



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

**Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Grant Program
Request for Applications
for INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

STATE OF WASHINGTON - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

PROJECT TITLE: Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Program

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award USDA Resilient Food System Infrastructure funds for projects that strengthen the local food system infrastructure in Washington state by building resilience in the middle of the supply chain.

RESPONSE DUE DATE: July 15, 2024, 5PM Pacific Standard Time

EXPECTED TIME PERIOD FOR SUBAWARD: September 2024 – May 2027

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT ELIGIBILITY: This procurement is open to entities that meet the minimum qualifications stated herein and have facilities located physically within the state of Washington. Infrastructure Grant grantees are referred to as “subrecipients” throughout this document.

FUNDING SOURCE AND METHOD: Funding for the RFSI Grant Program was made possible by a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service. Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis for allowable expenses as defined by the program guidelines. The contents of this RFA are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

2024 RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Prepared By the Washington State Department of Agriculture

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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award projects under the USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Grant Program. The purpose of this program is to strengthen local food system infrastructure in Washington state by building resilience in the middle of the supply chain, create new revenue streams for the state's producers, and support the development and expansion of local and regional food production and distribution networks.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), will offer a single competitive grant program for infrastructure projects. Projects should support infrastructure in the middle-of-the-supply-chain for Washington state food and farm businesses and other eligible entities. The food supply chain involves the following stages: 1. Production, 2. Processing, 3. Aggregation and Distribution, and 4. Markets and Consumers. RFSI Infrastructure Grant proposals must support the middle of the supply chain, which refers to second and third stages, Processing, and Aggregation and Distribution. This program supports food system crops and products meant for human consumption (excluding meat and poultry products, which are funded through other USDA programs).

Limited technical grant assistance will be offered throughout the application process to help those who request it. WSDA will not provide writing assistance to applicants but will connect them to external resources for support. WSDA encourages applicants and applications that are from or benefit, small farm and food businesses, veterans, women owned companies, and other historically marginalized groups.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the RFSI program include:

1. **Infrastructure Development:** Enhance the physical and organizational structures necessary for the production, processing, distribution, storage, and sale of food within Washington state.
2. **Capacity Building:** Support entities in increasing their ability to withstand disruptions to the food supply chain and adapt to future challenges.
3. **Innovation and Expansion:** Encourage innovative approaches to local and regional food system development and expand access to markets for small and mid-sized producers.
4. **Sustainability and Environmental Impact:** Promote practices that contribute to the sustainability of the food system and minimize negative environmental impacts.
5. **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure equitable access to program benefits, with a focus on supporting underserved communities and populations.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Entities

Entities eligible for RFSI grants include:

- 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*;
- 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.

* 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's [Size Standards website](#). For a quick check on whether your business qualifies, please use the [Size Standards Tool](#).

All applicant businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and applicants' facilities must be physically located within the state of Washington.

Eligible Activities

Middle-of-the-supply-chain activities refers to activities in the Processing and/or Aggregation and Distribution stages. Examples of activities are listed below. This is not a complete or exhaustive list; rather, the list below is meant to provide clarity on the meaning of "middle-of-the-supply-chain" activities:

- Packaging, including grading, sorting, and labeling; Processing, canning, preserving, or pasteurizing crops; Extraction of juice, oil, nut meat, etc. from crops
- Processing crops, such as chopping, washing, peeling, drying, hulling, milling, shelling, etc.
- Creating value-added products via cooking, baking, juicing, fermenting, distilling, etc.
- Processes or activities involving tracking, storage, cold storage, warehouse, and/or distribution of crops and/or products
- Enhancing worker safety and/or education in the above or similar activities
- Modernizing, developing, or expanding equipment or facilities used for the above or similar activities

Eligible Products

Funds will support expanded 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, fiber, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, landscaping

products, tobacco, and dietary supplements. 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.

Matching Funds Eligibility Requirement

Infrastructure grant recipients are required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding. This applies to all applicants except those who qualify for the reduced match described in the [Matching Funds Requirements](#) section.

FUNDING AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

WSDA anticipates that approximately \$7.3 million will be awarded to projects that expand middle-of-the-food-supply-chain capacity for locally and regionally produced foods. These grants are intended to offer more and better market opportunities as well as new streams of revenue to small and mid-sized agricultural producers, including those who may not have access to value-added opportunities or processing to meet market demand for premium or value-added products, such as underserved producers.

Projects can begin as soon as subrecipients are notified by WSDA that they have received the grant, which is expected in September 2024. The project must conclude by May 15, 2027.

AWARD LIMITS

The minimum award amount for an Infrastructure Grant is \$100,000 and the maximum award amount is \$3,000,000. The \$3,000,000 award cap does not include the in-kind/matching funds from the grant recipient. A grant applicant can apply for up to \$3,000,000 of RFSI funding and will be required to provide the appropriate matching funds noted in the [Matching Funds Requirements](#) section.

MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENTS

Grantees are required to contribute 50 percent of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding. This applies to all applicants except those who qualify for the reduced match described below. Match may consist of cash match, in-kind contributions, or any combination thereof. Program income (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1) or any other federal funding may not be used as match or cost share for RFSI grants.

Funds from state grants may be used as matching funds, so long as those funds do not originate from a federal pass-through grant and are not committed elsewhere as matching funds. Most state grants that are specific to the proposed RFSI project may be applied as match, but applicants should consult with a financial or legal advisor if uncertain.

For [historically underserved farmers and ranchers](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers) (https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers), or for other businesses that qualify under the [U.S. Small Business Administration categories](https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs) (https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs) of disadvantaged small business, women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business, the required match funding contribution or cost share is reduced to 25 percent of the project

cost. Applicants must self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications as being eligible for this reduced match.

See below examples using 50 and 25 percent match requirements:

RFSI Match Calculator 50 Percent Match Requirement	
Total Project	\$200,000
Federal Funds Requested	\$100,000
Matching Funds/In-kind Amount Required	\$100,000

RFSI Match Calculator 25 Percent Match Requirement	
Total Project	\$200,000
Federal Funds Requested	\$150,000
Matching Funds/In-kind Amount Required	\$50,000

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 and project budget. Additionally, applicants must submit one match verification letter for EACH cash or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization. A matching funds verification template will be provided by the WSDA.

Signed Match Verification Letters must accompany the grant proposal at the time of application, due July 15, 2024. Please see Appendix E for a template for matching funds verification template.

Cash match is defined as real cash contributed to project.

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Cash contributed by the applicant’s organization;
- Equipment to be purchased by applicant’s organization for RFSI project activities;
- Personnel to be hired by the applicant organization to help with the project, who will not be hired if the grant is not funded;
- Paying for a project brochure and/or its dissemination.

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 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(e). These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used toward satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement to which the applicant is a party.

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Personnel time given to the project;
- Person on loan from another organization/corporation;
- Use of existing equipment or facilities.

All matching contributions must be committed or secured at the time an applicant is recommended for an award.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses. A cost may not be allocated as an indirect cost if it also incurred as a direct cost for the same purpose and vice versa.

