



WILTON SIMPSON  
COMMISSIONER

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Division of Administration

**NOTICE OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING  
OPPORTUNITY REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

CFR 200

**Funding Opportunity Number USDA-AMS-TM-RFSI-C-23-0001**

**I. Overview**

Recipient: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

Funding Opportunity Title: Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program

Announcement Type: Request for Federal Financial Assistance Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: 23RFSIFL0029

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: Number: 10.190

Federal Agency Name: United States Department of Agriculture

The information requested is pursuant to 2 CFR 200 and the federal awarding agency statutory authority.

**II. Federal Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Description**

Introduction/Program Description

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is entering into cooperative agreements with each U.S. State and Territory for Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program Cooperative Agreements (RFSI). This program is intended to provide similar support provided in other USDA funding for meat and poultry processing, but for the non-meat and poultry sectors. States will partner with USDA to make competitive subawards to support infrastructure in the middle-of-the-supply-chain for domestic food and farm businesses and other eligible entities. States may use a limited portion of funds to develop and/or strengthen the State's supply chain coordination and targeted market development services for local and regional produced products.

The overall goal of the RFSI is to create more and better processing options for local and regional producers across the specialty crops, dairy, grain (for food), aquaculture, and other sectors (excluding meat and poultry products, which are funded through other USDA programs), and by targeting gaps and opportunities in the pandemic assistance, Food Systems Transformation (FST) programs, and existing USDA grant programs that support the agricultural supply chain.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) was awarded a cooperative agreement from the USDA for the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program (RFSI).

FDACS will administer the RFSI Program funds through a sub-award process allowing eligible applicants to apply for a portion of Florida's allocated funds towards expanding the capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, infrastructure, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of regional agricultural products. Applicants must be able to request minimum award amounts of \$100,000 and maximum award amounts of \$3,000,000.

The purpose of the award is to build up resiliency within the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain in Florida, while strengthening local and regional food systems. The major focus will be on supporting Florida processors and producers.

With the RFSI funding, Florida's expected outcome is to support and increase expansion and capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, **excluding meat and poultry**.

Grant recipients will be required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding. The required match funding contribution or cost share will be reduced to 25% of the project cost for historically under-served producers, or for other businesses that qualify under SBA categories of small, disadvantaged business, women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business. FDACS will require that applicants self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications to being eligible for a reduced match.

NOTE: If funding remains near the end of the period of performance, FDACS will consider advertising equipment only non-matching projects (between \$10,000 and \$100,000).

Applicants must propose projects focused on middle-of-the-food-supply-chain (i.e., processing, aggregation, and distribution) resiliency. Applicants will be required to submit projects which include the purchase of allowable equipment (e.g., special purpose equipment) as well as construction and/or renovation activities.

Intended beneficiaries will be underserved farmers and ranchers, veteran producers, processors, and other middle of the supply chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals.

### Funding Priorities

Based on the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) outreach efforts, the following potential funding priorities have been identified:

- Modernizing equipment or facilities, specifically to allow for increased volumes of on site processing (cleaning, grading, etc.).
- Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, particularly refrigerated delivery trucks, ice machines, and processing components.
- Construction of new facilities and improvements to facilities, such as paving driveways, installing loading docks, and expanding washing and packing stations.
- Increasing packaging and labeling capacities such as bagging, boxing and labeling.

- Increasing storage space - specifically to increase cold storage, such as walk in coolers.

Ineligible products include:

meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, or dietary supplements.

Funding will be prioritized that benefit the following:

- Underserved farmers and ranchers (as defined by [USDA](#)).
- New and beginning farmers or ranchers.
- Processors and other middle-of-the-supply businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals (as defined by the U. S. Small Business Administration).
- Veteran producers.

Projects that receive funding will focus on the following:

- Offer family-supporting job quality and treatment/safety of workers.
- Focus on small and medium-sized enterprises that add options and choices for consumers and producers (emphasis on value-added).
- Demonstrate local support for the project.
- Support underserved communities; and
- Are submitted by cooperatives, farmer- and worker-owned enterprises.

