

2024 Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Request for Applications

Released:

May 15, 2024

Grant Proposals Due:

June 28, 2024, 5:00 p.m. EST

No late submissions will be accepted.

Incomplete submissions will not be
considered.



**FARM AND FOOD
GROWTH FUND**



**Agriculture
and Markets**

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agriculture Marketing Services (AMS), is entering into cooperative agreement with New York State Department of Agriculture (NYS AGM) for the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program Cooperative Agreements (RFSI). Funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally New York State raised and produced food products including [specialty crops](#), dairy products, grains for human consumption, land-based aquaculture and near-shore shellfish, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry. Processed products must contain a minimum of 51% New York State produced raw ingredients.

NYS AGM has partnered with Farm and Food Growth Fund Inc, (FFGF) to administer and manage the competitive grant program portion of NY's RFSI award. FFGF and NYS AGM will work in partnership with the USDA to make competitive subawards to support infrastructure in the middle-of-the-supply-chain for New York State food and farm businesses and other eligible entities.

There are two types of grants, Infrastructure Grants and Equipment Only Grants. An applicant can only apply for one type of grant, however applicants not selected for the Infrastructure award may apply for the Equipment-Only grant. The Infrastructure Grant has a minimum award amount of \$100,000 and a maximum amount of \$3,000,000; RFSI Infrastructure Grants will be awarded in 2024. The Equipment Only Grant has a minimum award amount of \$10,000 and a maximum award of \$100,000 for equipment purchases. The application period for the Equipment Only grants will open in 2025. FFGF is currently soliciting projects and accepting applications for the Infrastructure RFSI program.

Purpose

The purpose of the USDA RFSI program is to build resilience in the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain and strengthen local and regional food systems by creating new revenue streams for New York producers. NYS AGM and FFGF will make subawards in the form of Infrastructure Grants to middle-of-the-supply chain businesses to create more diverse local and regional market options and create more economic opportunities for communities, allowing them to retain more of the value chain dollar. RFSI investments aim to create a food systems infrastructure to support competitive and profitable market access for New York farm products.

RFSI serves as an important component of USDA's framework to transform the food system to benefit consumers, producers, and rural communities by providing more options, increasing access, and creating new, more, and better markets for small and mid-size producers. The pandemic and recent supply chain disruptions have revealed the perils of a national food system that depends on capacity concentrated in a few geographic areas and requires many steps to get from farm to fork. To be more resilient, the food system of the future needs to be more diversified, distributed, and local.

RFSI addresses this need by targeting crucial parts of the agricultural supply chain to address gaps in existing pandemic assistance, Food Systems Transformation (FST) programs, and other USDA programs. The primary goal of RFSI is to support food system crops and products meant for human consumption (excluding meat and poultry products, which are funded through other USDA

programs).

The program also aims to:

- Support development of value-added products available to consumers;
- Support proposals that provide fair prices, fair wages and new and safe job opportunities that keep profits in rural communities; and
- Increase diversity in processing options in terms of business model approaches, geography, and availability to underserved communities.

This program is also aligned with efforts to:

- Ensure equitable access to USDA programs and benefits from USDA-funded projects and support the policies of Executive Order 13985 (Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government);
- Contribute to the resilience of the food and agricultural supply chains through support for diversified, value-added agriculture and support the policies of Executive Order 14017 (Executive Order on America's Supply Chains);
- Promote competition in the food system and support the policies of Executive Order 14036 (Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy); and
- Implement the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act. [Guidance on BABA requirements for USDA award recipients is available here.](#)

PRIORITIES:

Infrastructure Grants must 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. USDA intends for RFSI program to focus funding Infrastructure Grant activities that:

- Demonstrate responsiveness to State Priorities for RFSI;
- Proposed activities are eligible;
- Demonstrates financial viability, technical feasibility, and readiness to implement;
- Has significant market impact;
- Demonstrates community impact and support, including labor and workforce considerations;
- Prioritize applications from underserved, beginning, and veteran farmers and producers and mid-supply chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged businesses (as defined by the [Small Business Administration](#)); and
- Promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities.