Grantees (federal subrecipients) with a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) can request indirect costs up to the amount of their NICRA. A copy of the NICRA must be submitted with the application. Otherwise, applicants may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

All entities which elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use their Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as the base. MTDC are defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>) as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, up to the first \$25,000 of each grant (regardless of the period of performance of the grants 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 RFSI grant in excess of \$25,000. 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.

As described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a recipient chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the recipient may apply to do at any time, and which would be applicable to future federal grant awards.

FEDERAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS

RFSI Infrastructure Grant subrecipients must comply with the requirements of the following:

- a. USDA AMS General Terms and Conditions
- b. RFSI Program Specific Terms and Conditions
- c. Standard Form 424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs.
- d. Form AD-1047, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters - Primary Covered Transactions.
- e. Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions.
- f. Form AD-1049, Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants) Alternative I - For Grantees Other Than Individuals.

- g. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Note: The appropriate lobbying disclosure report form, SF-LLL, is available from the Federal Agency if applicable. (a) Exception to the above: Certification Regarding Lobbying is not required from recipients of a Federal contract, grant, or cooperative agreement of \$100,000 or less.
- h. 2 CFR Part 170, Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information.
- i. 2 CFR Part 175, Award Term for Trafficking in Persons.
- j. National policy requirements contained in 2 CFR 1 – 200 and 400 et seq.
- k. In accepting the provisions of the award, the subrecipient certifies that all employees and personnel responsible for providing the economic, marketing, or scientific data ensure the integrity and accuracy of the information. USDA has in place a Scientific Integrity Policy (DR 1074-001) that can be found at: <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/directives-categories>
- l. Prohibition Against Using Funds under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements:
- (a) The subrecipient may not require its employees, contractors, or second-tier subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting them from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.
- (b) The subrecipient must notify its employees, contractors, or second-tier subrecipients that the prohibitions and restrictions of any internal confidentiality agreements inconsistent with paragraph (a) of this award provision are no longer in effect.
- (c) The prohibition in paragraph (a) of this award provision does not contravene requirements applicable to any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.
- (d) If the Government determines that the subrecipient is not in compliance with this award provision, it:
- (1) Will prohibit the subrecipient's use of funds under this award, in accordance with sections 743, 744 of Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) or any successor provision of law; and
 - (2) May pursue other remedies available for the subrecipient's material failure to comply with award terms and conditions.
- (e) The subrecipient further certifies that any service provider with concerns, questions, complaints, or information regarding possible violations of scientific integrity will report those concerns, either directly or through WSDA's management, to the contracting officer who will forward those concerns to the AMS Scientific Integrity Officer (ASIO) or use the OIG Hotline at: <https://usdaoig.oversight.gov/>
- (f) Delinquency on Federal Debt Any organization or individual that is indebted to the United States and has a judgment lien filed against it for a debt to the United States, is ineligible to receive a Federal grant. If the applicant discloses a delinquency, the SCBGP may not award the grant until the debt is satisfied or satisfactory arrangements are made with the agency to which the debt is owed. Anyone who has been judged to be in default on a federal debt and who has had a judgment lien filed against him or her should not be listed as a participant in an application for a SCBGP grant until the judgment is paid in full or is otherwise satisfied. No funds may be budgeted following an award to pay such an individual. The Federal Agency will disallow costs charged to awards that provide funds to individuals in violation of this requirement.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are required to complete and submit their proposal online using the application portal on WSDA's website. The application portal can be found here: <https://webportalapp.com/sp/wsdarfsi>

Applicants must create a user account in the application portal to submit a proposal. The application will walk applicants through a series of questions, with the opportunity to upload appropriate documentation at the end. Questions are answered in one or more of the following formats: a drop-down menu, a text box with predetermined character limitations, yes/no, single-choice, multiple-choice, or a document attachment. Responses to all questions must be submitted in the manner and format required by the application questionnaire in the portal, without exception.

The WSDA website provides a Frequently Asked Questions document, available in English and Spanish. For technical questions about the application portal, please reach out to the Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or email RFSI@agr.wa.gov.

Submitting Documents

When submitting your proposal for review, an applicant must upload the following documents as attachments through the application portal:

1. Attachment A – Critical Resource and Infrastructure template
2. Attachment B – Matching Fund Letter of Verification template
3. Attachment C – Budget Worksheet
4. Attachment D – AMS-ENV-A Worksheet (Construction only)
5. Attachment E – AMS-ENV-B Worksheet (Construction only)
6. Attachment F – WA Dept. Ecology Water Quality Permit or Application (May be required IF the project uses water)

Please include your applicant's name in the file name structure such as:

- Applicantname_critical_fromname
- Applicantname_matchletter_fromname
- Applicantname_budget
- Applicantname_ENVA
- Applicantname_ENVB
- Applicantname_EcologyPermitApp

COMPUTER SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure proposals and attachments are submitted successfully, WSDA strongly encourages all applicants to comply with the computer system recommendations provided by the application portal. WSDA cannot guarantee that the application portal will be compatible with other browsers or operating systems. Use of other browsers or operating systems may limit the ability of WSDA staff to provide applicants with technical assistance, should any issues arise. WSDA recommends that applicants:

- Use Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari;
- Use a computer instead of a mobile device, if possible;
- Save work often; the system will time out periodically, and any unsaved work will be lost.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has over two decades of experience working to develop regional food systems and providing targeted support for farms and food businesses, including facilitating market connections between local producers and schools and food hubs and hunger relief programs. The experience and understanding gained through this work with food producers provides the foundation for WSDA's identified priorities for the Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) program. Funding priorities are as follows:

- Projects submitted directly by growers, producers, processors, shippers, etc. that support middle-of-the-supply-chain activities.
- Projects that benefit one or more of the following:
 - Historically underserved farmers as defined by USDA;
 - Socially disadvantaged farmers as defined by AB 1348, the Farmer Equity Act of 2017;
 - Agricultural operations that qualify as small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, or veteran-owned businesses as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Projects that expand capacity for processing, aggregation and distribution of agricultural products to create more and better markets for producers;
- Construction and infrastructure projects that demonstrate feasibility that the projects can reasonably be completed within the grant duration.
- Projects that modernize manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems;
- Projects that improve the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements;
- Projects that modernize or expand an existing facility (including expansion and modifications to existing buildings and/or construction of new buildings at existing facilities);
- Projects focused on the construction of wastewater management structures and other similar infrastructure;
- Projects that modernize processing and manufacturing equipment; and
- Projects that develop, customize, or install equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality, and/or aligns with one or more of USDA's Action Plan for Climate Adaptation and Resilience proposed adaptation actions.

APPLICATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Application Assistance

WSDA staff will assist RFSI applicants in developing their proposals during weekly online office hours beginning June 4, 2024, and continuing through July 9, 2024. For the full office hours schedule and Microsoft Teams meeting details, visit <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>.

Technical Assistance

WSDA encourages RFSI applicants to connect with their local associated development organizations, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), WSU Extension, the Northwest Agricultural Business Center and other similar organizations to learn about resources available to support farm and food businesses

with federal grant processes and applications. To ensure available assistance for general application, eligibility, and federal funding applicant questions, WSDA has entered a partnership with the WA SBDC.

