



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

## Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program

### Request for Applications

January 8, 2024

**Application Due Date: March 15, 2024, 11:59 pm EST**

#### Program Contacts:

**KAREN FEDOR**

Administrator, Farm and Food Programs

Maryland Department of Agriculture

**RFSI.mda@maryland.gov**

**410-841-5773**

**MARTIN PROULX**

Supply Chain Coordinator

Maryland Department of Agriculture

**Martin.Proulx@maryland.gov**

**410-841-5985**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... 2

INTRODUCTION ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

    Funding Priorities.....4

    Available Funding .....4

    Implementation Timeline .....4

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS ..... 5

    Eligible Projects.....6

    Ineligible Projects .....6

    Infrastructure Grant Duration.....7

    Federal Permitting Requirements.....7

    Matching Funds Requirement .....7

    Evidence of Critical Infrastructure .....9

    Infrastructure Application Packet and Required Documents.....9

SIMPLIFIED EQUIPMENT-ONLY GRANTS..... 10

    Simplified Equipment-Only Grant Application Packet .....11

EVALUATION AND REVIEW ..... 11

    Review Process .....11

    Award Administration Information.....12

    Award Notices .....12

        Award Payment .....12

        Unsuccessful Applicants .....12

    Reporting Requirements.....12

    Agency Contacts .....12

    Grant Application Support .....12

        Virtual Workshop Dates.....12

APPENDIX A ..... 13

APPENDIX B ..... 15

APPENDIX C ..... 16

    Definitions .....16



## INTRODUCTION

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is currently accepting grant applications for the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure program (RFSI). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), entered into a cooperative agreement with MDA, to work in partnership with USDA to make competitive grants available for the program.

Grant 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.

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

Applications must address all information requested on the following pages to be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Projects will be evaluated and scored based on feasibility and the potential impact they will have on their community and the Maryland economy.

The USDA encourages projects that benefit underserved farmers and ranchers, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, veteran producers, and processors and other middle of the supply chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA). For projects intending to serve these entities, applicants should engage and involve those beneficiaries when developing projects and applications.



## Funding Priorities

The Maryland Department of Agriculture conducted statewide outreach through a stakeholder listening session and a survey to establish funding priorities for the RFSI program in Maryland. RFSI funding priorities for Maryland, based on collected data and feedback, will include projects that:

- Expanded capacity for aggregation, distribution, and processing;
- Construction of new facilities;
- Modernize manufacturing, tracking, and storage through information technologies;
- Cold storage equipment to increase supply chain resilience; and
- Enhancing operations through employee training.

## Available Funding

**Infrastructure Grants: \$3,000,000**

Minimum award of \$100,000 and a maximum award of \$3,000,000.

**Simplified Equipment-Only Grants**

Minimum award of \$10,000 and a maximum award of \$100,000.

## Implementation Timeline

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Grant Submission                            | <b>January 8, 2024 - March 15, 2024</b> |
| Grant Competitive Review                    | <b>March - April 2024</b>               |
| Approved Applications submitted to USDA AMS | <b>May 24, 2024</b>                     |
| RFSI Funding Period Begins                  | <b>No earlier than August 1, 2024</b>   |
| Equipment-Only Funding Period Ends          | <b>August 1, 2025</b>                   |
| Infrastructure Funding Period Ends          | <b>May 1, 2027</b>                      |

## INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

Infrastructure Grants will be used for the purpose of expanding middle-of-the-food- supply-chain capacity for locally and regionally produced foods and offer more and better market opportunities and 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.

### Entities eligible for Infrastructure Grants will be:

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

### Eligibility Requirements

- An official W-9 form furnished by the IRS will be required by all applicants to include in their application. This allows MDA to verify an organization's name, address, and tax identification number. It is important that the address included on the W-9 form matches the address of the organization receiving the grant award.
- Applicants must be in "Good Standing" with the State of Maryland. Go to <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch> to find if your organization is in good standing with the State of Maryland.
- In order to receive an award and enter into a Grant Award Agreement with the MDA, all applicants must provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to the AZDA. A UEI number is a twelve-digit number established and assigned by **SAM.gov** to uniquely identify business entities. A UEI number may be obtained from SAM.gov at: <https://gsa.gov/entityid>.



**NOTE:** SAM.gov registration is not required to obtain a UEI. If your entity is already registered in SAM.gov, your UEI has already been assigned. Sign in to your SAM.gov account.