Based on stakeholder feedback conducted through an open public comment period and listening sessions, NYS AGM has identified the following program priorities within New York and will prioritize funding projects that address building a more resilient food system across the state.

The review panel will evaluate projects based on the following criteria, which is in order of priority:

NYS Department of Agriculture and Market Priorities:

- Support infrastructure development to expand business' capacity for processing, aggregation, storage and distribution;
- Target development of infrastructure projects to the dairy, fruit and vegetable, and organic industries to support the development of new value-added products; and
- Create greater market access to intermediaries such as food hubs, aggregators, wholesalers, and distributors with the goal of increasing local food sales to institutions such as schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities.

Accordingly, NYS will prioritize Projects that will:

- Expand capacity for aggregation and processing of NYS agricultural products to create more and better markets for multiple producers;
- Modernize manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems;
- Facilitate better communication between farmers and institutions to incentivize a diversity of products from small-scale producers to meet larger institutional needs across the state according to the guidelines defined by [NYS Executive Order 32](#); and
- Develop aggregation, storage, transportation, and loading dock infrastructure.

Project examples include those that address the following challenges:

- Transportation (includes strategically placed cold storage and evaluating additional pathways to move food, i.e. rail, ports, etc.);
- Storage (including ambient and refrigerated);
- Distribution & aggregation (including hyper-local aggregation and regional food hubs);
- Infrastructure (potential of aseptic by commodity-type); and
- Competition – (costs per unit are greater for smaller operators and therefore they are losing market opportunities to larger scale operators)

FUNDING AND DURATION:

Approximately \$14.7 million of RFSI funds are available through this competitive grant to build resilience in the middle-of-the-food- supply-chain, provide more and better markets to small farms and food businesses, support the development of value-added products for consumers, and create new and safe job opportunities.

Through this RFP, FFGF is managing a competitive online application that provides opportunities to the middle of the supply businesses for processing, aggregation, storage, transportation, and distribution (excluding meat and poultry products).

NYS AGM has also partnered with the [Northeast Farms of Color Land Trust](#) (NEFOC). They will support other Business Technical Assistance providers through their Holistic Technical Assistance framework to provide business planning services to producers/businesses seeking to develop

RFSI projects and/or expand processing, aggregation, storage, or distribution of food, and provide technical assistance for the successful implementation of RFSI projects. To access NEFOC services, applicants may contact Gabriela Pereyra: Gaby@nefoclandtrust.org.

As the funding authority, USDA will have final approval for projects submitted through this notice. FFGF will utilize a review panel to make funding recommendations and selected applicants will be forwarded to USDA to make the final determination concerning the awards. Projects cannot begin until the USDA has made their official award announcement and the contract between FFGF and the sub-grantee has been signed by all parties.

Equipment Only Grant

FFGF will issue Equipment-Only Projects in **2025**. These projects offer a simplified application to fund smaller grants between \$10,000 and \$100,000 for equipment purchases. The Equipment-Only opportunity is a Fixed Price Grant, meaning it will fund only equipment purchases (not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs). The amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment up to \$100,000. No match is required for this grant type. FFGF will announce the release of the Equipment Only grant in **2025**.

Infrastructure Grants

Infrastructure grants will range in value from a minimum award of \$100,000 and a maximum award of \$3,000,000. Applicants are required to submit a project narrative that describes the overall scope and how it aligns with the program goals and priorities. A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned organized approach over a fixed period and within specific limitations (costs, performance/quality, etc.). It uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Project Budgets 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 describing how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. Refer to the [USDA Program Scope and Requirements](#) section 4.4 for more information on allowable and unallowable expenses. Project Budgets, including Matching Funds, **must only** include the costs that are associated with the specific grant request and that are eligible to be funded by RFSI.

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

The application will be open from May 15 through June 28, 2024. Applicants will be notified of awards in late summer 2024. Projects must be slated to begin in the fall of 2024 with an end date no later than February 27, 2027.

Matching Funds (Infrastructure Grants Only)

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 below. All matching contributions **must be committed or secured at the time an applicant is recommended for an award**. Signed match verification letters **must be submitted with your application**.

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 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**.

