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# Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program

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**Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications**

**Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA-AMS-TM-SPMGP-G-19-0007

**Publication Date:** April 23, 2019

**Application Due Date:** 11:59 PM Eastern Time on June 24, 2019

## Program Solicitation Information

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program

**Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA-AMS-TM-SPMGP-G-19-0007

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 10.173

**Dates:** Applications must be received on or before 11:59 pm Eastern Time June 24, 2019, through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

**Executive Summary:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), requests applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program (SPMGP). AMS will award grants to at least one national entity whose mission is consistent with the purpose of the grant program. The SPMGP is designed to strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of sheep and sheep products in the United States through the improvement of infrastructure, business, and resource development, and the development of innovative approaches to solve long-term needs.

It is anticipated that approximately \$2 million will be available to fund applications under this solicitation.

This announcement provides information about the eligibility criteria for applicants and projects, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an award.

**Stakeholder Input:** AMS seeks your comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program. Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice via e-mail to: [AMSGrants@ams.usda.gov](mailto:AMSGrants@ams.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are commenting on the **Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program RFA**.

## Application Checklist

The application checklist below provides the required and conditionally required documents for an application package. AMS expects applicants to read the entire RFA prior to submitting their application to ensure that they understand the program’s requirements.

AMS requires that **all application packages** include the following:

- SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (in Grants.gov)
- SF-424B – Assurances - Non-Construction Program (in Grants.gov)

The following required application components must be combined into one PDF in the order listed below.

- Project Narrative
- Fiscal Plan and Resources
- A Letter of Commitment from Each Partner or Collaborator
- Personnel Qualifications

When applicable, application packages may be required to include the following documents:

- AD-3030 – Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (in Grants.gov)
- AD-3031 – Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (in Grants.gov)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (PDF Attachment)

## Timing to Obtain or Submit Grants.gov Required Elements

Required Action	<i>Timing to Obtain/Submit</i>
AMS Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through Grants.Gov.	<i>June 24, 2019 – 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time</i>
Obtaining Your Organization’s DUNS Number (if you do not already have one)	1-2 business days
Establishing an <i>Active</i> SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	7-10 business days
Obtaining a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one)	Up to 2 weeks
Creating your Grants.gov profile and registering your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) authorization	Up to 2 weeks

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## 1.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### 1.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program (SPMGP) is authorized under section 209 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended by section 12102 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113—79) and amended under section 12102 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115—334) ([7 U.S.C. 1627a](#)).

### 1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of SPMGP is to develop projects that strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of sheep and sheep products in the United States, including the improvement of infrastructure, business, and resource development, and the development of innovative approaches to solve long-term need.

The SPMGP seeks to develop solutions for practical problems on a national basis and address the needs of the entire sheep industry, while focusing on the measurable benefits for sheep producers, encouraging partnerships among other sheep industry organizations, and reducing duplication of effort among participating organizations.

## 2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

### 2.1 TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

AMS will use a Grant Agreement to provide a Federal award to successful applicants.

### 2.2 TYPE OF APPLICATIONS

**New application.** All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in section [5.0 Application Review Information](#).

### 2.3 AVAILABLE FUNDING

It is anticipated that approximately \$2 million will be available to fund applications in FY 2019.

Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

### 2.4 FEDERAL AWARD PERIOD DURATION

Projects are awarded for a period of up to 60 months (5 years), although it is acceptable to complete a project before the scheduled performance period ending date. Insert these start and end dates on Block 17 on the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance.”

### 2.5 AWARD SIZE

Applicants may request part of, or the full amount of the funding available through this RFA, approximately \$2 million.

### 3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

#### 3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include national entities with a mission consistent with the SPMGP's purpose (see section [1.2](#)).

Eligible applicants must be in the 50 States, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

#### 3.2 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

An applicant may subcontract or subaward with partners and collaborators. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements provided in section [3.1](#).