SBDC contact information for RFSI applicants is:

<https://wsbdc.org/>
washington@wsbdc.org
 833-492-7232

SBDC will provide telephone, virtual and email assistance in English and Spanish. Complex issues may receive one on one applicant assistance with the SBDC. In addition to WSDA office hours the SBDC will conduct three training webinars covering RFSI and the application process. For the webinar schedule please visit: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>

RFA COORDINATOR

The RFA Coordinator is the sole point of contact in WSDA for this RFA. All communication between the Applicant and WSDA upon release of this RFA shall be with the RFA Coordinator, as follows:

Name: Sean Krumhauer

Email: RFSI@agr.wa.gov

Website: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>

ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF GRANT SOLICITATION ACTIVITIES

Issue Request for Applications	May 30, 2024
Questions for Q&A accepted	May 30 – July 8
Updated FAQ posted periodically	June 6 – July 10
Office Hours	Tuesdays at 10:00AM PST June 4 - July 9, 2024 Thursdays at 2PM PST June 6 – June 27, 2024
Applications due	July 15, 2024, at 5PM PST
Evaluate applications	July 16 – August 22
Announce “Apparent Successful Grantees” (ASG) and send notifications via e-mail to unsuccessful Applicants	August 23, 2024
Hold debriefing conferences (if requested)	August 26 – 30
Invite ASG to submit final USDA application form	August 26 – 30
Submit proposed Apparent Successful Grantees to USDA for final review and approval	August 31
Grant agreement negotiations	September 3 – 30
Earliest date grant agreement may be signed	September 6, 2024
Project Completion Date	May 15, 2027

WSDA reserves the right to revise the above schedule. Subawards cannot be confirmed until the USDA has approved of each award. Then WSDA will notify the apparent successful grantee and begin grant agreement negotiations.

OTHER GRANT PROGRAMS

In addition to the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, WSDA offers several grant programs that address local infrastructure, improve access to and consumption of healthy Washington foods, and provide direct assistance to Washington state farmers and ranchers. For a comprehensive list of WSDA's grant programs, please visit: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities>

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Applicants must apply using the application portal; links can be found on the [WSDA RFSI website \(https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure\)](https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure). Failure to answer one or more application questions may result in disqualification. The following questions and descriptions are provided as a preview of the application, accessible only through the application portal:

RFSI Infrastructure Grant Application Questions

Applicant Profile

Applicant Organization:

Legal name of the organization that will serve as lead for the project and will receive and oversee the use of grant funds. The name listed must match the organization's federal tax return.

Business Structure:

Using the drop-down menu, select the entity type that best describes the applicant.

Taxpayer Identification Number:

Enter the applicant's 9-digit taxpayer identification number in the format 12-1234567.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

Enter the applicant's UEI number, if known. To obtain a UEI, please visit SAM.gov (<https://sam.gov/content/home>). If awarded RFSI funds, recipients will need to obtain a UEI before a grant agreement can be executed.

WA Unified Business Identifier (UBI):

Enter the applicant's 9-digit UBI number. Find your UBI number at www.dor.wa.gov.

Description of Applicant Organization:

Briefly describe the applicant organization, the services it provides, and/or the purpose of the organization.

Washington State Legislative District:

Using the drop-down menus, select the districts where the applicant and project are located. To identify districts, please visit: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>. RFSI funds cannot support projects outside of the State of Washington. Visit the USDA AMS RFSI website (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsi>) for information about the RFSI program in other states or territories.

6 Digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code:

Visit the US Company Lookup Tool by NAICS/com to identify the code that best reflects your primary business activity. <https://www.naics.com/naics-identification-help/>

Business Entity Type:

All businesses MUST meet the eligibility criteria and be operating middle of the supply chain activities such as processing, aggregation, or distribution of targeted agricultural products. From the dropdown menu, select the entity type that best describes the applicant.

Applicant Mailing and Physical Address:

Physical and mailing address (if different) for the applicant.

Contact Information:

Please enter contact information for the individual who is authorized to execute a funding agreement and receive grant funds, as well as a secondary contact. The primary contact should be the main contact for any correspondence. The secondary contact should be authorized to discuss and make decisions related to the project. Collected information includes phone number, email address, and mailing address.

Submitting Organization:

Select yes or no. If yes, contact the RFA Coordinator to discuss the circumstances.

Project Information**Project Title:**

Concisely describe the project in 15 words or less, with a unique and descriptive title.

Award Requested:

The total amount of RFSI funds requested for the project should be entered into the "Award Requested" box on the Project Information page. This number must match the amount listed under the Grant Funding Subtotal on the Budget page. Funds requested must range from \$100,000 to \$3,000,000; requests outside of this range may result in disqualification.

Required Match Rate:

See Matching Funds Requirements section for details regarding which entities are eligible for the reduced match requirement.

Cash Match and In-Kind Match Contributions:

Matching funds, including cash match and in-kind contributions, are required for RFSI Infrastructure Grant projects. Please see the Matching Funds Requirement section for more information.

Proposal Application Form**Executive Summary:**

Provide a brief description of the proposed project (250 words maximum). Ideally this should be two to three sentences, or a combination of sentences and bulleted list items. It should include:

- Name of applicant
- Project purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes
- Key tasks or activities to be completed

If funded, this summary will be published by WSDA and USDA and shared with the public.

Funding Priorities:

Using the checkboxes, select one or more of the RFSI Funding Priorities listed in this RFA that are aligned with the project.

Duration of Project:

Enter the start date and end date for the proposed project. The start and end dates must fall between September 1, 2024 and May 15, 2027.

Applicant Project Type:

Using the checkboxes, select the applicable project type from the list provided. Applicants may select more than one project type.

Provide the Specific Issue, Problem, or Need That the Project Will Address:

Within the text box, identify the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.

Project Objectives:

Provide a list of the objectives that this project hopes to achieve. Name each objective by number and provide a description of the objective(s).

Project Beneficiaries:

- Estimate the number of project beneficiaries. The number cited should be a reasonable estimate of the number of individuals that could realistically be **directly impacted** by the results of the project. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the number of beneficiaries is trackable and reportable **within the project duration**.
- Using the checkboxes, select all applicable beneficiaries from those listed. Check all that apply.

Other Support from Federal or State Grant Programs (NOT SCORED):

Indicate if this project been submitted for funding to a federal or state grant program other than the RFSI and/or if a federal or state grant program other than the RFSI is funding the project currently. If yes, please describe the following in the provided text box:

1. The name(s) of the other grant program and the agreement number(s).
2. How the RFSI project differs from, or builds upon, the other proposed or funded projects.
3. The mechanisms in place to ensure the RFSI project does not duplicate costs or activities for the other project(s).

Graduated Match Self-Certification:

To qualify for the 25 percent graduated match, the applicant must meet the definition of one of the provided groups. Select the applicable checkbox(es) as well as the certification checkbox at the bottom.