Reduced Matching Funds

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. FFGF will require that applicants self-certify in their Infrastructure Grant applications to being eligible for this reduced match. Applicants that are not farmers, ranchers, or for-profit businesses may qualify for reduced match based on the composition of their governing body. For example, a nonprofit may qualify for reduced match under the women-owned category if 51% or more of their **voting board members** are women.

To calculate the required match, **the total cost of the project = grant award + grantee match**. No additional priority is given to projects that include matching contributions above the required amount.

Match Requirement	Total Project Cost	Grant Award	Grantee Match
50% (default)	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
25% (reduced)	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$100,000

Letters of Verification for Matching Funds

Signed Match Verification Letters must accompany the Infrastructure Grant proposal at the time of application. Each application must include the total amount of matching funds 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. A Match Verification Template Letter is provided on the application.

Match Verification will be monitored by FFGF and must be available upon request from the USDA. Program income (as defined in [2 C.F.R. § 200.1](#)) or any other Federal funds is an ineligible source of match or cost share.

Indirect Costs as Matching Funds

Indirect costs may count toward the Infrastructure Grant applicant’s match. **Indirect costs** (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”) defined at [2 C.F.R. § 200.1](#) are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Refer to [2 C.F.R. §§ 200.413](#) and [414](#) for additional information on determining if costs charged to the award are direct or indirect.

The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should typically be treated as indirect costs. However, charging these costs as direct costs may be appropriate where all the following conditions are met:

- administrative or clerical services are integral 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.

As stated in the regulations ([2 C.F.R. §§ 200.413](#) and [414](#)), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except State and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. 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.

All entities who 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](#) 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.

APPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS:

To be considered, applications must be submitted via <https://ffgf.smapply.us/> no later than 5:00PM EST on Friday, June 28, 2024.

Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible for Infrastructure Grants made by FFGF:

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

All applicant businesses and organizations must be physically located in New York State and domestically owned.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): Each applicant must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). On April 4, 2022, the Federal government stopped using DUNS to uniquely identify entities and started using a UEI created in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). For more information, please visit gsa.gov. You are not required to have the UEI number before submitting your application to the New York State Department of Agriculture for the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant program, but you will be required to have the number before accepting funds as a recipient.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects are those involving:

Middle of the Supply Chain activities: The purpose is to support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products.

Eligible agricultural commodities: specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, land-based aquaculture and near-shore shellfish.

The primary goal of RFSI is to support food system crops and products meant for human consumption (excluding meat and poultry products, which are funded through other USDA programs). Ineligible products include: meat and poultry, wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, cannabis, or dietary supplements.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has developed an environmental screening process to review grant projects for environmental compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other Federal environmental statutes. All applicants are required to complete [this form](#), which will help the FFGF determine what level of additional environmental review is required to advance your application. All activities under funded through 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 will be conducted prior to the award of the grant funds. If selected for an award, applicants must provide all requested information to support the compliance with NEPA, NHPA, ESA and all other federal environmental laws and regulations. [A Citizen's Guide to NEPA \(doe.gov\)](#) is a relatively short guide that provides an overview of NEPA requirements. **All projects that have any existing permits, consultations, and other proof of compliance must submit them with the application to demonstrate project readiness and feasibility.**

Build America Buy America (BABA) Requirements: Any public infrastructure project funded under RFSI program must coordinate with FFGF 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](#). BABA is *not applicable to for-profit entities* (either prime or subrecipient). 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. Buy America Preferences for RFSI funded projects can be found in [2 CFR Part 184](#).

Eligible Activities

Allowable activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects must follow the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#), and in the [RFSI Program Specific Terms and Conditions](#). Where there are differences between the RFSI Special Terms and Conditions and the AMS General Terms and Conditions, the RFSI terms take precedence. For any item not specifically stated in the RFSI Guidelines in Section 2.0, the AMS rules are to be followed.

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

Activities Not Eligible for Funding

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
- On-farm production related expenses;
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products such as wild-caught seafood, exclusively animal feed, and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, tobacco, cannabis, non-edible hemp products including CBD, or dietary supplements;
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program;
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities through an Infrastructure Grant. However, Infrastructure Grants may build on the successes of prior funding, such as the

USDA Regional Food Business Centers Business Builder subawards, to fund subsequent activities.