### **III. Eligible Applicants**

- Agricultural producers or processors, or groups of agricultural producers and processors.
- Nonprofit organizations operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products.
- For-profit entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, or distribution of targeted agricultural products, whose activities are primarily focused for the benefit of local and regional producers, and that meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards are eligible.
- For-profit entities must meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards matched to industries described in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). For more information on these size standards, please visit [SBA Table of Size Standards](#). For a quick check on whether your business qualifies, please use the Size Standards Tool.
- Local government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products
- Tribal governments operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products.

- Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product.

All applying businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and project facilities must be physically located in Florida.

A complete Infrastructure Grant Project Proposal is required for all projects. Submission of the following documents is required:

- ✓ Verification of Matching Funds Letter
- ✓ Critical Resources Infrastructure Letter(s)
- ✓ RFSI Applicant Environmental Questionnaire
- ✓ RFSI Infrastructure Grant Application
- ✓ Letter of Support/Collaboration (optional)

Only one application is allowed per applicant.

If selected for submission to USDA-AMS, FDACS will conduct an Environmental Prescreening using the AMS-ENV-A Environmental Prescreening Worksheet ([AMS-ENV-A Environmental Pre-Screen Worksheet \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/ams/env-a)), and if needed, the AMS-ENV-B Environmental Screening Worksheet ([AMS-ENV-B Environmental Screening Worksheet \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/ams/env-b)).

### Eligible Projects

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Additionally, it uses resources specifically allocated to the project's work and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because, unlike operations, projects have a limited duration with a definitive beginning and end. A project will also have an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Infrastructure Grants will fund projects that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted agricultural products. Examples include:

- Expanding processing capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new wholesale/retail product lines;
- Modernizing equipment or facilities through upgrades, repairs, or retooling; (e.g., adapting product lines for institutional procurement or adding parallel processing capacity);
- Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, or delivery vehicles;
- Modernizing manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems;

- Enhancing worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment or facility improvements;
- Construction of a new facility;
- Increasing packaging and labeling capacities that meet compliance requirements under applicable laws (e.g. sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment);
- Increasing storage space, including cold storage;
- Develop, customize or install climate-smart equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality, and/or meets one or more of USDA's climate action goals;
- Modernize equipment or facilities to ensure food safety, including associated Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation, plan development and employee training; and
- Training on the use of all equipment purchased under the grant and associated new processes;

Allowable activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects may include:

- Hiring term-limited personnel to assist with project implementation activities;
- Purchasing special purpose equipment: defined in section 8.2 of the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#)
- Purchasing of special purpose equipment for institutions or others that will benefit multiple producers through middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product;
- Analyzing potential facility upgrades and changes that meet regulatory requirements, obtaining design and/or architecture services, etc. (to the extent these costs are directly related to the project);
- Planning for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) or other food safety or worker safety measures or equipment recommendations; and
- Upgrades or new facilities for processing specific agricultural products, such as:
  - On-farm post-harvest processing, preservation, and storage/cold storage;
  - post-harvest cleaning and grading;
  - Aggregator warehouse and storage, including cooperatives;
  - Purchase of freezing equipment, freezer, or cold storage;
  - Processing, canning, preserving and pasteurization;
  - Preparation and packing;
  - Drying, hulling, shelling, and milling; and
  - Cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, fermenting.

The following activities are **not eligible** for funding:

- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products; [AMS RSFI Program Scope and Requirements Section 1.2.1](#)
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program;
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities through an Infrastructure Grant. However, Infrastructure grants may build on the successes of prior funding, such as the USDA Regional Food Business Centers Business Builder subawards, to fund subsequent activities.

#### Evidence of Critical Infrastructure

Applicants must submit evidence (in MS Word or PDF) that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and working condition at the time of application submission. Applicants should use the, [Critical-Resource-Infrastructure-Letter-Template.pdf](#), which must include the following:

- Project Applicant Name
- Project Title
- A statement about committing/approving/granting permission, etc. of the critical resource or infrastructure to the project for the project 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

#### Letters of Support/Collaborators

When requested, letters of support/collaborations can be very influential in determining whether or not your project/program is worthy of funding. Most letters have three parts:

- an opening statement that identifies the project/program where funds are being sought;
- one or two middle paragraphs that indicate the relationship of the writer to the effort seeking funding; and a closing statement.