- All applicant businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and applicants' facilities must be physically located within Maryland. Applicants doing business along the Maryland border should only apply in one state to avoid duplication of federal funds.

## Eligible Projects

The USDA defines the middle of the food supply chain as activities that take place after the production of the agricultural product but before the product is sold to consumers. These activities include the processing, aggregation, and distribution of agricultural products between leaving the field and entering the marketplace. Therefore, grant funds cannot be used for cultivation, harvest, or retail marketing of eligible food products.

Potential grant activities may include:

- Expanding capacity for processing, aggregation and distribution of agricultural products to create more and better markets for producers;
- Modernizing manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems;
- Enhancing worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment or facility improvements;
- Improving the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements;
- Improving operations through training opportunities;
- Increasing packaging and labeling capacities that meet compliance requirements under applicable laws (e.g. sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment); and
- Modernizing or expanding an existing facility (including expansion and modifications to existing buildings and/or construction of new buildings at existing facilities).

## Ineligible Projects

The following activities are not eligible for RFSI funding:

- Acquiring real property (including pre-existing buildings and land purchases), or any interest therein;
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products;
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program;
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities through an Infrastructure Grant. However, Infrastructure Grants may build on the successes of prior federal funded grants to fund subsequent activities.



Please see additional Allowable and Unallowable Cost and Activities for Infrastructure Grants on [MDA's website](#).

### Infrastructure Grant Duration

Funds will be awarded no earlier than August 1, 2024, and projects must be completed by May 1, 2027. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.

### Federal Permitting Requirements

RFSI funded projects may involve conducting work that requires permits and clearances from various agencies.

### Build America, Buy America (BABA)

**Overview:** Any public infrastructure project funded under RFSI must coordinate with AMS to ensure adherence to BABA guidance. For such projects, the recipient must comply with the Buy America Sourcing requirements outlined in the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#).

**For-Profit Entities:** BABA is *not applicable to for-profit entities* (either prime or subrecipient) particularly for infrastructure projects. AMS will review facilities owned by public entities to determine whether BABA requirements apply, following USDA guidance to exempt *de minimis* grant awards and other inapplicable activities. All other Infrastructure Grant entities that surpass the \$250,000 threshold of applicable procurement costs must adhere to BABA.

**Small Grants Waiver:** The small grants waiver will apply to awards with total federal funding below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, which is currently set at \$250,000. BABA is not applicable to Equipment Only Grants as they do not surpass this threshold of \$250,000.

**Resource:** 2 CFR Part 184 - BUY AMERICA PREFERENCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-184>

### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

**Overview:** All activities funded under this RFA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related applicable agency regulations and instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), other laws and regulations as outlined therein, and any applicable state, local, or tribal laws. A review for NEPA compliance is required prior to the award of grant funds. If selected for an award, applicants must provide all requested information to support compliance with NEPA, NHPA, ESA, and all other federal environmental laws and regulations.

**Resource:** [A Citizen's Guide to NEPA \(doe.gov\)](#) is a relatively short guide that provides an overview of NEPA requirements.

### Matching Funds Requirement

Infrastructure grant recipients are required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding, except for applicants qualifying for a reduced match.

For historically underserved farmers and ranchers, or for other businesses that qualify under SBA categories of small, disadvantaged business, women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business, the required match funding contribution or cost share is reduced to 25% of the



project cost. States will require eligible applicants to self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications regarding eligibility for this reduced match.

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 nonprofit community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as a match contribution to the project. 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.

Each application must include the total amount of match and how it will specifically align with their requested funding. Additionally, applicants must submit ONE match verification letter for each cash or in-kind resource signed by the matching organization.

Signed Match Verification Letters must accompany the Infrastructure Grant proposal at the time of application to the State. A template is located on [MDA’s website](#). Match Verification will be managed and monitored by the MDA and must be available upon request from the USDA.

**Match Calculation Examples**

| RFSI Match Calculator<br>50% Match Requirement |                  |
|--|------------------|
| AMOUNT   |                  |
| <b>Total Project Amount</b>                    | <b>\$200,000</b> |
| Federal Funds Requested                        | \$100,000        |
| Cost-sharing\Matching Amount                   | \$100,000        |

| RFSI Match Calculator<br>25% Match Requirement |                  |
|--|------------------|
| AMOUNT   |                  |
| <b>Total Project Amount</b>                    | <b>\$200,000</b> |
| Federal Funds Requested                        | \$1500,000       |
| Cost-sharing\Matching Amount                   | \$50,000         |





## MARBIDCO Match

MARBIDCO has partnered with MDA to provide match funds for this program.

