Community Development Training and Technical Assistance** - Your performance period cannot be more than 36 months (3 years) in length. • Enter start date: September 30, 2025, and • Enter end date: September 29, 2028.
18 - Estimated Funding – Federal	Enter the Total Federal award requested.
18b - Estimated Funding – Applicant	Enter the Total Cost Share amount.
19 - Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process.	See *section 5.5 Intergovernmental Review*.

4.3   SF-424A – BUDGET INFORMATION FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Required. The SF-424A is available via the application package in Grants.gov. The blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or easily explained in the form instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on the SF-424A.

Please fill in **only** sections A, B and C. **Do not** complete sections D, E, and F.

Section A – Budget Summary

Box	Instructions
1.a – Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter "FMPP – Federal"
1.b – Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter "10.175"
1.e – Federal	Enter the amount of Federal funding requested for the project
1.f – Non-Federal	Enter the **total** cost share contribution amount provided for the project

Section B – Budget Categories

Box	Instructions
6.a – 6.j – Object Class Categories	In Column 1, enter the amount of Federal funds requested for each Object Class Category. Do **not** include cost share funding. For example, if you are requesting $2,000 in Federal funds for "Travel", enter 2000 in Column 1, box 6.c

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

Box	Instructions
8.a – Grant Program	Should auto-populate from Section A, Box 1.a
8.b – 8.d	Enter the cost share amount being provided from each source (Applicant, State, or Other) for the project.

4.4 PROJECT ABSTRACT SUMMARY

Required. The Project Abstract Summary form will be used as the public-facing description of any projects which receive an award, including publication on the AMS website. This is required for all project types and is separate from the FMPP Project Narrative or FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative or FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative. The Project Abstract Summary must include:

- Project purpose: What is the main goal or objective of the project?
- Activities to be performed: What specific tasks or actions will be carried out as part of the project?
- Deliverables and expected outcomes: What are tangible results and impacts or benefits are expected from the project?

4.5 PROJECT NARRATIVE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Required. All applicants for project types OTHER THAN the Turnkey Projects **MUST** prepare and submit a narrative using the FMPP Project Narrative form. The form and instructions are available on the "How Do I Apply for an FMPP Grant" webpage. The Project Narrative must clearly describe the objectives and goals, types of activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The Project Narrative Guide can assist applicants in filling out the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and must not exceed fifteen (15) 8.5 x 11 pages (excluding existing Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Project Narrative form is 20 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 35 pages (20 pages + 15 pages)**. DO NOT modify the FMPP Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified. Before submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes, mark-up edits, or comments are visible. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit the FMPP Project Narrative form as a PDF form and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" link in Grants.gov.

The supporting documents listed in sections 4.7 through 4.10 do not count toward the 35-page limit.

4.6   PROJECT NARRATIVE FOR TURNKEY PROJECTS

Required for all Turnkey projects. Applicants **MUST** prepare and submit a narrative using the "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative form" or the "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative form". The forms and instructions are available on the "How do I Apply for an FMPP Grant" website. The Turnkey Project Narratives lists all the activities that may be included in the project. DO NOT propose any additional activities. Doing so may disqualify the application from consideration. The Turnkey Project Narrative must clearly describe the activities, applicable outcome indicators, and fiscal plan and resources information. The Project Narrative Guide explains how to fill out the form.

The Project Narrative must be typed and single-spaced, in an 11-point font, and **must not exceed five (5) 8.5 x 11 pages** (excluding existing Turnkey Project Narrative form content). For example, if the Turnkey Project Narrative form is 16 pages before you begin entering your project information into the form, **your narrative may be up to 21 pages (16 pages + 5 pages)**. DO NOT modify the Project Narrative form. Evaluation points will be deducted if the Project Narrative form is modified. Before submitting the application to Grants.gov, please make sure no tracked changes, mark-up edits, or comments are visible. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit the "FMPP Turnkey Marketing and Promotion Project Narrative" or the "FMPP Turnkey Recruitment and Training Project Narrative" form as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" link in Grants.gov.