Letters of support/collaboration are optional but if submitted the letter(s) must be received with the original grant application. Please do not include more than three letters of support if you choose to do so. [Collaborating Organization Template.pdf](#)

#### National Environmental Policy Act

FDACS is required to ensure that Infrastructure Grant recipients comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHIPA),

Endangered Species Act (ESA), and all other federal environmental laws and regulations. FDACS is required to review projects for NEPA compliance before the award of Infrastructure Grant subaward funds. To do this, all applicants must complete the RFSI Applicant Environmental Questionnaire. If selected for submission to USDA, FDACS will conduct an environmental screening using **AMS-ENV-A Environmental Prescreening Worksheet** and the **AMS-ENV-B Environmental Screening Worksheet**. Applicants should review the [Application Environmental Questionnaire \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/infrastructure/grants/infrastructure-grant-application-environmental-questionnaire) to help determine impact.

#### USDA Substantial Involvement

A cooperative agreement means a legal instrument of financial assistance between a Federal awarding agency and a recipient or a pass-through entity and a subrecipient. (See 2 C.F.R. § 200.1.) A cooperative agreement is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement of the Federal awarding agency in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.

USDA will be substantially involved throughout the period of performance of the award. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Maintaining engagement to ensure that implementation maintains consistency across states and in alignment with RFSI program purpose while also being responsive to the specific needs of the producers in the state. This may include coordinating state partner meetings.
- Sharing expertise and resources on local and regional food systems, market development, value chain coordination or other topics identified as useful to support state RFSI activities.
- Providing specific direction or redirection of work during the period of performance including reallocation of Infrastructure Grant funds or supply chain coordination funds to alternative projects or uses, as needed.
- Developing and disseminating clear and consistent branding for this program. USDA will coordinate with states on all award announcements to ensure they are amplified at the federal level and provide opportunities for USDA officials to attend announcement events if feasible. States will also coordinate with USDA on events or ribbon-cuttings or other events to highlight success of Infrastructure Grant projects.
- Collaborating with States on data collection methods and data analysis for performance reports.

#### **IV. Key Dates**

Action Item	Timeframe	Location
Notice of Federal Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Advertisement	06/10/2024	Posted electronically via: <a href="#">Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program</a>
Submission of Questions	From 06/10/2024 To 07/04/2024	All questions must be submitted electronically to: <a href="mailto:Grants@FDACS.gov">Grants@FDACS.gov</a>

Responses to Questions Posted	From 06/15/2024 To 07/12/2024	Posted electronically to <a href="#">Grant Opportunities</a> · <a href="#">FDACS</a>
Application Submission Deadline	08/05/2024	<a href="#">Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program</a>
Evaluation of Applications selected and included in Florida's State Plan	From 08/05/2024 To 08/19/2024	Review and evaluation of applications begins.
Anticipated USDA-AMS approval of Florida's State Plan	10/18/2024	Anticipated USDA-AMS approval of Florida State Plan
Award Notice	11/01/2024	Posted electronically via: <a href="http://www.fdacs.gov">www.fdacs.gov</a>
Subrecipient Agreement End Date	03/31/2027	All project concludes

#### V. **Submission Dates, Times, and Location**

**The submission deadline is Monday, August 05, 2024.** Applicants may upload a complete Word application packet to [Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program](#)

Digital application packets must be fully uploaded by the submission deadline. Applicants submitting an electronic application do not need to mail a hard copy.

**Applicants who elect to use the online application process must ensure that submissions are in PDF format. It is advised that applicants do not wait until the final date/time to upload their submission.**

**It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure its submittal at the proper place and time indicated in the notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity notice. No extensions. No exceptions.**

#### VI. **Statutes and Regulations**

RFSI is funded through Section 1001(b)(4) of the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

#### VII. **Award Information**

Total amount of funding available	\$8,043,348.00
Anticipated number of awards	Not determined
Maximum grant award to a single applicant	\$3,000,000
Minimum grant award to a single applicant	\$100,000
Period of Performance	Upon Execution of Agreement – March 31 2027



## **VIII. Definitions**

**Applicant:** Entity that submits an application for federal financial assistance under this notice of funding opportunity.