Letters of Support

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

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

Each applicant must include at least one letter of support and a maximum of three letters of support for the project. The letter(s) must be received with the original grant application.

Evidence of Critical Infrastructure

Evidence of Critical Infrastructure is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed grant project. Applicants must submit evidence that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place. Critical resources and infrastructure can be facilities, land, structure, use of city street/parks, shared-use kitchen, and/or other resources that are essential for the proposed project activities. Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition at the time of application submission.

Applicants are required to submit a letter indicating 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 using the Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Template, found on the [NYS AGM's and FFGF RFSI Program websites](#). This letter must be submitted with your application.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that, therefore, cannot be readily 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 NICRA, it is required to use this amount, and 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). See Program Scope and Requirements section 4.2 Indirect Costs for further guidance.

REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT:

Reporting

Grantees are required to submit quarterly written performance reports to FFGF detailing the project status and how grant monies were used. Upon completion of the project, a final, comprehensive report is due. Reporting requirements will be detailed in the award agreement. Grantees shall maintain records, receipts, accounting procedures and practices sufficient to reflect all costs claimed to have been incurred for the performance of the grant agreement. Annual and final reports shall document all grant expenditures.

Annual Reports (Infrastructure Grants Only)

Annual reports summarize the project's activities and progress of the project's period of performance and are due 30 days after the end of each grant year.

Final Reports

A final report is required 90 days after the completion of the grant project. Final reports summarize the project's activities and evaluate the project's ability to meet the desired objectives and outcomes.

FFGF reserves the right to hold the processing of a reimbursement if any report is not provided by a sub-recipient at the approved deadline. A held reimbursement will be released for payment once that information is provided to FFGF.

Reimbursement

Please note payments for this grant are strictly provided as a reimbursement of expenses incurred. Reimbursement requests may be submitted once a quarter. Reimbursement forms will be provided to awarded projects.

To receive reimbursements, a payment request must be submitted through the grant portal after actual expenses are incurred and paid by the grantee. Supporting documentation for both the reimbursement and match is required with the reimbursement request. All documentation of expenses shall be required as part of the budget closeout report. Payments will not be issued in advance.

- **EXAMPLE:** Request for personnel reimbursement must include hours worked, tasks performed and hourly rate. Matching for personnel should also show the same however when submitted with the reimbursement form, please keep the reimbursement documentation separate from the match.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Regional Food System Infrastructure Grant Scoring Rubric

Administered by: Farm and Food Growth Fund (FFGF)

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of evaluators with expertise in agricultural business development, market development including those with experience of serving BIPOC owned businesses, supply chain logistics and procurement, and priority agricultural commodities.

Grant review process

- 1) Applications are received by FFGF by the grant due date (no late submissions will be considered);
- 2) FFGF will review the applications for completeness and ensure that they meet the minimum criteria for funding (listed below);

- 3) Grant applications will be distributed via SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA) to the grant review team;
- 4) Grant review team will evaluate each grant and give them a score between 1-100. Applications will be ranked from highest score to lowest;
- 5) FFGF will select the grants for funding based on the grant review team scoring and inform the grant review team of their selections. After notification, FFGF will refer selected projects to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for review and submission to the USDA; and
- 6) Upon USDA approval, FFGF will send out letters to all grant applications informing them of their status as either approved or denied.

The following scoring rubric is designed to help identify those projects which best align with both USDA and State priorities under the Regional Food System Infrastructure Grant. Scores will be used to rank applications for funding. All scores are based on a 100-point system with 100 points being the highest and 0 points the lowest. Funding will be awarded beginning with the highest ranking score until funds are depleted. Applications must score at least 65 points to be considered for funding.

The final recommendations for funding will be made by FFGF based on ranking. Recommendations will be forwarded to NYS AGM for review and State approval. USDA, as the funding entity, will have final approval for projects submitted through this notice.