External Project Support:

Within the text box, name the stakeholders (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project) who support the need for this project and describe why they support the project.

Does the project have a new wastewater component?

Select yes or no from the drop-down list.

Does the project require any construction or ground disturbance?

Select yes or no from the drop-down list.

Does the project have any construction element and applicant must also comply with BABA? *

Select yes or no from the drop-down list. Build America Buy America (BABA) is NOT Applicable to For-Profit entities. More requirement information can be found here (<https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba>).

Expected Performance Measures

Using the format provided within the application, provide expected numbers based on the project's scope of work. Input zero (0) if not applicable to the specific project.

Distressed Communities Index

Using the Distressed Communities Index Map (<https://eig.org/distressed-communities/2022-dci-interactive-map/?view=county>), provide the community distress score for the county(ies) and/or zip code(s) benefiting from the proposed project.

Supporting Documents

Attach the following supporting documents in the application portal:

- Critical Resource Infrastructure template (required for all applicants)
- Matching Funds Letter(s) of Verification (required for all applicants)
- Environmental Pre-Screening Worksheet A (required IF project includes construction)
- Environmental Pre-Screening Worksheet B (may be required per Worksheet A)
- Department of Ecology Water Quality Permits (may be required if project uses water)
- Optional uploads may be used to share any other documents, or add Matching Funds Letters of Verification, if needed

Budget

The budget should be completed before a summary of the budget is entered into the application portal form. The budget must show the total cost for the project and describe how category costs listed in the budget are derived. The budget justification must provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. The budget must show a relationship between work planned and to be performed to the costs incurred. Refer to Appendix B: Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table for Infrastructure Grants for more information.

Please be sure to list and justify all expenses to be covered with matching funds separately and the source of the matching funds. If applicable, ensure that the proposal includes Critical Resources and Infrastructure letter(s) to support the application information.

Matching Funds: All eligible entities must provide a 50 percent match OR a 25 percent graduated match of the total project cost. See the Matching Funds Requirement section for more information. Applicants must submit written and signed verification of match commitment from any party, including the eligible entity, which will contribute a match of non-federal resources to this project.

A. Personnel

Estimate the total cost of salary and wages for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization. In the description column, list the title of each employee, the approximate time spent on the project (number of hours or percent full time equivalent), and the individual's activities in support of project goals.

B. Fringe Benefits

Estimate the total cost of fringe benefits for time spent on the project by individuals employed by the applicant organization in accordance with the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy. In the description column, list the approximate fringe benefit rate and types of benefits included in the applicant organization's established fringe benefits policy.

C. Travel

Estimate the total cost of project-related travel for all individuals except contractual personnel. Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by the General Services Administration (GSA), including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at [the GSA website](http://www.gsa.gov) (<http://www.gsa.gov>).

D. Special Purpose Equipment

Estimate the total cost to purchase any special purpose equipment necessary to achieve project objectives. Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the award and how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Equipment is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit. "Special purpose equipment" is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Activities that strengthen middle of the supply chain resiliency shall be considered allowable technical activities in defining special purpose equipment for the purpose of the RFSI. "General purpose equipment" is not limited to research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Rental of general purpose equipment must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this award.

E. Supplies

Estimate the total cost to purchase supplies necessary to achieve project objectives. List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and enhance the mid-supply chain and infrastructure efforts of this program. General use office supplies (paper, printer ink, pens, etc.), facilities costs (telephone, internet, etc.) and administrative costs are considered indirect costs and should not be included under this category.

F. Construction

Estimate the total cost of construction necessary to the project. Describe costs including administrative and legal expenses, structures, relocation expenses and payments, architectural and engineering fees, project inspection fees, site work, demolition and removal, construction, and miscellaneous expenses related to modernizing or expanding a new or existing facility. Describe the need for construction costs. For projects involving construction, include: any design and/or construction documents; a completed AMS-ENV-A form; a completed AMS-ENV-B form, if required; a submitted Department of Ecology Water quality permit. The type of water quality permit that must be obtained may be found here: [Water quality permits - Washington State Department of Ecology](#). If a project is selected for funding, the subrecipient will be required to follow all applicable federal, state, and local regulations regarding the construction activities.

G. Contractual

Estimate the total cost of work on the project that will be performed by individuals or organizations

other than the applicant (e.g., consultants, contractors, partner organizations, etc.). Provide a list of contractors/consultants, detailing the name, hourly/flat rate fee structure, and overall cost of the services performed. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants. Provide for each of the real or anticipated contractors listed a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include timelines for each activity.

Descriptions should have adequate detail to determine the appropriateness and allowability of all contractual costs. For contractual costs greater than \$10,000, provide a breakdown of costs requested. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a General Schedule (GS)-15 step 10 federal employee in the area where work will be performed, provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs of the contractor/consultant, or other expenses.

H. Other

Estimate the total cost of all other project-related expenses. Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost per unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, costs associated with meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection. If the budget includes meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs. Within the justification, describe the purpose of each item listed and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

I. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that, therefore, cannot be readily and reliably identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses. If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), it is required to use this amount, and a copy of the NICRA must be submitted with the application via the Upload feature on the Budget page. Otherwise, applicants may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See the [Indirect Costs](#) section for further guidance.

Certifications and Assurances

Review Appendix F and electronically sign the certifications and assurances.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	Maximum Points
<p>Funding Priorities, Specific Issue, Problem or Need That the Project Will Address, and Project Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project demonstrate a clear link to the identified funding priority or priorities? • Is the specific issue, problem, or need clearly explained, and are they relevant to the funding purpose? • Are the project objectives clear, relevant to the program, • and reasonably achievable within the grant duration? 	40
<p>Project Beneficiaries and External Project Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project demonstrate a clear benefit to the proposed beneficiaries? Is the number of beneficiaries reasonable given the overall purpose of the project? • Does the project demonstrate meaningful external support? 	20
<p>Performance Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the expected performance measure(s) relevant, reasonably achievable, and appropriate to the budget request? 	15
CRITERIA	Maximum Points
<p>Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are costs clearly detailed? • Are costs reasonable? • Can costs clearly be linked to the project’s intended purpose and objectives? 	25
<p>Additional Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals that benefit at-risk communities based on the zip code and distressed communities index will receive an additional 3 points while proposals that benefit distressed communities based on the zip code and distressed communities index will receive an additional 5 points. • Proposals submitted by or that directly benefit one or more of the following will receive an additional 5 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Historically underserved farmers ○ Socially disadvantaged farmers ○ Small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, or veteran-owned businesses 	10
<p>Total Points Possible (including all possible points from additional considerations):</p>	110

FEDERAL COST PRINCIPLES

Federal cost principles are regulations, based on organization type, used to determine allowable costs and ensure consistent treatment of costs. Applicants are responsible for identifying the federal cost

principles appropriate to their organization, consistent application of cost principles to the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Program (RFSI) grant funds and ensuring applicants and its contractors or consultants comply with federal cost principles requirements from 2 CFR 200, et seq., as applicable.

REQUIREMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

Environmental Review, National Environmental Policy Act and Other Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations

Grant recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and all other federal environmental laws and regulations, as well as any state and local laws and regulations. Compliance with NEPA will be required prior to the award of grant funds.

Build America, Buy America Act

Any public infrastructure project funded under this grant must ensure adherence to Build America, Buy America (BABA) guidance. For such projects, the recipient must comply with the Buy America Sourcing requirements outlined in the BABA provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>).

Unallowable Costs

USDA has identified the activities listed below as not eligible for funding. Proposals with unallowable costs may be subject to disqualification as described below.

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, such as flowers for non-culinary purposes, meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, or dietary supplements;
- Costs and activities funded by another federal, state, or local government grant program or funding opportunity. Note that RFSI funds can complement or build on the successes of prior funding, such as the USDA Regional Food Business Centers Business Builder subawards, to fund subsequent activities.

Please see Appendix B: Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table for Infrastructure Grants for more information on specific cost categories.

Indirect Costs

Infrastructure Grant recipients with a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) can request indirect costs up to the amount of their NICRA. A copy of the NICRA must be submitted with the Infrastructure Grant application. Otherwise, applicants may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

All entities which elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC are defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>) as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services,

travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each Infrastructure Grant (regardless of the period of performance of the Infrastructure Grants 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 Infrastructure Grant in excess of \$25,000. 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.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a particular award, project, program, service, or other organizational activity or that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Typically, direct costs include, but are not limited to, compensation of employees who work directly on the award, to include salaries and fringe benefits; travel that is necessary for the project; equipment and supplies used for the project; and the hiring of qualified contractors to achieve project objectives.

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Below are typical indirect costs. The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate where all of the following conditions are met:

- Administrative or clerical services are integral and directly related to a project or activity;
- Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity;
- Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the federal awarding agency; and
- The costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

The following are typically considered indirect costs and should only be included in the Budget page as direct costs if consistent with the applicant’s NICRA:

- Information technology services
- Rent
- Utilities and internet service
- Telephone service (mobile and landline)
- General office supplies
- Insurance
- Maintenance

Travel

The maximum travel rates allowable are the lesser of the rates in effect at the time of travel as established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) available on the GSA website (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>), or the Recipient’s established travel policy. Applicants should apply the current government mileage rate for personally owned vehicles used for travel related to the project; this rate is available on the Internal Revenue Service website ([Standard mileage rates | Internal Revenue Service \(irs.gov\)](#)).

Note: International travel must comply with the Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118 () ([63 FR 16936 - Federal Travel Regulation; Use of Commercial Transportation, Fly America Act - Content Details - 98-8897 \(govinfo.gov\)](#)) and Foreign Travel Per Diem allowances (https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp). Also, consideration should be given to the use of alternative technologies such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing if they are available, appropriate for the project, and less costly.

Disparaging Language and Protected Personal Identifiable Information (PII)

Recipients are prohibited from using AMS grant funds to conduct any activity that is false, misleading, or disparaging toward agricultural commodities or products or to disparage the mission, goals, and/or actions of another organization or individual.

Reports submitted to AMS must avoid use of Protected PII, including use of an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of types of information, including, but not limited to, social security number, passport number, credit card numbers, clearances, bank numbers, biometrics, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, criminal, medical and financial records, educational transcripts, etc. Personal contact information included in performance reports should be limited to the recipient project coordinator's name, and e-mail address, as well as organization name, physical address, and telephone number.

Financial Management

Subrecipients are required to meet the standards and requirements for financial management systems set forth or referenced in [2 CFR § 200.302](#).

The adequacy of a subrecipient's financial management system is integral to their ability to account for grant expenditures. The subrecipient must use Federal funds in a responsible manner and apply adequate internal controls and cash management practices consistent with the requirements outlined in [2 CFR § 200.303](#).

A subrecipient must notify the WSDA Agreement Manager immediately when they discover financial management problems. Deficiencies in the recipient's financial management system, whether reported by the subrecipient or identified by WSDA, may result in WSDA imposing special award conditions, such as a high-risk designation or other requirements for increased monitoring.

REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION

Review Criteria

Applicants' proposals will be evaluated on the criteria established within this RFA.

Review Process

WSDA will conduct two levels of review during the proposal evaluation process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether proposal requirements are met and, if applicable, assess an applicant's past WSDA grant performance. The second level is a technical review to evaluate the merits of the proposals.

The WSDA RFSI Technical Review Committee will perform the technical review. The Technical Review Committee is comprised of members of the community with varied perspectives and expertise related to infrastructure, food safety, the needs of middle-of-the-supply-chain producers, the critical issues facing Washington's historically underserved producers and other relevant areas.

After technical review of proposals, the RFSI Coordinator will prepare a proposed slate of Apparent Successful Grantees for the Director's approval. Once approved by the Director, WSDA will notify Apparent Successful Grantees and invite them to submit final USDA application forms. WSDA will submit

each apparently successful State Infrastructure Grant Proposal to USDA for review to ensure that project portfolios in each state align with the program purpose, provide reasonable geographic coverage within the state, support a diversity of targeted agricultural products appropriate to the specific state, and support program goals.

Notification and Feedback

Proposals that are disqualified utilizing the criteria below will be notified within 21 days of the proposal due date. All other applicants will be notified regarding the status of their proposals in Fall 2024. The actual date of notification is dependent on the USDA, a process which the state of Washington has no influence over. Feedback will be available for applicants not selected for awards upon request. Feedback will be provided within 60 days of the request date.

To ensure all communications are received, points of contact listed in the application should add RFSI@agr.wa.gov to their email safe senders list, address book, or contact list.

Disqualifications

The following may result in the disqualification of a project proposal:

- Incomplete proposals: proposals with one or more unanswered or insufficiently answered questions
- Proposals that include activities outside the grant duration
- Proposals for less than the minimum award amount or more than the maximum award amount
- Proposals with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives, including but not limited to:
 - Indirect costs that exceed the limit set forth in this document
 - Costs to support ineligible commodities
 - Costs to support activities that are not middle-of-the-supply-chain (e.g., costs related to cultivation, harvest, wholesale/retail sale, etc.)

PROTEST PROCESS

If an application that was submitted on time and included all required application materials is not selected for funding; and the listed individual in the Contact Information profile has also received a letter of no award by Friday August 23rd; an unsuccessful applicant may submit a protest as a formal request for reconsideration. Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of a reviewer.
- Errors in computing the score.
- Non-compliance with procedures described in the Request for Application document, USDA policy, or WSDA policy.
- Violation of state or federal law.

If a protest is submitted, however, it does not follow the following procedures, it will not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to applicants who have not been selected for RFSI funding.

- Applicant requests and participate in a debriefing conference to take place between August 26 to August 30;
- Protest must be received by Friday August 30th, 2024, no later than 5:00pm PST: emailed to RFSI@agr.wa.gov

Protest must include:

1. A statement describing the grounds for the protest (bias, mathematical error etc.)
2. A description of specific information in the proposal the applicant believes were misinterpreted during review.
3. Any documents supporting the protest description.
4. Information about the protesting applicant, including name of firm, mailing address, phone number, email address, and name of person responsible for submitting the protest, date and original signature (on the physically mailed copy).