**Application Packet:** Complete written response of the applicant to the notice of federal financial assistant funding opportunity including properly completed forms, supporting documents and attachments.

**Business hours:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern standard time on business days.

**Business days:** Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays.

**Calendar days:** All days, including weekends and holidays.

**Commissioner:** Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Florida.

**FDACS:** Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, an agency of the State of Florida.

**Grant Manager:** An employee of FDACS, who is designated to be responsible for the monitoring and management of the subrecipient agreement.

**Local Government:** A county government, a municipality (an incorporated city, town, or village), a school board district or an independent special district.

**Non-profit Organization:** An organization which has filed an application with Florida's Secretary of State for nonprofit corporate status pursuant to Section 617, Florida Statutes, and has been issued a federal employer identification number by the Internal Revenue Service.

**Subrecipient Agreement:** Formal agreement that will be awarded to the successful applicant under this notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

### **Additional Definitions**

**New and Beginning Farmer or Rancher:** An individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

**Cooperatives:** A business or service organization (1) that is owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its services and (2) whose benefits (services received and earnings allocations) are distributed to the user-owners based on how much they use the cooperative.

**Critical Resources:** Critical resources and infrastructure can be facilities, land, structure, use of city streets/parks, shared-used kitchens, and/or other resources that are essential for the proposed project activities.

**Domestically owned:** An entity organized in the United States under the law of the State, the states, or under Tribal jurisdiction where the entity operates, and a majority of the entity is owned by US citizens.

**Food Access Considerations:** Distinct cultural markets, marginalized communities, or defined by USDA as low-income low access.

**Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP):** HACCP provides a framework for establishments to conduct science-based process controls that can be validated as effective in eliminating, preventing, or reducing to an acceptable level the food safety hazards that are reasonably likely to occur in an official establishment's particular production processes.

**Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher:** Four groups are defined by USDA as "Historically Underserved," including farmers or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource as described at "Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers" | Natural Resources Conservation Service [USDA](#)

**Infrastructure Grant Project recipients:** RFSI subaward recipients who are awarded Infrastructure Grants by the Lead State Agency, who is the primary recipient.

**Institutions:** These include organizations such schools (K-12; colleges/universities), hospitals, food banks, gleaners, food rescue, workplace cafeterias, prisons, and care centers (senior, preschools)

**Intermediaries:** Includes aggregators, distributors, food hubs, brokers, auction houses, and wholesale.

**Mid-Size Producers:** USDA defines small family farms as those with a Gross Cash Farm Income (GCFI) of less than \$350,000; mid-size farms have a GCFI of \$350,000 to \$999,999.

**Lead State Agency:** Governmental agency within the State or Territory coordinating the application. The Lead State Agency must be the governmental agencies, commissions, or departments that is responsible for agriculture within the State or Territory and with whom AMS has entered an RFSI cooperative agreement.

**Nonprofit Corporations:** 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 inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

**Retail:** Includes businesses such supermarkets, restaurants and caterers, and direct and other to retail markets (food cooperatives, small independent grocers, corner stores).

**Small Disadvantaged Business:** A business that is small according to SBA's size standards for its business type and that is 51% or more owned and controlled by one or more disadvantaged persons. The disadvantaged person or persons must be socially disadvantaged and economically disadvantaged. For the purposes of this designation, disadvantaged persons is defined per eCFR 13 CFR 124.103 -- "Who is socially disadvantaged?" as "Those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control." See "Small Disadvantaged Business" (sba.gov) for more information.

**Tribal Entities:** Tribal Entities is expansive and include all entities falling under the eligible legal structures, including but not limited to: tribal owned corporations, intertribal non-profits and associations, Alaska Native Corporations, Native entities within the State of Alaska recognized by and eligible to receive services from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native Hawaiian organizations including Homestead Associations, State recognized tribes/non-profits, and individually-owned Native American entities.

**Tribe:** means the term as defined in the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-454; 108 Stat. 4791, 4792).

**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.
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product.
- 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.
- 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 and, 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.

