



FLOWING FUNDS:

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEDERAL GRANT DOLLARS

As businesses and other organizations collectively climb out of the catastrophic impacts of COVID-19, the United States government is dedicating substantial funding to new and existing federal grant programs – creating a timely opportunity for entities that may be seeking to leverage grant funding to help offset their costs to support grower education, explore new market opportunities, launch new products, or increase local food supply chain infrastructure.

Substantial investments in federal funding for new and existing grant and financial assistance programs were announced in March, under the new United States Department of Food and Agriculture Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

Funding from this initiative will support several existing programs including the Specialty Crop Block Grant program, the Farmers Opportunities Training and Outreach Program, and the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, which includes the Local Food Promotion Program and Farmers Market Promotion Program.

These programs have been released for the 2021 year, with applications already underway or submitted. Still, it is likely that the additional exposure and attention to these programs will bode well for future funding years.

The additional funding included:

- \$100 million in additional funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, administered by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which enhances the competitiveness of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops.
- \$75 million in additional funding for the Farmers Opportunities Training and Outreach Program, administered by the

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, which encourages and assists socially disadvantaged, veteran, and beginning farmers and ranchers in the ownership and operation of farms and ranches.

- \$100 million in additional funding for the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, administered by the AMS and USDA Rural Development, which supports the development, coordination, and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food markets and enterprises, and value-added agricultural products.

In addition to these programs, an additional \$6 billion will be allocated to new programs, which are still upcoming and have yet to be released. This funding is earmarked to support initiatives related to:

- Biofuels
- Timber harvesting and hauling
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other protective measures for food and farm workers and specialty crops, seafood processors, and distributors
- Improving the resilience of the food supply chain
- Developing infrastructure to support donation and distribution of perishable commodities, including food donation and distribution through farm-to-school, restaurants, or other community organizations
- Reducing food waste

Details on the funding provided by these potential new programs will be forthcoming. Agency rule-making regarding eligibility and application requirements is likely to commence in the upcoming months and we could see new programs announced as soon as this fall.

The substantial infusion of federal dollars into programs to support farmers, food businesses, agricultural cooperatives, government entities, and non-profit organizations means there will be significantly more successful grant awards, and in some cases, substantially higher dollar amounts that applicants are eligible to apply for.

In many cases, the matching funds requirement has been eliminated or significantly reduced, making grant projects more feasible to pursue, or allowing for grant funding to be spent more quickly. Applicants may also be eligible for even more funding on programs that may have a limit on the number of open grant applications an entity can have.

If you've been reluctant to explore grant opportunities in the past, or are looking to increase the federal grant dollars coming into your organization, now is the ideal time to explore new grant opportunities or prepare applications for programs that are offering higher grant funding.

Morrison keeps an up to date list of potential grant opportunities at www.morrisonco.net/blog/category/grant-opportunities. You can also check out a number of successful grant projects we have the honor to work on at www.morrisonco.net/case-studies#grants.

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