The supporting documents listed in Sections 5.2.6 through 5.2.9 do not count toward the 21-page limit.

4.7   LETTERS OF VERIFICATION FOR COST SHARING FUNDS

Required. Applicants **MUST** have written verification of cost share commitments from *every party*, including the applicant, who will contribute cash or in-kind cost sharing to the project.

Submit one letter verifying the cost share for EACH cash or in-kind resource that is being contributed. The letter must be signed by the cost sharing contributor organization. For example, if the cost share contribution will be provided by the applicant organization and two partners, a total of 3 cost share verification letters are required.

AMS has posted a [Letter of Verification for Cost Sharing Funds template](#) on the grant program's website. We highly encourage you to use this template. If you do not use this template, your cost share verification document must include the following:

- Project Applicant Name
- Project Title
- Cash Commitment per year (if applicable) and Total Cash Cost Share Contribution
- In-kind Contribution per year (if applicable) and Total In-kind Cost Share. Break down items into categories as applicable:

  - Salaries (employee name, title, duties, pay rate/hour, amount provided per year)
  - Items/Activities (fair market value per unit, how value determined, and amount provided per year)

- Explanation of how each type of cost share will correspond to the budget or be used by the applicant
- Signature of Organization Representative providing the cost share, with typed name and title

Instructions for organizations submitting Letter of Verification for *Cost Sharing Funds*: Submit *Letter of Verification for Cost Sharing Funds* on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are "LETTER OF VERIFICATION FOR COST SHARING FUNDS". All letter(s) must be signed and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately**.

4.8   LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Required. Applicants **MUST** provide letters of commitment, not just letters of support, from all project partners and collaborators listed in the Project Narrative. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in *section 2.2*.

AMS has posted a [Partner Organization Template Letter](#) on the grant program's website. We highly encourage you to use this template. If you do not use this template, the Letters of Commitment must include at least the following information:

- Project Applicant Name
- Project Title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization's mission and its reason(s) for joining the project
- What the organization commits to participating in and supporting
- The time period of the partnership
- Roles and responsibilities of the participating individuals, as applicable, and any individual time commitment
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to abide by the management plan contained in the application

Instructions for organizations submitting Letters of Commitment: Submit letters on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are "LETTERS OF COMMITMENT".

All letter(s) must be signed by the partner or collaborator and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately.**

PLEASE NOTE: FMPP does not require Congressional letters of support, and such letters do not carry any weight during the evaluation process.

4.9   EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed project. Applicants **MUST** submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that the critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, buildings, structures, and other critical resources *must be in place and in working condition* at the time of application submission. The letter must describe the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project.

AMS has posted a Suggested Evidence Of Critical Resources And Infrastructure Template Letter on the FMPP application website. We highly encourage you to use this template. If you do not use this template, your Letter of Evidence of Critical Infrastructure must minimally include the following information:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A statement about committing/approving/granting permission, etc. of the critical resource or infrastructure to the project for the time period
- A description of the approved use of the critical resource or infrastructure approved for the project, any costs associated with its use, and any qualifying circumstances for its use.

Instructions for preparing Letters of Critical Infrastructure: Submit Letters of Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Documents should be clearly labeled **"**EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**"** at the top. The letters must accompany the proposal at the time of the application submission.

Letter(s) must be signed and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15. **AMS will not accept unsigned letters or letters emailed separately.**

4.10   NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)

Required if the applicant has a NICRA. See *section 3.7* Indirect Costs for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

5.0 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

5.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants MUST apply to this program electronically via Grants.gov. No other submission method is accepted. AMS urge applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. The How to Apply for Grants in Grants.gov webpage gives an overview of the application process. This RFA contains the information needed to complete the required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in *section 5.2.*

Applicants can find the opportunity under either the Assistance Listing number "10.175," or the FMPP Funding Opportunity Number "USDA-AMS-TM-FMPP-G-25-0003".