If eligible, MARBIDCO’s funds can be used to help grant applicants meet their non-federal match requirement if the project involves the aggregation of local farm products for wholesale or institutional sales. More specifically:

- For historically underserved farmers, ranchers or other businesses that qualify under SBA categories of small, disadvantaged business, women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business- grant of up to 100% match, up to a maximum of \$50,000.
- For all other eligible applicants- grants of up to 50% match, up to a maximum of \$50,000, with this exception: If a unit of local government, rural regional council, or county school system is the applicant, the maximum award could be up to \$400,000.

MARBIDCO’s RSFI matching grant application form will be posted on [MARBIDCO’s website](#) on February 1, 2024. The deadline for submission will be February 29, 2024.

## Evidence of Critical Infrastructure

Evidence of Critical Infrastructure is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed Infrastructure Grant project. Applicants must submit evidence that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition. The letter must indicate the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project. An Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Letter must accompany the Infrastructure Grant proposal at the time of application to the State. A template is located on [MDA’s website](#).

## Infrastructure Application Packet and Required Documents

The electronic application and other required attachments for this RFA can be found on [MDA’s website](#).

| Required Form                           | Instructions   |
|---|--|
| <b>Infrastructure Grant Application</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download the Infrastructure Grant Application (PDF file) from <a href="#">MDA’s website</a>.</li> <li>• The Infrastructure Grant Proposal must be completed in the PDF Format.</li> <li>• Complete the application in its entirety</li> </ul> |
| <b>Eligibility Requirements</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W9</li> <li>• Three letters of support</li> <li>• Screenshot of being in Good Standing with the state</li> </ul>  |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Evidence of Critical Resources &amp; Infrastructure</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download the Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Letter Template (Word document) from <a href="#">MDA's website</a>.</li> <li>• Complete the template for <b>EACH</b> critical resource/piece of infrastructure (necessary land, buildings, or other resources)</li> <li>• Ensure each letter is signed by an authorized organization representative from each source of matching funds</li> <li>• Upload the completed, signed match verification letter(s) in PDF format</li> </ul> |
| <b>Construction Documents (if included in project)</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your project includes a construction component, provide design documents, supply lists, etc. that illustrate the scope of the construction project</li> </ul>  |
| <b>To complete the steps above, your computer system must have the following:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Microsoft Word</li> <li>• Adobe Acrobat Reader</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Submit to:</b>   | <p><a href="mailto:RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov">RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov</a><br/> <b>COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKETS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN 11:59:59 p.m. (EST), MARCH 15, 2024</b></p>  |

## SIMPLIFIED EQUIPMENT-ONLY GRANTS

Simplified Equipment-Only Grants will range in value from a minimum award of \$10,000 and a maximum award of \$100,000 and do not require cost sharing or matching. The Simplified Equipment-Only Grant is a fixed price grant, meaning it will fund only equipment purchases (and not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs), and the amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment up to \$100,000.

There are no match requirements for Simplified Equipment-Only grants. Indirect Costs are unallowable for these grants.

Simplified Equipment-Only Grant applicants must submit documentation to substantiate the cost of each piece of equipment listed on their application. Documentation can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by licensed commercial entities. The cost of delivery and installation can be covered by the grant if they are listed in the official bid. When soliciting bids, please make sure they will be honored at the time of the grant award which will be no earlier than August 1, 2024.

Similar to the Infrastructure grants, Simplified Equipment-Only Grants must comply with Federal Permitting, see page 6.

## Simplified Equipment-Only Grant Application Packet

| Required Form   | Instructions   |
|---|--|
| <b>Simplified Equipment-Only Grant Application</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download the Infrastructure Grant Application (PDF file) from <a href="#">MDA's website</a>.</li> <li>• The Simplified Equipment-Only Grant Proposal must be completed in the PDF Format.</li> <li>• Complete the application in its entirety</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Eligibility Requirements</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W9</li> <li>• Three letters of support</li> <li>• Screenshot of being in Good Standing with the state</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Evidence of Critical Resources &amp; Infrastructure</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download the Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Letter Template (Word document) from <a href="#">MDA's website</a>.</li> <li>• Complete the template for <b>EACH</b> critical resource/piece of infrastructure (necessary land, buildings, or other resources)</li> <li>• Ensure each letter is signed by an authorized organization representative from each source of matching funds</li> <li>• Upload the completed, signed match verification letter(s) in PDF format</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting Documentation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be submitted in ONE PDF file</li> </ul>  |
| <b>To complete the steps above, your computer system must have the following:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Microsoft Word</li> <li>• Adobe Acrobat Reader</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Submit to:</b>   | <p><a href="mailto:RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov">RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov</a><br/> <b>COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKETS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN 11:59:59 p.m. (EST), MARCH 15, 2024</b></p>  |