**Veteran Farmer or Rancher:** A producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof, was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for no more than 10 years or who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

**Veteran-Owned Small Business:** A small business, as defined by the SBA size standard for its business type that has no less than 51% of the business owned and controlled by one or more veterans. For those veterans who are permanently and totally disabled and unable to manage the daily business operations of their business, their business may still qualify if their spouse or appointed, permanent caregiver is assisting in that management. See "Veteran contracting assistance programs" ([sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov)) for more information.

**Women-Owned Small Business:** A small business according to SBA size standards for its business type that is at least 51% owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens; and have women manage day-to-day operations who also make long-term decisions. See "Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract program" ([sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov)) for more information.

## IX. **Cost Sharing (Matching) Requirements**

Infrastructure grant project recipients are required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to the grant. This applies to all applicants except those who qualify for the reduced match described below.

Reduced Matching Funds– Historically Underserved Groups: For [Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)](#) or other businesses that qualify under [SBA categories](#) of small, disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, or veteran-owned small businesses, the required match funding contribution or cost share is reduced to 25% of the project cost. Applicants must self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications to being eligible for this reduced match.

Other Matching Fund Information: In-kind contributions are defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as a match contribution to the project as described in [C.F.R. § 200.306\(e\)](#). These contributions cannot satisfy a cost-share or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used to satisfy a match requirement under any other federal grant agreement to which the applicant is a party.

- All matching contributions must be committed or secured when an applicant is recommended for an award.
- Indirect costs may count toward the Infrastructure Grant Project recipient's match. Refer to [USDA-AMS RFSI Program Scope and Requirements Section 4.2](#), for more information.
- Program income (as defined in [2 C.F.R. § 200.1](#) ) or any other Federal funds is an ineligible source of match or cost share.

**Matching Funds and Letters of Verification:** Each application must include the total amount of match and how it will specifically align with their requested funding. Additionally, applicants must submit one match verification letter for EACH cash or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization. The applicant must submit and provide the match verification using the [Match-Verification-Letter-Template.pdf](#) which must include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- Cash Commitment per year (if applicable) and Total Cash Match
- In-kind Contribution per year (if applicable) and Total In-kind Match. Break down items into categories as applicable:
  - Salaries (employee name, title, duties, pay rate/hr., amount matched per year)
  - Items/Activities (fair market value per unit, how value is determined, and amount matched per year)
  - Explanation of how each type of match will correspond to the budget or be used by the applicant.
  - Signature of Matching Organization Representative with typed name and title.

Signed Verification of Matching Funds Letter(s) must accompany the Infrastructure Grant Project proposal to FDACS at the time of application.

Applicants will be required to submit documentation for cost sharing. A cost share may either be in the form of a cash contribution, donated services, donated equipment, or donated property. Cost sharing used in previous subrecipient awards or in other current subrecipient awards cannot be used for this subrecipient award.

#### Sample Match Requirement

Recipients of Infrastructure Grants must provide matching funds equal to the federal fund award amount, or 50% of the total project cost. For a project requesting the minimum \$100,000 federal grant amount, an equivalent \$100,000 recipient contribution is required.

RFSI Match Calculator 50% Match Requirement	
	Amount
Total Project Amount:	\$ 200,000.00
Federal Funds Requested:	\$ 100,000.00
Cost-Sharing/Matching Amount:	\$ 100,000.00

The table below illustrates the match that would be contributed towards a minimum \$100,000-federal funded project by an applicant that qualified for reduced match.

RFSI Match Calculator 25% Reduced Match Requirement	
	Amount
Total Project Amount:	\$ 133,333.33
Federal Funds Requested:	\$ 100,000.00
Cost-Sharing/Matching Amount:	\$ 33,333.33

#### **X. Funding Source and/or Restrictions**

RFSI is funded through Section 1001(b)(4) of the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. FDACS will offer RFSI funding to Infrastructure Project Grants through a competitive subawards process administered according to the USDA requirements.

All awarded projects must be completed by March 31, 2027, and no extensions will be permitted. Projects cannot begin until USDA-AMS has announced the official award, a Grant Agreement between FDACS and the approved applicant has been signed and returned, and a purchase order for the sub-award has been completed.