5.2 SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

5.2.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY

Applicants **MUST** have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), an active SAM.gov account, and a Grants.gov account to submit an application. AMS recommends that applicants start the registration process in these systems immediately to allow enough time to meet application submission deadlines.

Registration in these systems collectively may take **more than four weeks** to complete.

The steps below provide details on how to complete each registration.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://apply07.grants.gov/help/html/help/Register/OrganizationRegistration.htm

1. Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): Entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a UEI from SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational UEI" on the SF-424. Getting a UEI requires validation steps in SAM.gov. Applicants are encouraged to start this process as early as possible, and, if applicable, this includes providing guidance to sub applicants on getting their own UEI.

2. Register with the System for Award Management (SAM): In addition to having a UEI number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Current SAM registrants have already been assigned their UEI and can view it within SAM.gov. All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be renewed annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov. Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.**

3. Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's UEI number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is

a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the AOR.

   a. Watch the video on how to Register in Grants.gov and create an institutional profile. Applicants are required to use Login.gov to sign into Grants.gov. See the Grants.gov help article for more information on logging in with Login.gov credentials. The Grants.gov validation process also includes a check for an active SAM.gov registration. Applicants without a current SAM.gov registration will be rejected.

4. Authorize Grants.gov Roles: After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, including the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

5. Track Role Status: After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you to track your status.

6. Electronic Signature: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

5.2.2   HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

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

1. *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

2. *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

   a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out the webforms, you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local storage device, network drive(s), or external drives, and then accessed through Adobe Reader.

      NOTE: You may need to visit the Adobe Software Comparability to download the appropriate version of the software. There is no cost for Adobe Reader Software.

   b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.

c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

3. *Submit via a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

   SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in *section 4.0* are included correctly in the application package when submitting via Grants.gov*.*

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

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides a [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#) and additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 (except federal holidays) toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email [support@grants.gov](#). Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, use the contact information described in *section 1.7.1*.

5.3   ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION DETAILS

AMS will not consider any applications received after the deadline. In addition, AMS will not consider any applications submitted by fax, email, or postal mail, or any applications that don't meet the requirements of this RFA such as not being eligible, having an incomplete application, or missing required attachments documents, etc.). See [AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.](#)

Ensure that all components are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. **AMS encourages you to submit your application *at least two weeks* before the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.**

Grants.gov will automatically record the date and time when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp in an email as proof that the application was submitted on time.

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

5.4   SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applicants **MUST** submit applications electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 27, 2025. AMS cannot consider applications received after this deadline for funding. See AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeal Procedures Policy.

5.5   INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

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

6.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

All applications will go through a review process as described in the following subsections.

6.1   INITIAL REVIEW (INITIAL SCREENING)

Each application is initially reviewed for overall completeness, as well as compliance with eligibility and program requirements described in this RFA. If an application does not meet these requirements, it is removed from consideration. Please see *section 5.3* and AMS' Late Applications, Denials and/or Appeals Procedure for more information.

Applications that will not be considered includes, but are not limited to:

- Those from an organization that does not meet the eligibility criteria.
- Those requesting FMPP funds outside the funding range for the project type selected.
- Those missing the required documentation.
- Those submitted after the deadline.

6.2   REVIEW CRITERIA (TECHNICAL REVIEW)

Applications that pass the initial review screening are evaluated on their overall merit by a panel of independent peer reviewers. AMS attempts to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned applications. Peer review panels evaluate assigned applications using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers score applications and discuss with panel members to arrive at a consensus score. AMS then uses the scores as the basis for selecting applications that will go to the administrative review.

Each Capacity Building or Community Development Training and Technical Assistance application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements will be reviewed and scored competitively using the criteria listed below.