## EVALUATION AND REVIEW

### Review Process

Once the application window closes, MDA will conduct an internal review of all applications to disqualify any projects that do not meet the requirements of the RFSI program. Grants will be awarded through a competitive review process. The MDA RFSI Evaluation Team may adjust an application packet's project proposal, scope of work and/or project budget. The Evaluation Team may disallow certain expenses in the best interest of the RFSI and the State. MDA may ask a potential grantee for more information on any of the above Application Packet Requirements before awarding the grant or entering into an agreement with the grantee. MDA reserves the right to fund the project in part, add and delete tasks, and ask for clarification on the work plan, timeline, and budget. No



agreement will be entered into until MDA is satisfied with all the specifications of the project. Any project proposal funding is dependent upon the availability of federal funds and final approval from the USDA. Funds will be awarded no earlier than August 1, 2024.

## Award Administration Information

### Award Notices

Upon completion of the competitive review process, selected applications will be sent to USDA AMS. Final determination of approved projects will be determined by USDA AMS. MDA will notify successful applicants after final approval by USDA AMS. Successful applicants will be required to register as a vendor of the State prior to the awarding of Infrastructure Grants.

### Award Payment

The Infrastructure Grants and Equipment-Only Grants are reimbursement grants. This means that grant recipients will submit invoices to MDA at least annually for reimbursement of project expenses. Payments will not be issued in advance. Invoices can only include expenses already paid for by the grant recipient. Grant recipients will be required to submit receipts for single purchases over \$1,000 with each invoice as proof of payment.

### Unsuccessful Applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by MDA personnel via email soon after the awards are approved by USDA AMS. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided review panel comments of their proposals upon request via email.

### Reporting Requirements

Funded Infrastructure Grants will be subject to data collection on an annual basis. MDA will solicit performance measure data from each project via email, phone calls, teleconferencing, and/or site visits.

### Agency Contacts

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact Karen Fedor by email with questions about the program at [rfsi@maryland.gov](mailto:rfsi@maryland.gov). Please contact Martin Proulx at [martin.proulx@maryland.gov](mailto:martin.proulx@maryland.gov) if you have questions about value-chain coordination.

## Grant Application Support

### Virtual Workshop Dates

*Introductory and Informational Session: Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) Program Grants*

Jan 24, 2024 03:00 PM

[Registration](#)

*Virtual Office Hours: Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) Program Grants*

Session 1 - Feb 7, 2024 10:00 AM

[Registration](#)

Session 2 - Feb 21, 2024 10:00 AM

[Registration](#)



# APPENDIX A

| INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT SCORING RUBRIC |  |                        |                 |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| Project Area                        | Criteria   | Maximum Points Awarded | Points Received |
| <b>Distressed Communities Index</b> | <p>Please assign points based on the <u>average</u> score of all counties listed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points = Distressed (score &gt; 80)</li> <li>• 8 points = At Risk (score 79-60)</li> <li>• 6 points = Mid-tier (score 59-40)</li> <li>• 4 points = Comfortable (score 39-20)</li> <li>• 2 points = Profitable (score &lt;19)</li> </ul>  | 10                     |                 |
| <b>Project Need</b>                 | <p>Is the specific issue, problem, or need clearly explained, and are they relevant to the funding purpose?</p> <p>The project demonstrates a clear link to the funding priorities.</p> <p>Are the project objectives clear, relevant to the program, and reasonably achievable within the grant duration?</p> <p>The proposed project will directly benefit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underserved farmers and ranchers;</li> <li>• New and beginning farmers or ranchers;</li> <li>• Veteran producers;</li> <li>• Processors and other middle-of-the-supply businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).</li> </ul> <p>The project involves more than one food producer/aggregator and/or proposes a shared use of infrastructure.</p> | 35                     |                 |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                     | <p>Are the project’s outcomes realistic?</p> <p>Are the project’s outcomes worth the total investment?</p>   | 5                      |                 |
| <b>Budget</b>                       | <p>Proposals submitted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning Farmer or Rancher</li> <li>• Veteran Farmer or Rancher</li> <li>• Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher</li> <li>• Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher</li> <li>• Small Disadvantages Business</li> </ul>  | 35                     |                 |



|                                 |   |            |  |
|---------------------------------|---|------------|--|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women-Owned Small Business</li> <li>• Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers</li> </ul> <p>Does the budget align with the activities of the project?</p> <p>Does the budget only contain necessary costs?</p> <p>Are the costs realistic and supported?</p> |            |  |
| <b>External Project Support</b> | <p>Are there letters of support for the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there support in the community for this project?</li> <li>• Is there support by local producers for this project?</li> </ul>   | 10         |  |
| <b>Review Total</b>             |   | <b>100</b> |  |