- A *partnership* is a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
- A *collaborator* is a person or an organization unaffiliated with the applicant that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project and is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Partners and collaborators may come from private or public, for-profit or nonprofit entities.

Applicants are required to show evidence of existing community or industry support and engagement. AMS will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit one individual or entity.

#### 3.3 COST SHARING AND MATCHING

This solicitation **does not** have a Federal cost sharing or matching requirement.

### 4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

#### 4.1 ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. We urge applicants to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process, see Grants.gov's [Apply for Grants webpage](#). This RFA contains the information needed to obtain and complete required application forms and AMS-specific attachments. More information about applying through Grants.gov can be found in section [4.7 Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures and Requirements](#).

#### 4.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

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#### 4.2.1 SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

**Required:** Form SF-424 is available via the opportunity at Grants.gov. Most information blocks on the required form are either self-explanatory or adequately explained in the instructions. However, applicants must use the following supplemental instructions associated with specific blocks on the SF-424.

Block	Instructions:
#1 Type of Submission	Application
#2 Type of Application	New
#4 through #7	Not required
#8c Organizational DUNS	Applicant DUNS# for the organization submitting the application. See <a href="#">D&amp;B Request a DUNS Number</a>
#8d Address	Enter the organization street address as it appears in SAM.gov. P.O. Boxes will not be accepted. Enter a 9-digit zip code.
#10 Name of Federal Agency	AMS, USDA
#11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	10.173
#12 Funding Opportunity Number	USDA-AMS-TM-SPMGP-G-19-0007
#13 Competition Identification Number	Not applicable
#14 Areas Affected by Project	Enter cities, counties, States affected by project.
#15 Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project	Provide a short description of the project.
#16a Congressional Districts for Applicant	Enter the Congressional district where your main office is located.
#16b Congressional Districts for Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district where your project will be implemented. Write “All” if the project will be implemented in more than one location.
#17 Proposed Project Start Date and End Date	Start Date. End date.
#18a Estimated Funding - Federal	Total Federal amount requested.
#19 Is Applicant Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	See section <a href="#">4.5 Intergovernmental Review</a> .

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#### 4.2.2 SF-424B ASSURANCES NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

**Required:** Form SF-424B is available via the opportunity at [Grants.gov](#).

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#### 4.2.3 PROJECT NARRATIVE

**Required.** The Project Narrative must be submitted as a PDF and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under SF-424 item #15. Handwritten applications or applications in MS Word will not be accepted. The Project Narrative must be typed, single-spaced, in an 11-point font, not to exceed twenty (20) 8.5 x 11 pages.

Prior to submitting an application to Grants.gov, make sure that it is in final form (e.g., if you used the “track changes” function, accept all changes before submitting so that the mark-up is not visible upon final submission).

**The supporting documents in the subsequent sections do not count against the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative.**

### **(1) Executive Summary**

Include a summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. This summary should provide a concise outline of the project’s outcome(s) and description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.

### **(2) Alignment and Intent**

(i) Clearly state the purpose of the project. Describe the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address in relation to the statutory language of the program ([7 U.S.C. 1627a](#)). Include data and/or estimates that describe the extent of the issue, problem, or need.

(ii) List the objectives of the project. The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) mentioned in section (2)(i).

(iii) Provide a description of the benefits that are intended to be achieved as a result of engaging in the activities associated with this project, including the number of affected producers or processors.

### **(3) Technical Merit**

(i) Provide a Work Plan that describes the activities and timeline associated with each project objective. Include the following information for each objective mentioned in the Alignment and Intent section above: a timeline for each activity and major output including the anticipated date of completion; how and where the activities will take place; required resources; milestone(s) for assessing progress and success; the person(s) responsible for completing the activity, including collaborative arrangements with subcontractors or subgrantees; and evaluation activities.