Each Turnkey application that meets the initial qualifications screening requirements will be reviewed and scored competitively on each of the criteria below EXCEPT alignment and intent. Technical Merit, Achievability, Expertise and Partners, Fiscal Plan and Resources will all carry equal weight, or 25 points each.

Alignment and Intent .... **25 Points**

1. The application provides a clear and concise description of the specific issue, problem, or need addressed by the project, and the objectives for, the project.

2. The project helps develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food businesses (including those that are not direct producer-to-consumer markets) that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products and an agricultural local and regional food system infrastructure.

3. The applicant identifies and engages the intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries and how they will benefit. The application demonstrates a commitment to engage potential project beneficiaries as active participants in partnership activities.

4. The application describes the project's proposed geographic focus area and why it is the most appropriate place to conduct project activities.

5. The application complies with all written instructions and requirements described within the RFA and Project Narrative Template.

Technical Merit .... **25 Points**

1. The application presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable work plan for fulfilling the goals and objectives of the proposed project.

2. The application presents a realistic schedule for implementing the proposed project during the award project period.

3. If the project and/or entity was previously funded, the extent to which the previous lessons learned are incorporated into the proposed project.

4. The level of effort attributed to personnel and contractual entities detailed in the application are at a reasonable level to conduct the proposed project.

5. The application work plan contains measurable or quantifiable tasks that relate directly to the objectives of the proposed project.

Achievability .... **15 Points**

1. The outcomes and indicator(s) are appropriate for the scale and scope of the project, including:

   a. How indicator numbers were derived with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator; and

   b. The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to or restrict progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.

2. The proposed project can be easily adapted to other regions, communities, or agricultural systems. *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*

3. The applicant provides a comprehensive plan to distribute the project's results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties. *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*

Expertise and Partners ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯ **20 Points**

1. The proposed project represents substantial, effective, diverse and strong qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborators to accomplish the project's goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:

   a. Commitment from the key partner and/or collaborators demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;

   b. The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and names and titles of the individuals who comprise the Project Team; and

   c. The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project.

2. The application describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel and external partners and collaborators.

3. The application describes a commitment to collaboration and engagement among partners to ensure high levels of participation or provides a clear and concise plan for how such engagement will occur.

4. The application describes how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project's period of performance (without grant funds). *(Not applicable to Turnkey projects)*

Fiscal Plan and Resources ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯ **15 Points**

1. The application budget narrative or justification provides a clear, detailed, narrative description for each budget line item including:

   a. How the budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project; and

   b. How the budget relates logically to the narrative describing the project.

2. The application provides evidence that critical resources and infrastructure that are necessary for the initiation and completion of the proposed project are currently in place.
3. The applicant demonstrates that its partners' or collaborators' contribution of non-Federal cash resources or in-kind contributions is available and obtainable for the project as evidenced through the submitted Cost Sharing funds and Letters of Verification.

AMS may assign additional points to the overall score for applications that address program priorities as describe in *section 3.4*, provide geographic coverage/variety and benefit underserved communities.

6.3   ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (SELECTION PROCESS AND RISK REVIEW)

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top scores applications. In addition to the scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope of this RFA, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic coverage/variety (including across program years), and program priorities, as described in *section 3.4.* AMS staff will work with top-scored applicants to negotiate any revisions as necessary and possible. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these awards using the guidance provided in *section 6.3.1.*

6.3.1   RISK REVIEW

Prior to making a Federal award, AMS will review the risk of applicants in managing federal funds. AMS will review the applicant's financial stability, the quality of their management systems and standards, current and prior performance managing federal grants, audit reports and findings, the ability to effectively implement Federal award requirements, and make sure that the applicant has policies and procedures in place to manage a federal award. AMS will review the applicant's responsibility and qualification records in SAM.gov, USA Spending, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) along with any comments entered by the applicant. For additional information refer to 2 CFR 200.206.