## APPENDIX B

| EQUIPMENT ONLY GRANT SCORING RUBRIC |  |                        |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Project Area                        | Criteria   | Maximum Points Awarded |
| <b>Distressed Communities Index</b> | <p>Please assign points based on the <u>average</u> score of all counties listed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 points = Distressed (score &gt; 80)</li> <li>• 16 points = At Risk (score 79-60)</li> <li>• 12 points = Mid-tier (score 59-40)</li> <li>• 8 points = Comfortable (score 39-20)</li> <li>• 4 points = Profitable (score &lt;19)</li> </ul>  | 20                     |
| <b>Project Need</b>                 | <p>Is the specific issue, problem, or need clearly explained, and are they relevant to the funding purpose?</p> <p>The project demonstrates a clear link to the funding priorities<br/>Is the impact realistic and related to the equipment being purchased?</p> <p>The proposed project will directly benefit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underserved farmers and ranchers;</li> <li>• New and beginning farmers or ranchers;</li> <li>• Veteran producers;</li> <li>• Processors and other middle-of-the-supply businesses</li> <li>• owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).</li> </ul> | 20                     |
| <b>Project Impact</b>               | <p>Please assign points based on the estimated number of local and regional producers who will be impacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 points = 100+ producers</li> <li>• 4 points = 50-99 producers</li> <li>• 3 points = 25-49 producers</li> <li>• 2 points = 6-24 producers</li> <li>• 1 point = 0-5 producers</li> </ul>  | 5                      |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                     | <p>Are the project's outcomes realistic?<br/>Are the project's outcomes worth the total investment?</p>  | 15                     |
| <b>Budget</b>                       | <p>Is the budget requested realistic for the project?<br/>The equipment justification is clearly explained and related to the objective and outcomes of the project.</p>   | 20                     |
| <b>Feasibility</b>                  | <p>Is the project well-thought out?<br/>Will the project reasonably be completed in one year?</p>  | 10                     |
| <b>External Project Support</b>     | <p>Are there letters of support for the project?<br/>Is there support in the community for this project?<br/>Is there support by local producers for this project?</p>   | 10                     |
| <b>Review Total</b>                 |  | <b>100</b>             |

## APPENDIX C

### Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Grant Subaward Recipient:** RFSI subaward recipients who are awarded Infrastructure Grants or Simplified Equipment-Only Grant by the MDA, who is the primary recipient.

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

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

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

**Nonprofit Corporations:** Any organization or institution, including nonprofits with State or IRS 501 (c) status and accredited institutions of higher education, where no part of the organization or institution's net earnings inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

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

**Small Disadvantaged Business:** A business that is small according to SBA's size standards for its business type and that is 51% or more owned and controlled by one or more disadvantaged persons. The disadvantaged person or persons must be socially disadvantaged and economically disadvantaged. For the purposes of this designation, disadvantaged persons is defined per [eCFR](#)

[:: 13 CFR 124.103 -- "Who is socially disadvantaged?"](#) as "Those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control." See "[Small Disadvantaged Business](#)" ([sba.gov](#)) for more information.

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

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

**Value-Added Agricultural Product:** Any agricultural commodity or product that:

- Has undergone a change in the physical state or form of the product, such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam.
- Is produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product.
- Is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product, such as an identity preserved product.
- Is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E-85 fuel; or
- Is aggregated and marketed as a locally produced agricultural food product and, as a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

**Veteran Farmer or Rancher:** A producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof, was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and has not operated a



farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for no more than 10 years or who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.

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

See "[Veteran contracting assistance programs](#)" ([sba.gov](#)) for more information.

**Women-Owned Small Business:** A small business according to SBA size standards for its business type that is at least 51% owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens; and have women manage day-to-day operations who also make long-term decisions.

See "[Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract program](#)" ([sba.gov](#)) for more information.