Idaho - Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Grants
Program Updates and Clarifications
March 11, 2024 – new items added at the bottom

Below are updates to the RFSI grant program as well as answers to frequently asked questions:

Unique Identity Identified number (UEI)

- Applicants must obtain an Organizational Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number through SAM.Gov. Originally a UEI was not mandatory until just prior to executing individual grant agreements. USDA, however, is requiring a UEI for each applicant at the time ISDA submits selected projects to USDA in May. Applicants must have a UEI submitted to ISDA by **May 15**.

Compliance with Federal Laws and Regulations - NEPA

- **Both Simplified Equipment Only and** Infrastructure Grant Recipients will be reviewed for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and all other federal environmental laws and regulations.

- States are required to review projects for NEPA compliance prior to the award of Infrastructure Grant subaward funds. Subrecipients will be required to provide additional information and documentation to ISDA to ensure compliance with NEPA prior ~~to the execution of disbursement agreements~~ **prior to submission to USDA for approval in May**.

- Once grant applications have been reviewed, scored and selected to receive a grant, all recipients will be sent an environmental questionnaire to complete and return with additional supporting documentation.
  - Applicant Environmental Questionnaire

Pre-Award Costs

- USDA General Award Terms and Conditions provide for the approval of pre-award costs under certain circumstances with pre-approval. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture will not pursue approval of any pre-award costs for the RFSI program.

Purchasing Requirements – 3-bids

- Three bids are only required if the piece of equipment costs more than $15,000. The 3 bids are NOT needed at the time of application but are required before purchasing the item or contracting for the service. For equipment purchases, only one verification of the cost (quote, catalog, website) is needed at the time of application.

Match – Land

- Land cannot be used as match. The purchase of land is an unallowable cost, making land, as a match, unallowable as well.

Non-Profit Qualification for Reduced Match

- The determination is based upon the make-up of the board of directors or ownership of the non-profit and is not based upon the constituents served by the non-profit. To qualify for reduced match, more than 50% of the board membership or ownership of the non-profit must be comprised of individuals that meet the requirements for 25% graduated match.

Infrastructure Grant Application Construction Documents

If an Infrastructure Grant application includes construction, Construction documents have been added to the list of application materials required at the time of submission. Below is a revised list:

- **Application** – Must use the application template and complete all sections.
- **Match Verification Letters** for each source of match – Must use the verification letter template provided.
- **Critical Resources and Infrastructure Letter** – applicants must submit a Critical Resources and Infrastructure letter, using the mandatory template provided if critical resources/and or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed Infrastructure Grant project.
- **NICRA** – if you are claiming indirect costs and have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) negotiated with the Federal Government, you must submit a copy of your NICRA with your Infrastructure Grant application.
- **Letters of support** from entities other than the applicant to demonstrate local support for the project (Optional).
- **Equipment supporting documentation** – If equipment is being purchased, documentation must be submitted to substantiate the costs of each piece of equipment - contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by licensed commercial entities.
- **Construction Documents –** For projects involving construction, include any design and construction documents. If selected for funding, the grantee will be required to follow all applicable federal regulations regarding the construction activities.

Added March 11, 2024

Application Submission
- The application document must be emailed in the fillable form. Do not print and scan the form or add attachments to the form.
- Attachments must be added separately. Attachments may be consolidated by category. For example, for an infrastructure grant:
    - Application – attached as its own document
    - Match verification letter (s) – attach together as one
    - Critical Resources and Infrastructure letter (s) – attach together as one
    - Letters of Support - if applicable
    - Equipment supporting documentation - price info – attach together as one
    - Construction documents – attach together as one
    - NICRA - if applicable
- Therefore, there would be up to 7 attachments

Reduced Match for Veteran Small Businesses
- Per section IV in the Application Guidelines, page 5, veteran small businesses are eligible for reduced match. USDA recognizes that Veteran-owned small business were left off of the list of options for self-certification for graduated match.
- Check the Veteran Farmer box

Wells

- A well-pump would qualify as special purpose equipment. It would be allowable if the project met all other grant requirements. For an equipment only grant, however, the drilling and installation of the well is not allowable.

Used Equipment
- Used or re-conditioned equipment may be purchased from any source as long as it is in good working condition and purchased at a reasonable price.

Equipment vs supplies
- Lower cost items, particularly those under $5,000 and not installed in a kitchen or processing facility, such as portable racking systems and carts are considered supplies and not equipment.

Type of applicant
- Is a food processor an "Agricultural producer or processor" or a For-profit entity"? The answer is both. All applicants that check the first box "Agricultural producer or processor" must also check one of the other boxes, too.

TYPE OF APPLICANT

Select applicant type:

- [ ] **Agricultural producers or processors**, or groups of agricultural producers and processors.

- [ ] **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 more information on these size standards, please visit SBA's Size Standards webpage. For a quick check on whether your business qualifies, please use the Size Standards Tool.

- [ ] **Nonprofit organizations** operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural products

- [ ] **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.

Renting Equipment to Other Producers
- The equipment usage will need to be accurately outlined within the project proposal and be used on allowable activities during the period of performance for the RFSI.