### **(4) Achievability**

(i) Provide at least one distinct, quantifiable, measurable project outcome and associated indicator. If the outcome measures are long-term and occur after the project’s completion, identify an intermediate outcome that occurs before, and is expected to help lead to the fulfillment of long-term outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

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<sup>1</sup> The USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture published a short description for developing outcomes through a [Logic Model Planning Process](#). Applicants may also contact AMS (section [7.0](#)) for additional assistance.

(iii) Describe how you will disseminate the project's results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may be interested in the project's results or implementing a similar project.

#### (5) Expertise and Partners

(i) List key staff, including personnel and external project partners and collaborators that comprise the Project Team, their roles, and their relevant experience and past successes in developing and operating projects similar to this project. Ensure that you have included Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations to support the information.

(ii) Describe your management plan for coordinating, communicating, and sharing data and reports among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, both internally to personnel and externally to partners and collaborators.

(iii) Discuss your experience and the management processes that will be used to ensure open and fair access to direct grant opportunities, including solicitation and review of proposals, procedures for handling conflicts of interest, and administration of oversight of sub-awards.

(iv) Describe your experience and the management processes that will be used to ensure proper accounting and reporting for the use of Federal funds.

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#### 4.2.4 FISCAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

**Required:** The Fiscal Plan and Resources requirement includes a Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative. The Budget Spreadsheet must show the relevant expenditure categories in the far left column. Relevant cost categories include:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Special Purpose Equipment
- Supplies
- Contracts/Consultants
- Other
- Indirect Costs
- Program Income

Proceeding across the page, there must be a column showing the dollar amount of Federal funds requested. Provide separate Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and cumulative budgets.

A general line-item for "grants" may be provided under Contracts in the application's budget. The individual subaward budgets are not expected at the submission of this application; however, selected applicants will be expected to provide a comprehensive plan detailing each project, associated outcomes, and applicable expenses in order to draw down on the funds associated with this line item.

The Budget Narrative must breakdown and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section [4.6.3 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities](#) for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.

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#### 4.2.5 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

**Required:** Provide a one- to two-page resume or summary of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and for each of the other major project participants. Longer resumes will be disregarded.

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#### 4.2.6 LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM PARTNER AND COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

**Required:** Applicants must provide at least three (3) letters of commitment (in MS Word or PDF) from project partners and collaborators. More information can be found on partners and collaborators in section [3.2 Partners and Collaborators](#). Emails will not be accepted. The Letter of Commitment should include the following:

- Project Applicant
- Project Title
- A short introduction describing the partnering organization’s mission and how its applicable to this program
- How the organization is participating in and supporting the project
- A statement that these individuals and the organization agree to work with the applicant as put forth by the application’s management plan

Submit *Letters of Commitment* on letterhead and address them to the applicant (i.e., Project Director). Clearly indicate at the top of the documents that they are **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT**. Letters must accompany the proposal at the time of application. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

Letter(s) must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the “Add Attachments” button under Form SF-424 item #15.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This funding opportunity does not require Congressional letters of support and such letters do not carry additional weight during the evaluation process.

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#### 4.2.7 FORM AD-3030 – REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING FELONY CONVICTION AND TAX DELINQUENT STATUS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS

**Required if the applicant is a corporation.** A corporation includes, but is not limited to, any entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. territories. Corporations can include both for-profit and non-profit entities. AD-3030 is a self-certification form. It is the applicant’s responsibility to determine if the AD-3030 needs to be completed and submitted. The applicant must submit the version of the form in Grants.gov. This requirement does not apply to State departments of agriculture, but it may apply to State universities and State colleges. Most information blocks on the required form are self-explanatory; however, AMS is providing further clarification below.