FDACS reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

FDACS reserves the right to award, or not award, subrecipient agreement(s) based on the availability of federal funds.

FDACS' obligation to pay under this subrecipient agreement is contingent upon funding by the federal agency.

Funding is available for project work initiated and completed during the award period.

Funding is subject to the amount of spending authority allocated by the Florida Legislature.

The allowability of costs shall be in accordance with the federal financial assistance cost principles applicable to the subrecipient.

**XI. Cost of Preparation**

FDACS is not liable for any costs incurred by the applicant in response to the notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

**XII. Public Records**

Article 1, section 24, Florida Constitution, guarantees every person access to all public records, and Section 119.011, Florida Statutes, provides a broad definition of public record. As such, all responses to a federal financial assistance funding opportunity are public records unless exempt by law. Any applicant claiming that its response contains information that is exempt from the public records law shall clearly segregate and mark that information and provide the specific statutory citation for such exemption.

**XIII. Request Application Packet**

The application packet is available online at *(Administration will add a unique URL per funding opportunity)*.

If you are unable download the application packet, a written request for the application packet should be submitted to [Grants@fdacs.gov](mailto:Grants@fdacs.gov).

**XIV. General Instructions for Application Packet**

Carefully review all materials and prepare the responses accordingly.

The application packet must be complete and provide all the required information by the submission deadline to be considered. Application packets that fail to provide all the required forms and signatures will be considered non-responsive and consequently will be removed from the evaluation process.

For all corporate applicants, proof of corporate status must be provided with the application.

For nonprofit applicants, documentation that verifies the official nonprofit status of an organization in accordance with Chapter 617, Florida Statutes, must be provided with the application.

Please ensure that all attachments reflect the applicant's name and funding opportunity number.

Unless otherwise noted, all hard copy application packets must be submitted on 8 ½" by 11" plain white paper. Pages on hardcopy and digital submissions must be consecutively numbered for ease of reading.

**XV. Application Package Components** Applicants are required to complete the AMS RFSI Infrastructure Grant Application [RFSI Infrastructure Grant Application](#).

FDACS forms must be used. Substitute forms will not be reviewed. Do not alter the pages unless the page indicates that it can be modified. Applications that do not include all required pages will be removed from the evaluation process.

**XVI. Clarifications/Revisions**

Before award, FDACS reserves the right to seek clarifications or request any information deemed necessary for proper evaluation of submissions from all applicants deemed eligible for the subrecipient agreement. Failure to provide requested information may result in rejection of the application.

**XVII. Rejection of Applications**

FDACS reserves the right to reject any and all applications or waive any minor irregularities when to do so would be in the best interest of the State of Florida, and to reject the proposal of an applicant whom FDACS determines is not in a position to perform the scope of work. Minor irregularities are those which will not have a significant or adverse effect on overall completion or performance.

**XVIII. System for Award Management (SAM) Registration**

The applicant must be registered in the System of Award Management (SAM) [SAM.gov Home/](#) The applicant will be required to maintain a registration for the duration of the award. Applicants who have an active exclusion may not be eligible for award.

The following must be completed by the time the application is submitted:

Obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI): All entities eligible to receive funds through this Program must register with the Federal System for Award Management at [SAM.gov Home/](#) and obtain a Unique Entity ID. This may include updating as required by the Federal government. Registering allows entities to do business with the Federal government and ensures that federal funds are not paid to organizations that have been suspended or disbarred. **Please note that sam.gov registration may take several weeks, so apply early if you intend to submit an application.**

**XIX. Late Applications**

Applications, hard copy or digital, received by FDACS after the application submission deadline will be rejected as untimely.

**XX. Evaluation Criteria**

Each application will be evaluated and scored based on the criteria listed below.

- a. Executive Summary/Infrastructure Context: Up to 20 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - Does the applicant define the problem the project is proposing to address?
  - Does the project address the problem?
  - Does this project meet the goal of enhancing or strengthening the organization's equipment needs or infrastructure?