USDA priorities:

- Demonstrates responsiveness to State Priorities for RFSI;
- Proposed activities are eligible;
- Demonstrates financial viability, technical feasibility, and readiness to implement;
- Has significant market impact;
- Demonstrates community impact and support, including labor and workforce considerations;
- Prioritize underserved, beginning, and veteran farmers and producers and mid-supply chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged businesses (as defined by the USDA and Small Business Administration); and
- Promotes climate-resilient landscapes and rural economic systems, including tools to support agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities.

NYS Department of Agriculture and Market Priorities:

- Supports infrastructure development to expand business' capacity for processing, aggregation, storage and distribution;
- Targets development of infrastructure projects to the dairy, fruit and vegetable, and organic industries to support the development of new value-added products; and
- Creates greater market access to intermediaries such as food hubs, aggregators, wholesalers, and distributors with the goal of increasing local food sales to institutions such as schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities.

SCORING RUBRIC

1st Indicator (0 to 25 points): Alignment with NYS Priorities

- Supports infrastructure development to expand business' capacity for processing, aggregation, storage and distribution
- Targets development of infrastructure projects to the dairy, fruit and vegetable, and organic industries to support the development of new value-added products
- Creates greater market access to intermediaries such as food hubs, aggregators, wholesalers, and distributors with the goal of increasing local food sales to institutions such as schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities

2nd Indicator (0 to 20 points): Multiple NYS Markets and Multiple NYS Producers Impacted.

- Illustrates in their grant application how the funding will be critical to them expanding in a manner that positively benefits multiple NYS Producers (percentage increase)
- Illustrates in their grant application how the funding will be critical to them expanding in a manner that positively impacts multiple NYS Markets (percentage increase)

3rd Indicator (0 to 30 points): Complete Application

- The project is shovel ready and has the capacity for successful implementation
- The project has a budget that clearly demonstrates alignment with project activities, objectives, and outcomes
- The project narrative is detailed and fully describes the project activities

4th Indicator (0 to 10 points): Project Demonstrates Community Benefit and Buy-In

- Demonstrates strong commitments of support and significant stakeholder engagement

5th Indicator (0 to 5 points): Promotes Climate-Resilient Landscapes and Rural Economic Systems

- Includes goals and activities related to mitigating and adapting to climate change in the project's design and implementation

6th Indicator (0 or 5 points): Applicant meets the Criteria of being an underserved, beginning or veteran farmer/producer/mid-supply chain business

7th Indicator (0 or 5 points): Applicant Meets the Criteria of being a mid-supply chain business owned by a socially disadvantaged individual

Total available points: 100

Award threshold: 65

GENERAL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

All awarded grant projects must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award. Grantees agree to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, regulations, rules, and orders. The grant will be governed by and construed in

accordance with the laws of the State of New York. State and local governments, non-profit organizations, institutions and for-profits will be subject to 2 CFR 200, Uniform Grant Guidance, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal awards. All grant recipients are expected to carry out their project, maintain clear and consistent communication with FFGF and NYSDAM, keep detailed records, and report progress in a timely manner.

FFGF and NYSDAM Reserves the Right to:

- Reject any or all applications received;
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and agreement of applicant;
- Provide partial funding for specific application components that may be less than the formal amount requested in the grant application;
- Require a good faith effort from the project organization or sponsor to work with NYSDAM subsequent to project completion to develop reporting data or implement the project results where applicable;
- Withhold any payments that do not meet grant conditions;
- Require return or refund of grant monies used for expenditures that are not allowed or unauthorized; and
- Reallocate unawarded Infrastructure grants to Equipment-Only grants.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for accessing matching funds can be found at:

- NYS Community Development Financial Institutions ([“NYS CDFI Coalition” website](#))
- NYS Small Business Credit Initiative website ([“State Small Business Credit Initiative \(SSBCI\) | Empire State Development \(ny.gov\)”](#))
- NYS Job Development Authority Agriculture Loan Fund web page ([“JDA Agriculture Loan Fund | Empire State Development \(ny.gov\)”](#))
- Small Business Investment Companies directory website ([“SBIC directory | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)”](#)),
- U.S. Small Business Administration lender directory website ([“Loans | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)”](#))