Your protest will be reviewed by the director or director's designee. Formal protests are reviewed to ensure compliance with this policy and determine if the claims laid out in the protest warrant reconsideration for funding. The applicant will be notified of the result of the reconsideration by September 6, 2024.

The final determination of the protest shall:

- Find the protest lacking in merit and uphold the WSDA's action; or
- Find only technical or harmless errors in the WSDA's acquisition process and determine the WSDA to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest; or
- Find merit in the protest and provide the WSDA options for resolution

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Grant Agreement Execution

Applicants selected for the awarding of funds will receive a Grant Agreement package with specific instructions regarding award requirements, including information on project implementation and the payment process. WSDA will complete a risk assessment to determine grant agreement monitoring requirements prior to executing the grant agreement. Once a Grant Agreement is executed, grant recipients can begin implementation of the project. Grant recipients are responsible for the overall management of their awarded project to ensure all project activities are completed before the end of the grant agreement term.

Reporting and Communication

Subrecipients are expected to provide annual performance reports (every 12 months) throughout the period of performance as well as a final report. Applicants must file form SF-425 Federal Financial

Report by January 30th of each year and a final report not more than 90 days after the end date of the Grant Agreement; to the Grant Specialist. Performance reports must be formatted and submitted using the approved templates and/or guidance provided upon Grant Agreement Execution. Infrastructure Grant subrecipients may be required to provide WSDA additional information related to performance of the grant or other information it requires under 2 CFR 1 – 200 and 400 et seq.

REIMBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds will be paid to subrecipients for approved expenditures on a reimbursement basis. Subrecipients must have the financial capability to pay project costs up-front and may not request reimbursement more frequently than monthly. WSDA will only reimburse expenditures that have been approved in the budget and only after services rendered.

ASSISTANCE AND QUESTIONS

Office Hours

WSDA will offer bi-weekly office hours between June 4, 2024, and July 9, 2024 every Tuesday at 10AM and Thursday at 2PM PST. For the full office hours schedule and to register, visit the [WSDA RFSI website](https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure) (<https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The general RFSI FAQ can be found on the [WSDA RFSI website](https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure) (<https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>).

WSDA will conduct four rounds of Q&A to address general questions about the proposal. Email all questions about the solicitation process to the RFA Coordinator at RFSI@agr.wa.gov.

Responses to questions received during office hours, or by email will be posted to the WSDA RFSI website on a weekly basis.

Questions should not identify the submitting person or organization. WSDA will answer questions in a Q&A document posted periodically according to the dates identified in the Schedule of Grant Solicitation Activities. WSDA will be bound only to WSDA written answers to questions.

July 8, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. PT is the final deadline to submit questions.

To maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, WSDA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific projects during the solicitation process.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Applications submitted in response to this RFA shall become the property of WSDA. All Applications received shall remain confidential until the Apparent Successful Grantees are announced; thereafter, all

Applications are subject to disclosure as provided for in Chapter 42.56 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Any information in the application that the Applicant desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of Chapter 42.56 RCW, or other state or federal law that provides for the nondisclosure of your document, must be clearly designated. The information must be clearly identified and the particular exemption from disclosure upon which the Applicant is making the claim must be cited. Each page containing the information claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the words "Proprietary Information" printed on the lower right-hand corner of the page. Marking the entire application exempt from disclosure or as Proprietary Information will not be honored.

If a public records request is made for the information that the Applicant has marked as "Proprietary Information," WSDA will notify the Applicant of the request and of the date that the records will be released to the requester unless the Applicant obtains a court order enjoining that disclosure. If the Applicant fails to obtain the court order enjoining disclosure, WSDA will release the requested information on the date specified. If an applicant obtains a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction enjoining disclosure pursuant to Chapter 42.56 RCW, or other state or federal law that provides for nondisclosure, WSDA shall maintain the confidentiality of the Applicant's information per the court order.

REVISIONS TO THE RFA

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFA, addenda will be published:

On the program website: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>

If you downloaded this RFA from the Agency website located at <https://agr.wa.gov/>, you are responsible for regularly checking the [Program Website \(https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure\)](https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure) in order for your organization to receive any RFA amendments or Applicant questions/agency answers

WSDA also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFA in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

DIVERSE BUSINESS INCLUSION PLAN

Applicants are required to submit a Diverse Business Inclusion Plan with their Application describing in good faith their aspirational goals for subcontractor types. In accordance with legislative findings and policies set forth in RCW 39.19, the state of Washington encourages participation in all contracts by firms certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE), set forth in RCW 43.60A.200 for firms certified by the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, and set forth in RCW 39.26.005 for firms that are Washington Small Businesses. No minimum level of minority- or women-owned business, Washington Small Businesses, or Washington State certified Veteran Business participation is required as a condition for receiving an award. Any affirmative action requirements set forth in any federal governmental rules included or referenced in the contract documents will apply.

WSDA has the following agency goals:

10% participation by Minority Owned Business

6% participation by Women Owned Business

5% participation by Veteran Owned Business

5% participation by Small Businesses

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Potential Applicants may submit a complaint to WSDA based on any of following:

- a) The solicitation unnecessarily restricts competition;
- b) The solicitation evaluation or scoring process is unfair; or
- c) The solicitation requirements are inadequate or insufficient to prepare an application.

A complaint may be submitted to WSDA at any time prior to 5 days before the application response deadline. The complaint must meet the following requirements:

- a) The complaint must be in writing;
- b) The complaint must be sent to the RFA coordinator in a timely manner;
- c) The complaint should clearly articulate the basis for the complaint; and
- d) The complaint should include a proposed remedy.

The RFA coordinator will respond to the complaint in writing. The response to the complaint and any changes to the solicitation will be posted on WEBS. The Director of WSDA will be notified of all complaints and will be provided a copy of WSDA's response. The complaint may not be raised again during the protest period. WSDA's action or inaction in response to the complaint is final. There is no appeal process.

MOST FAVORABLE TERMS

WSDA reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the Application submitted. Therefore, the application should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms which the Applicant can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure. WSDA reserves the right to contact an applicant for clarification of its Application.

The Apparent Successful Applicant should be prepared to accept this RFA for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFA. Contract negotiations may incorporate some, or all, of the Applicant's Application. The Application will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter without obligation to WSDA.

GRANT AGREEMENT GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The Apparent Successful Grantee will be expected to enter into a grant agreement which is substantially

the same as the example Grant Agreement and its general terms and conditions available on the program webpage: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/resilient-food-system-infrastructure>. The sample Grant Agreement is for information and review only and should not be returned with your application. In no event is an applicant to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions in response to this RFA. All proposed edits to the contract terms and conditions must be submitted as an attachment to Appendix F, Certifications and Assurances. WSDA will review requested edits and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

COSTS TO PROPOSE

WSDA will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Applicant in preparation of an application submitted in response to this RFA, travel to or conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFA.