- Does the project enable or facilitate cooperation or resource sharing with entities other than that of the applicant?
- b. Project Work Plan: Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - How well do tasks relate to the objectives and performance measures?
  - Is the timeline reasonable?
- c. Project Description: Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - How well does the applicant describe the project?
  - How well does the applicant define the need for and purpose of the project?
  - How consistent are project objectives with objective for the grant and Program?
- d. Measurable Outcomes: Up to 15 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - Does the project include at least one measurable outcome?
  - How significant is the outcome to the Florida or local food supply chain?
  - How clear, appropriate, and realistic are the goals and objectives?
- e. FDACS' Priorities: Up to 15 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - Modernizing equipment or facilities, specifically to allow for increased volumes of on-site processing (cleaning, grading, etc.).
  - Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, particularly refrigerated delivery trucks, ice machines, and processing components.
  - Construction of new facilities and improvements to facilities, such as paving driveways, installing loading docks, and expanding washing and packing stations.
  - Increasing packaging and labeling capacities such as bagging, boxing and labeling.
  - Increasing storage space-Specifically to increase cold storage, such as walk in coolers.
- f. Project Partner and Beneficiary Impact: Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the following:
  - Does the applicant clearly demonstrate how the project will have an impact on more than one Florida 's food producer by creating a new revenue stream for multiple producers or increasing the capacity of existing revenue streams for multiple Florida producers?
  - Does the project provide a direct benefit to and how effective will the project be at enhancing or strengthening the middle-of-the-supply-chain?



- Does the project specify ways to address food-related disparities within populations and communities?
  - Does the project demonstrate external partner support?
  - Does the application provide a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals impacted by the project results?
  - Does the project solely benefit a single entity or individual?
  - Does the project benefit small and medium-sized enterprises?
- g. Project Commitment and Oversight: Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the following:
- Does the applicant demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the project?
  - Does the application express the commitment and ability of the applicant to complete the project successfully?
- h. Budget: Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the relationship between the scope of work and the itemized budget narrative. The application must demonstrate the need and reasonableness of the projected costs. The applicant's budget narrative score will be based upon the following criteria:
- Did the applicant provide an itemized budget narrative?
  - Does the itemized budget narrative relate to the details in the scope of work?
  - Is each itemized budget line reasonable and necessary?
  - Does the budget plan tie to the budget narrative?
  - Is the budget adequate for the scope of the project?

The scores for each factor will be added to obtain a total score for each application. Funding will be awarded to applications according to the total score received. FDACS reserves the right to recommend partial funding of applications.

## **XXI. Evaluator(s)**

Per USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) the competitive application review process must follow state policies and procedures and include following:

- follow all applicable state policies and procedures;
- include the use of an independent review panel of experts or qualified individuals;
- include the factors and reasons for selecting an applicant and any changes in project proposal ranks/scores that may occur during the review process; and,
- maintain guidelines and procedures to prevent any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest as required by 2 C.F.R. § 400.2(b).

FDACS' evaluator(s) will consist of 3 or 5 individuals who FDACS determines have experience and knowledge in the program areas. The evaluator(s) will conduct a fair, impartial, and comprehensive evaluation of applications received in response to this notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

**XXII. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

All proposals selected as part of the Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Service's Grant Proposals will be submitted to USDA-AMS and reviewed by the USDA Review Board (Board) [USDA-AMS RFSI Program Scope and Requirements Section 1.5.5](#). The Board may respond with questions and recommendations for individual proposals requiring a timely response from the applicant to receive final USDA approval. Once the proposal is submitted to USDA-AMS and the proposal is approved, all applicants will be notified regarding their status, and approved applicants will receive a Subrecipient Agreement to sign and return.

**XXIII. Award Notice**

FDACS reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final award amount and scope of work prior to award.

The successful applicants will have thirty (30) days to fully execute the FDACS Subrecipient Agreement. Failure by the subrecipient to sign and return the Subrecipient Agreement, within 30 days upon receipt of the agreement, shall constitute forfeiture of the award.

Although it is the intent of FDACS to expedite the subrecipient grant award process as much as possible, applicants should be aware that execution of a Subrecipient Agreement could be delayed for some time until federal funding is received. Projects should be scheduled accordingly. No costs to be charged against the subrecipient award or counted as match can be incurred before the Subrecipient Agreement is executed.