Block	Instructions
#1 Applicant's Name	Enter the name of the individual or authorized representative-AOR who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization.
#2 Applicant's Address	Enter the address of the applicant organization.
#3 Tax ID No.	Enter the last four digits of the applicant organization's Tax Identification Number.
#4A, 4B, 4C Questions	<p>Address these questions by checking the Yes or No boxes.</p> <p>For question 4B, see below for what is meant by "acting on behalf" of.</p> <p>If the action of the official or agent resulted in a benefit to the corporation, then the official or agent was "acting on behalf" of the corporation. If the action of the official or agent resulted in a benefit to the official or agent, then the official or agent was not acting on behalf of the corporation.</p>
#5A Applicant's Signature (By)	The individual or authorized representative who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization must sign the form.
#5B Title/Relationship of the Individual if Signing in a Representative Capacity	Enter the title of the individual or authorized representative who is submitting the application on behalf of the applicant organization.
#5C Date Signed	Date the form.

**4.2.8 FORM AD-3031, ASSURANCE REGARDING FELONY CONVICTION OR TAX DELINQUENT STATUS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS**

**Required if the applicant is a corporation.** A corporation includes, but is not limited to, any entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. territories. Corporations can include both for-profit and non-profit entities.

The applicant must submit the fillable PDF version of the form in Grants.gov. AD-3031 is a self-certification form. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine if the AD-3031 needs to be completed and submitted.

**4.2.9 NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA)**

**Required if the applicant has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).** Refer to section [4.6.1 Indirect Costs](#) for more information. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15.

**4.3 SUBMITTED APPLICATION QUALIFICATION**

Your application will **not be accepted** if it:

- Is received by Grants.gov after the submission deadline (see [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#)).
- Is submitted via any method other than through Grants.gov.

Your application will be **rejected** if it:

- Is non-responsive to the requirements of this RFA (see [AMS' Policy on Non-Responsive Applications](#)).

#### 4.4 SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. Ensure that all components of the application are complete before submission. Allow enough time for the application process, as it may take more than one attempt before your application is successfully submitted. AMS encourages you to submit your application at least two weeks prior to the application deadline to ensure all certifications and registrations are met.

Only applications submitted and validated by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 24, 2019, to Grants.gov will be accepted. See [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#).

#### 4.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This solicitation is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Refer to the [Intergovernmental Review \(Single Point of Contact \(SPOC\) List\)](#).

#### 4.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

##### 4.6.1 INDIRECT COSTS

*Indirect costs* (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at [2 CFR § 200.56](#)) are those 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.

As stated in the regulations ([2 CFR §§ 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. As described in [2 CFR § 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.

All applicants who elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent must use the MTDC as the base. MTDC are defined in [2 CFR § 200.68](#) as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards 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 subaward 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.

If an applicant has a negotiated indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant agency, the applicant must submit a copy of its approved NICRA with its application. Entities that would like to negotiate an indirect cost rate must contact their cognizant agency. For assignments of cognizant agencies see [2 CFR § 200.19](#).

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#### 4.6.2 ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS AND ACTIVITIES

All AMS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

### 4.7 GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND RECEIPT PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

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#### 4.7.1 HOW TO REGISTER TO APPLY THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

The registration process can take **up to four weeks** to complete. Therefore, complete your registration allowing sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this grant funding opportunity, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/individual-registration.html>

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- 1) *Obtain a DUNS Number:* All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a [Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\) number](#) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 form.
- 2) *Register with SAM:* In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). All organizations must register with SAM to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. **SAM.gov accounts must be updated annually, and your organization must have an active SAM.gov account to submit your application to Grants.gov.**
- 3) *Create a Grants.gov Account:* The next step in the registration process is to [create an account with Grants.gov](#). Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the Authorized Organization Role.
- 4) *Authorize Grants.gov Roles:* After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying him or her of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and [authorize the appropriate roles](#), which may include the AOR role, thereby

giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online anytime after you have been approved as an AOR.

- 5) *Track Role Status*: After registering with Grants.gov and authorizing the applicant AOR, Grants.gov allows you [to track your status](#).

b. *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization to act as an AOR; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

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#### 4.7.2 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO AMS VIA GRANTS.GOV

On December 31, 2017, [Grants.gov officially retired the legacy PDF application package](#) as a method to apply for a federal grant. Applicants can now apply only by using Grants.gov Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

- 1) *Create a Workspace*: This allows you to complete your Workspace online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
  - a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or AMS forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: You may need to visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software.