CONTRACTING WITH CURRENT OR FORMER STATE EMPLOYEES

Specific restrictions apply to contracting with current or former state employees pursuant to Chapter 42.52 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). Applicants should familiarize themselves with the requirements prior to submitting an application that includes current or former state employees.

NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This RFA does not obligate the state of Washington or WSDA to contract for services specified herein.

REJECTION OF APPLICATIONS

WSDA reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all applications received without penalty and not to issue a grant agreement as a result of this RFA.

COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

The Director of WSDA or delegate is the only individual who may legally commit WSDA to the expenditures of funds for a contract resulting from this RFA. No services may begin and no cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

APPENDIX A: PROJECT EXAMPLES

USDA has provided the following examples of project types that are eligible for RFSI Grant Funding:

- 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;
- Developing, customizing, or installing 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;
- Modernizing 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 as defined in section 8.2 of the AMS General Terms and Conditions. This includes the purchase of special purpose equipment for institutions or others that will benefit multiple producers through middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, and/or 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), 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, and fermenting.

APPENDIX B: ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS TABLE

COST CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION, GUIDANCE & EXCEPTIONS
<p>Buildings and Land— Construction and/or Renovation</p>	<p>Allowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, alterations, or construction on an existing building or facility. • The construction of new buildings at an existing facility and of wastewater management structures. <p>This also includes construction and construction-related materials, which may include, but are not limited to, the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, and/or plumbing.</p>
<p>Equipment</p>	<p>Special purpose equipment purchases are allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for acquisitions costs and rental costs of special purpose equipment, provided the following criteria are met:</p> <p>Allowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchases of special purpose equipment (such as canners, hulling processors, reverse osmosis systems, egg packing machines, flotation tanks, roasters, or other processing equipment, packing and labeling equipment, and/or delivery vehicles) are allowable when approved in the agreement budget or with prior written approval. All equipment purchases must meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equipment is necessary for the technical activities of the agreement and is not otherwise reasonably available and accessible. ○ Equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization and is acquired in accordance with organizational practices. ○ Equipment must be used solely to meet the purpose of the program and objectives of the agreement. ○ Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under 2 CFR § 200.313 as applicable. <p>Unallowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchases of general-purpose equipment (e.g., general use motor vehicles, office furniture, office air conditioners, printers, and copiers) or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own).
<p>Compensation for Damage</p>	<p>Unallowable:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation for injuries or damage to property arising from project activities.
Purchases of Land, Buildings, and Facilities	<p>Unallowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of land, new buildings, and new facilities
Marketing Costs	<p>Unallowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipients to use funds for marketing their product(s), services(s), brand(s), logo(s), or organization.
MISCELLANEOUS	<p>Unallowable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factoring in the impact or potential for inflation within the economy or impact due to potential supply chain challenges • Including tax fees or costs to pay for an accountant for RFSI-specific activities • Payments to contractors or consultants that exceed the maximum allowable hourly or annual compensation as determined in the General Schedule 15 (GS-15), Step 10.

Refer to the USDA RFSI Special Terms and Conditions, Program Scope, and AMS General Terms and Conditions ([Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program \(RFSI\) Program Scope and Requirements \(usda.gov\)](#)) for additional information.

APPENDIX C: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

RFSI projects must include at least one outcome and one indicator from the table below. All outcomes and indicators selected must be achieved within the grant duration.

Outcomes	Indicators
Capacity in the middle of the supply chain for local/regional food products	Number of new facilities constructed
	Number of existing facilities improved or expanded
	Number of processing equipment units purchased and installed
	Number of processing equipment units modernized through upgrades, repairs, or retooling
	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units purchased and installed
	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units modernized through upgrades, repairs, or retooling
	Number of employees trained on new equipment and processes
	Number of employees that received food safety training
	Number of employees that received worker safety training
	Number of new or improved wastewater management systems
	Number of new or improved information technology systems
Increasing economic viability of local/regional producers and processors	Number of new jobs created
	Number of local/regional agricultural producers who benefited from the new or improved processing/aggregation/storage or distribution capacity
	Number of new local/regional products processed, aggregated, stored, or distributed

	Number of new value-added products developed
	Number of new market-outlets established

APPENDIX D: EVALUATION CRITERIA & SCORING

EVALUATION CRITERIA

This is a competitive grant. Applications will be scored based on their alignment with the grant purpose: to build resilience across Washington state's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain; aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution, for locally and regionally produced foods including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat, poultry and wild caught seafood. Evaluation criteria categories include **middle of the food supply chain impact, project beneficiaries, performance measures and a clear and reasonable budget**. Additional Bonus points will be awarded for proposals that **benefit at-risk communities** and that **benefit underserved or disadvantaged businesses**.

There are 110 total possible points across the (4) following categories:

1. Middle-of-the-Supply-Chain (MOTSC) Impact (40 points possible)

- a. **Project provides a clear link to the identified funding priorities. (12 points)**
 - i. One priority/Minimally.
 - ii. Multiple priorities/Minimally.
 - iii. One priority/Exceptionally.
 - iv. Multiple priorities/Exceptionally
- b. **The specific issue, problem or need is clearly explained and related to the funding purpose. (10 points)**
 - i. Minimally related/Not clearly explained
 - ii. Minimally related/Clearly explained
 - iii. Extremely related/Not clearly explained
 - iv. Clearly explained/ extremely related
- c. **Project Objectives clear and related to the funding purpose. (10 points)**
 - i. Not clear/Not related to funding purpose.
 - ii. Not clear/Likely builds resilience in MOTSC.
 - iii. Not clear/Likely builds resilience in MOTSC AND expands access to value added products.
 - iv. Clear objectives likely build resilience in MOTSC.
 - v. Clear objectives likely build resilience in MOTSC AND expands access to value added products.
- d. **Project Objectives are reasonably achievable within grant duration. (8 points)**
 - i. One objective/Not likely to be achieved in 30 months.
 - ii. One objective/Likely to be achieved in 30 months.
 - iii. Multiple objectives/Some likely to be achieved in 30 months.
 - iv. Multiple objectives/All likely to be achieved in 30 months.

2. Project Beneficiaries (20 points possible)

- a. **Project demonstrates a clear benefit to a reasonable number of beneficiaries. (12 points)**
 - i. No benefit to any beneficiaries.
 - ii. Benefit to an unrealistic number of beneficiaries
 - iii. Limited, but realistic number of beneficiaries.
 - iv. Significant number of beneficiaries directly impacted.
- b. **Project demonstrates meaningful external support. (8 points)**
 - i. Entity has few partnerships and they will not benefit.
 - ii. Entity has few partnerships and external stakeholders may benefit.
 - iii. Entity has few partnerships and external stakeholders will benefit.

- iv. Entity has multiple partnerships and external stakeholders may benefit.
- v. Entity has multiple partnerships and external stakeholders will benefit.