**THIS IS NOT A COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION SUBJECT TO THE NOTICE OR CHALLENGE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 120.57(1) AND 120.57(3), FLORIDA STATUTES.**

**XXIV. Programmatic, Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The applicant shall be in compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations applicable to the federal funds provided by the federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

The applicant shall maintain an accounting system and a set of accounting records which allow for the identification of revenues and expenditures related to this funding opportunity.

**XXV. Acknowledgment of Funding**

The subrecipient shall have an acknowledgement of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) support placed on any publication written or published or audiovisual produced with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity, or audiovisuals produced with grant support. This requirement does not apply to audiovisuals produced as research instruments or for documenting experimentations or findings and not intended for presentation or distribution to the public.

In addition to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) section 11.0 Acknowledgement of Support, this program also requires that the recipient follow AMS requirements for signage and acknowledgement of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. AMS will provide guidance on necessary signage.

Any public infrastructure project funded under this cooperative agreement must coordinate with AMS to ensure adherence to Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act. For such projects, the recipient must comply with the Buy America Sourcing requirements outlined in the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. [Guidance on BABA requirements for USDA award recipient can be found here.](#)

#### Disposition of Improved Properties

The recipient cannot encumber property improved as part of the cooperative agreement award and must follow the requirements of [2 CFR §200.311](#) before disposing of the property. The real property will be used for the originally authorized purpose as long as needed for that purpose. When real property is no longer needed for the originally authorized purpose, the recipient must obtain disposition instructions from USDA-AMS. The following alternatives will apply:

1. Retain title after compensating the Federal awarding agency as described in [2 CFR Part 200.311\(c\)\(1\)](#).
2. Sell the property and compensate the federal awarding agency as specified in [2 CFR Part 200.311\(c\)\(2\)](#); or
3. Transfer the title to the Federal awarding agency or to a third party designated/approved by the Federal awarding agency as specified in [2 CFR Part 200.311 \(c\)\(3\)](#).

### **XXVI. Performance Report**

The applicant will submit a performance report as required using the format and content shown on the FDACS form which is downloadable at <http://forms.fdacs.gov/02018.pdf>. Quarterly and Annual reports are also required for all projects. A final report is also required after the completion of the grant project. Additional reporting may be required as determined necessary.

The final report must summarize the project's activities and evaluate the project's ability to meet the desired objectives and outcomes.

The final report must include:

- Project Summary
- Outcomes and Measures Achieved
- Project Beneficiaries
- Lessons Learned
- Contact Person
- Additional Information
- Budget Summary

### **XXVII. Reimbursement Requests**

All reimbursement requests must be submitted using FDACS' standard payment request packet, unless otherwise noted in the special conditions of the subrecipient agreement and provide supporting documentation for each cost. The subrecipient shall submit the payment request packet to the recipient's grant manager not more often than monthly, but not less often than quarterly. To be eligible for reimbursement, costs shall be allowable, necessary, and reasonable, and must be submitted by budget category consistent with

the budget plan submitted with applicant's application. The payment request packet is downloadable <http://forms.fdacs.gov/02019.pdf>.

Bills for any authorized travel expenses shall be submitted and paid in accordance with the rates specified in Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, governing payments by the State for travel expenses. Any travel expenses must be specified in the budget plan and scope of work.

**The FDACS agreement with the federal agency is a cost reimbursement format; therefore, no advance payments will be provided.**

Any work performed on the project and/or any expenditure made prior to a fully executed subrecipient agreement and written authorization from FDACS is ineligible for reimbursement.

**XXVIII. Disclaimer**

The receipt of applications in response to the notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity does not imply or guarantee that any one or all qualified applicants will result in a subrecipient agreement with FDACS.

**XXIX. Questions**

Applicants shall address all questions regarding this federal financial assistance funding opportunity notice to the purchasing office. All questions submitted shall be published and answered in a manner that all applicants will be able to view. Each applicant is responsible for monitoring the Vendor Bid System for updates and notifications regarding this funding opportunity. All questions shall be directed to [Grants@fdacs.gov](mailto:Grants@fdacs.gov)

**The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.**