- b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms*: Fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory fields you must complete to successfully submit your application.
  - c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) *Submit a Workspace*: Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: Grants.gov **does not** check for AMS required attachments. It is the applicant's

responsibility to ensure that all required attachments listed in section [4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission](#) are included.

- 4) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, Grants.gov automatically assigns a Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) to the package, which will be listed on the Confirmation page generated after submission.

*Applicant Support*: Grants.gov provides additional [training resources, including video tutorials](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726, or email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Grants.gov will issue a ticket number to which you and Grants.gov can refer to if the issue is not resolved. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact mentioned in section [7.0 Agency Contacts](#).

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#### 4.7.3 TIMELY RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF TIMELY SUBMISSION

All applications must be received by the due date established in section [4.4 Submission Date and Time](#). Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov using an electronic date/time stamp generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will then receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When AMS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will electronically acknowledge receipt of the application to the applicant AOR's email address. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

AMS will not accept applications packages by fax, email or postal mail. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by AMS. See [AMS' Policy on Late Applications](#).

*Special Note for Applicants with Slow Internet Connections*. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, may experience significantly longer transmission times when submitting your application Grants.gov, especially if there are large attachments contained in the upload. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error message or a successfully received transmission notification via email to the applicant AOR.

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#### 4.7.4 TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this RFA and follow all of the instructions provided by AMS.
- Apply for the correct grant program.
- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](#) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.

- Limit Application File Size/ File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader)
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, \*, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct DUNS number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:  
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html> and FAQs:  
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>  
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

## 5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### 5.1 PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

AMS will use the following criteria and scoring for each competitively reviewed application:

**Alignment and Intent** ..... **25 Points**

The extent to which the application:

- 1) Provides a clear and concise description of the problem and need.
- 2) Supports the sheep industry through the development of projects that strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of sheep and sheep products in the United States, including through the improvement of infrastructure, business, and resource development, and through the development of innovative approaches to solve long-term needs.
- 3) Identifies the intended beneficiaries, including the number of beneficiaries, and how they will benefit.

**Technical Merit** ..... **25 Points**

The extent to which the application:

- 1) Presents a clear, well-conceived, and overall suitable methodology for fulfilling the goals and objectives, including providing subawards supporting the sheep industry.
- 2) Presents a realistic timeline for implementing the proposed work plan (including subaward administration) during the award performance period.
- 3) Demonstrates that the applicant will implement procedures to prevent conflicts of interest.

**Achievability** ..... **15 Points**

The extent to which the application:

- 1) Provides outcomes and indicators that are feasible for the scale and scope of the project including:

- How indicator numbers were derived with a clear means to collect feedback to evaluate and achieve each relevant outcome indicator; and
  - The anticipated key factors that are predicted to contribute to and restrict progress toward the applicable indicators, including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors.
- 2) Provides a comprehensive plan to disseminate the results (both positive and negative) electronically and in-person to target audiences, stakeholders, and interested parties.

**Expertise and Partners** ..... **25 Points**

The extent to which the application:

- 1) Presents the qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) and the relevant partnerships and collaborations to accomplish the project’s goals and objectives and to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries including:
  - Commitment from the key staff demonstrated through Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations;
  - The key staff who will be responsible for managing the projects and the individuals (name and title) who comprise the Project Team; and
  - The expertise and experience of the Project Team necessary to successfully manage and implement the proposed project.
- 2) Ability to draw on existing sheep industry resources, including activities conducted by sheep promotion entities, research capacity, academic and industry expertise, and sheep businesses.
- 3) Describes plans for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.
- 4) Demonstrates a high-quality record of administering Federally funded programs and that the applicant has the capacity and control systems necessary to administer the subawards.