3. Performance Measures (15 points possible)

- a. **Is the expected performance measure(s) relevant, reasonably achievable, and appropriate to the budget request? (15 points)**
 - i. Minimally reasonable
 - ii. Slightly reasonable
 - iii. Moderately reasonable
 - iv. Significantly reasonable
 - v. Exceptionally reasonable

4. Budget (25 points possible)

- a. **Are costs clearly detailed? (9 points)**
 - i. Minimally
 - ii. Slightly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Exceptionally
- b. **Are costs reasonable? (8 points)**
 - i. Minimally reasonable
 - ii. Slightly reasonable
 - iii. Moderately reasonable
 - iv. Exceptionally reasonable
- c. **Can costs clearly be linked to the project's intended purpose and objectives? (8 points)**
 - i. Minimally linked
 - ii. Slightly linked
 - iii. Moderately linked
 - iv. Exceptionally linked

5. Additional bonus (10 points possible)

- a. **Proposals that benefit AT-RISK communities based on the distressed communities index zip code? (3 points)**
 - i. No
 - ii. Yes
- b. **Proposals that benefit DISTRESSED communities based on the distressed communities index zip code? (5 points)**
 - i. No
 - ii. Yes
- c. **Proposals submitted by or directly benefit at least one: Historically underserved farmer, socially disadvantaged farmer; or small disadvantaged, women owned, or veteran owned business (5 points)**
 - i. No
 - ii. Yes

APPENDIX E: MATCH VERIFICATION TEMPLATE

[Use Letterhead of Organization Providing the Match]

MATCH VERIFICATION LETTER

[Application Authorized Organizational Representative]

[Applicant Organization Address]

Dear [Application Authorized Organizational Representative]:

We commit to providing the following matching funds to the [Current Year] [Grant Program] application: [Project title]

1. Cash in the total amount of \$XXX, which we will provide during the grant period September 1, 2024 through May 15, 2027
 - a. Funds will be used for [provide particular item(s) corresponding to the budget narrative or describe how the applicant will otherwise use the funds].
 - b. We will provide the following amounts per year:
 - i. Year 1:
 - ii. Year 2:
 - iii. Year 3:
2. In-kind contributions in the total amount of \$XXX, will be contributed as follows:
 - a. Salaries and wages of staff time for the following employees:

Employee Name (add additional lines as needed)	Title	Description of Duties	Base Rate (\$)/hr or % FTE	Year 1: # of Hours or \$ Equivalent	Year 2: # of Hours or \$ Equivalent	Year 3: # of Hours or \$ Equivalent

- b. The following items/activities with a total fair market value of \$XXX:

Item/Activity (add additional lines as needed)	Fair Market Value per Unit:	How Fair Market Value Determined (must provide documentation):	Amount Donated Year 1:	Amount Donated Year 2:	Amount Donated Year 3:

Sincerely,

[Signature of Matching Organization Representative]

[Printed Name of Matching Organization Representative]

[Title]

[Email, address and phone number if not already included on letterhead.]

APPENDIX F: CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

APPLICANT CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

I/we make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the Application to which it is attached, understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continuing compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract:

I/we declare that all answers and statements made in the Application are true and correct.

The prices and/or cost data have been determined independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with others for the purpose of restricting competition. However, I/we may freely join with other persons or organizations for the purpose of presenting a single application.

The attached Application is a firm offer for a period of 60 days following receipt, and it may be accepted by WSDA without further negotiation (except where obviously required by lack of certainty in key terms) at any time within the 60-day period.

In preparing this Application, I/we have not been assisted by any current or former employee of the state of Washington whose duties relate (or did relate) to this RFA or prospective contract, and who was assisting in other than his or her official, public capacity. If there are exceptions to these assurances, I/we have described them in full detail on a separate page attached to this document.

I/we understand that WSDA will not reimburse me/us for any costs incurred in the preparation of this Application. All Applications become the property of WSDA, and I/we claim no proprietary right to the ideas, writings, items, or samples, unless so stated in this Application.

Unless otherwise required by law, the prices and/or cost data which have been submitted have not been knowingly disclosed by the Applicant and will not be knowingly disclosed by him/her prior to opening, directly or indirectly, to any other Applicant or to any competitor.

I/we agree that submission of the attached Application constitutes acceptance of the RFA contents and the attached example contract and general terms and conditions. If there are any proposed edits to these terms, I/we have described those edits in detail on a page attached to this document.

No attempt has been made or will be made by the Applicant to induce any other person or organization to submit or not to submit an application for the purpose of restricting competition.

I/we grant WSDA the right to contact references and any others who may have pertinent information regarding the ability of the Applicant and the lead staff person to perform the services contemplated in this RFA.

If any staff member(s) who will perform work on this contract has retired from the state of Washington under the provisions of the 2008 Early Retirement Factors legislation, his/her name(s) is noted on a separately attached page.

I/we are not debarred from doing business with the state of Washington or the United States.

I/We have reviewed the Contract and General Terms and Conditions and I/we: (*check one*)

are submitting proposed contract edits. If proposed contract edits are being submitted for consideration, I/we have attached them to this form.

are not submitting proposed contract edits. (*Default if neither are checked*)

On behalf of the Applicant submitting this Application, my signature below attests to the accuracy of the above statement as well as my authority to bind the submitting organization.

Signature of Applicant Date

Printed Name Title

APPENDIX G: WORKERS' RIGHTS CERTIFICATION

GRANTEE CERTIFICATION

EXECUTIVE ORDER 18-03 – WORKERS' RIGHTS

Pursuant to the Washington State Governor's Executive Order 18-03 dated June 12, 2018, the Washington Department of Agriculture is seeking to enter into grant agreements with qualified entities which certify that their employees are not, as a condition of employment, subject to mandatory individual arbitration clauses and class or collective action waivers.

I hereby certify, on behalf of the organization identified below, as follows (check one and sign below):

NO MANDATORY INDIVIDUAL ARBITRATION CLAUSES AND CLASS OR COLLECTIVE ACTION WAIVERS FOR EMPLOYEES. This organization does NOT require its employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers.

OR

MANDATORY INDIVIDUAL ARBITRATION CLAUSES AND CLASS OR COLLECTIVE ACTION WAIVERS FOR EMPLOYEES. This organization requires its employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers.

OR

This organization certifies it has no employees.
I hereby certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington, that the certifications herein are true and correct and that I am authorized to make these certifications on behalf of the organization listed herein.

NAME: _____
Print full legal entity name of organization

By: _____
Signature of authorized person Printed Name

Title: _____
Title of person signing certificate Place: _____
Print city and state where signed

Date: _____

APPENDIX H: PROPOSAL TIPS

Washington State Department of Agriculture receives hundreds of grant applications every funding cycle. To help ensure that a proposal is accurately submitted and well-received by the Technical Review Committee, please consider the following advice when composing the proposal:

- Do not wait until the last minute to prepare or submit the proposal. Allow ample time for composition, research, review, and submittal.
- Compose answers to questions in a word processing document so they can be checked for grammar, spelling, syntax, and overall clarity before entering them into the online application portal.
- Keep answers clear, concise, and in response to the question asked.
- Double-check the project budget against the Allowable and Unallowable Costs Table for Infrastructure Grants.
- Check that the total award requested in the Project Information section matches the total listed in the Total Overall Budget Costs listed in the Budget section.