If the applicant is found to present significant risk, AMS may choose not to fund the application or place specific conditions (2 CFR § 200.208) on the award.

AMS will follow government-wide rules which prevent making awards to applicants that have been suspended or debarred from receiving federal awards.

7.0 AWARD NOTICES

7.1   SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send electronically a Notice of Award (NOA) to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. The NOA will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The NOA will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in 2 CFR § 200.211 and reference to the AMS General Terms and Conditions.

7.2   UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

AMS will contact unsuccessful applicants via email as soon as possible after the FMPP awards are announced. The unsuccessful applicants will receive anonymous consensus review panel comments regarding their application.

8.0 POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the NOA, all AMS recipients must abide by the AMS General Terms and Conditions, which reference applicable *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*.

8.2 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recipients must report progress of their project on an annual basis through the electronic submission of performance reports and federal financial reports (SF-425). A final performance and financial reports, and applicable closeout documentation must be submitted after the end of the performance period. Additional detail on reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the AMS General Terms and Conditions. If there are any program or award-specific terms or conditions, those will be identified in the NOA.

8.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USDA SUPPORT

Proper acknowledgement of your USDA-AMS funding in published solicitations (e.g., for state competitions), presentations, press releases, and other communications is critical for the success of the agency's programs. Grantees must meet the acknowledgement requirements outlined in the updated AMS General Terms and Conditions.

9.0 OTHER INFORMATION

9.1 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Critical Resources and Infrastructure means the physical and the non-physical assets necessary to start and complete a project:

- Critical Infrastructure includes physical assets such as land, structures, or equipment.
- Critical Resources includes non-physical assets such as human capital, community support and partnership, or institutional capacity.

Direct Producer to Consumer Marketing means instances in which producers sell locally or regionally produced agricultural products directly to the consumer (including, farmers markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agritourism activities, online sales, producer-to-retail, producer-to-restaurant and producer-to-institutional marketing) with minimal involvement of a middle-man such as an intermediary, a wholesaler, a retailer, an agent, a broker, or a reseller in a manner calculated to lower the cost and increase the quality of food to such consumers while providing increased financial returns to the farmers.

Locally and Regionally Produced Food means food that is raised, produced, aggregated, stored, processed, and distributed in the locality or region where the final product is marketed to consumers, so that the total distance that the product travels between the farm or ranch where the product originates

and the point of sale to the end consumer is at most 400 miles, or both the final market and the origin of the product are within the same State, territory, or tribal land.

FMPP recognizes that domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, agritourism activities, other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities, and local and regional food businesses may source or market some of their food products outside of the defined locality or region. These enterprises are encouraged to consider local boundaries for projects based on existing networks, foodsheds, distance to markets for farmers within the selected area, or other relevant factors. AMS may question the reason behind the selected local or regional food system development effort.

Mid-tier Value Chain means a local or regional supply network that links independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added agricultural product in a manner that:

- Targets and strengthens the profitability and competitiveness of small and medium-size farms and ranches that are structured as a family farm; and
- Obtains agreement from an eligible agricultural producer group, farmer or rancher cooperative, or majority-controlled producer-based business venture that is engaged in the value chain on a marketing strategy.

Project means a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people. Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end – they have a limited duration. A project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Value-Added Agricultural Product means any agricultural commodity or product that:

- Has undergone a change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam); or
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product, (such as organically produced products); or
- Is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved product); or
- Is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E–85 fuel; or
- Is aggregated and marketed as a locally produced agricultural food product.

As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

9.2   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, disability, pregnancy (including childbirth or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, 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 How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint 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.

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

9.3   FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 (5 U.S.C. § 552) (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a), as implemented by USDA's regulations (7 CFR § 1, Subpart A7 CFR § 1, Subpart A) govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to their records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 2055, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0201, Telephone: (202) 302-0650; or email: AMS.FOIA@usda.gov.

9.4   PAPERWORK REDUCTION

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.