**Fiscal Plan and Resources** ..... **10 Points**

The extent to which the application:

- 1) Budget narrative or justification provides a clear, detailed, narrative description for each budget line item including:
  - The budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project; and
  - The budget relates logically to the narrative describing the project.
- 2) Provides evidence that critical resources and infrastructure that are necessary for the initiation and completion of the proposed project are currently in place.
- 3) Demonstrates that sufficient staff, administrative support, and other resources to will be assigned to fulfill the program’s objectives.

**5.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

*Step 1: Initial Qualification Screening*

To meet the basic eligibility requirements, applications must be responsive to the RFA. Please see [AMS' Non-Responsive Application Policy](#) for more information.

### *Step 2: Technical Review*

Each application is evaluated by a panel of peer reviewers. AMS will make every attempt to match reviewers with applications in their areas of expertise. Each reviewer signs a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement regarding any assigned proposals. The peer review panels evaluate their assigned proposals using instructions prepared by AMS officials. Individual reviewers confer with other team members to derive a consensus score. The consensus review serves as the basis for awarding and allocating grant funds and focuses on strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

### *Step 3: Administrative Review*

AMS will conduct a final administrative evaluation of each review panel's top rankings and recommendations. In addition to the rank and scores, AMS reviews each application to ensure that potential recommended projects align with the scope of the RFA, allowability of budget items, available funding, geographic diversity, and USDA priorities. AMS staff will work with top-ranked applicants to negotiate any revisions if necessary and possible. AMS will also assess an organization's ability to account for the use of Federal funds and monitor the performance associated with these monies using the guidance provided by [2 CFR § 200.205\(c\)](#).

## 6.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 6.1 AWARD NOTICES

Upon announcement of the Federal awards, AMS will prepare and send a Notice of Award and Grant Agreement to each recipient for signature by the appropriate official. Grant Agreements consist of a 1-page Agreement Face Sheet (AMS-33) that will be signed by AMS and the AOR.

The Notice of Award and Grant Agreement will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in [2 CFR § 200.210](#) and a reference to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

### 6.2 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by AMS via email as soon as possible after the awards are announced. AMS will email unsuccessful applicants anonymous review panel consensus comments regarding their proposals as feedback.

### 6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

As part of the Notice of Award and Grant Agreement, all AMS recipients must abide by the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#), which reference applicable *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*.

### 6.4 REPORTING

Reporting and award closeout requirements are included in the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those will be identified in the award.

## 7.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

### 7.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 202-690-1300  
E-Mail: [AMSGrants@usda.gov](mailto:AMSGrants@usda.gov)

### 7.2 ADDRESS

**Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program**  
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Stop 0267  
Room 4534 South Building  
Washington, DC 20250-0269

### 7.3 GRANTS.GOV QUESTIONS

All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to Grants.gov's [Applicant Support](#).

## 8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

### 8.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

### 8.2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act of 1966 ([5 U.S.C. § 552](#)) (FOIA) and the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C. § 552a](#)), as implemented by USDA's regulations ([7 CFR §1, Subpart A](#)) govern the release or withholding of information to the public in connection with this Federal award. The release of information under these laws and regulations applies only to records held by AMS and imposes no requirement on the recipient or any subrecipient to permit or deny public access to its records.

FOIA requests for records relating to this Federal award may be directed to USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, FOIA/PA Officer, Room 3943-S, Mail Stop 0202, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0273, Telephone: (202) 720-2498; or email: [AMS.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:AMS.FOIA@usda.gov).

### 8.3 PROHIBITION ON USING FUNDS UNDER GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES THAT REQUIRE CERTAIN INTERNAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does not require any of its employees, contractors, or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, or subrecipients 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. Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in sections 743, 744 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Pub. L. 114-113, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions Government-wide) and any successor provisions of law on making funds available through grants and cooperative agreements to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and (2) section 744 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

#### 8.4 PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.