

Alaska’s 2024 Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program



Fiscal year 2023 Request for Applications.

Alaska’s Division of Agriculture (DoAG) announces the availability of grant funds for the purpose of assisting in the building of resiliency in the middle of the food supply chain by strengthening local and regional food systems, creating more diverse local and regional market options, increasing economic opportunities for communities, and opening new revenue streams for producers. These funds are targeted for the processing and aggregation/distribution stages of the food supply chain. These funds are awarded through a competitive grant process for subgrant awards (subgrantees) and the Alaska DoAG provides administration of the awards.

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A. Timeline

The Alaska Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds for the sole purpose of assisting in building resiliency in the middle of the food supply chain by strengthening local and regional food systems.

The timeline for this application cycle is:

January 15, 2024: Release of Request for Applications.
January 31, 2024: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program Webinar Webinar 12:00- 1:30pm Webinar Registration First Session
February 12, 2024: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program Q&A Webinar 1:00- 2:30pm Webinar Registration Second Session
February 27, 2024: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program Q&A Webinar 9:00- 10:30am Webinar Registration Third Session
March 15, 2024: Complete applications and supporting documentation due by 5pm
March 18- 22, 2024: Applications will undergo a competitive review process by a Review Committee.
March 29, 2024: Selected Subgrantees will be submitted to USDA for approval by April
April 15- 19, 2024: Contracting begins with selected subgrantees approved for funding by USDA
May 1, 2024: Beginning of grant performance period for subgrantees
May 31, 2024: Advances for the Infrastructure Grants will be processed
RFSI Period of Performance for awarded grantees: May 1, 2024 – May 1, 2027

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B. Introduction

The Alaska Division of Agriculture (DoAG) is currently accepting applications for grant projects under the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program. Funding for the program was awarded to DoAG by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) who received \$420 million from the American Rescue Plan to distribute to all states and territories. Alaska has received approximately \$2.2 million. The purpose of the RFSI program is to assist in building resiliency in the middle of the food supply chain by strengthening local and regional food systems, creating more diverse local and regional market options, increasing economic opportunities for communities, and opening new revenue streams for producers.

The DoAG will be awarding funds through a competitive grant process for subgrant awards and will provide administration of the awards. Projects must focus on expanding capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted local and regional agricultural products. Field production activities are not eligible. In other words, projects must be specific to middle of the food supply chain.

This program is intended to support food system crops and products meant for human consumption including specialty crops, dairy, grains, and aquaculture. Ineligible products for this grant program include meat and poultry products, wild caught seafood, animal feed and forage products, fiber, landscaping products, floriculture, hemp and cannabis, and 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, the Alaska economy, and building resiliency in Alaska's food systems. Emphasis will be made to fund projects that benefit historically underserved farmers and ranchers, businesses that qualify under Small Business Administration (SBA) categories of small, disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, and veteran-owned small businesses.

C. Funding Priorities

As the U.S.'s largest state by far, Alaska contains over 586,000 square miles of land and is isolated from the contiguous U.S. where building robust infrastructure for Alaska's food supply chain is challenging and costly. Alaska is completely reliant on food imports, importing approximately 95% of its food supply from the Western U.S., costing \$2 billion annually. Once imported, much of the food must travel further to be distributed to Alaska's remote communities, many of which are accessible only by boat or plane.

The pandemic and subsequent supply chain disruptions revealed the weaknesses in a national food system that depends on capacity concentrated in a few geographic areas and a distribution system that requires many steps to get product from the farm to table when empty grocery shelves were experienced nationally. It became especially evident just how vulnerable Alaska is to supply chain stressors when the Port of Seattle was on the brink of closing. Alaska relies on the Port of Seattle to bring goods and food to Alaska via shipping carriers.

Since then, the State and agricultural groups have worked to identify critical needs in Alaska's food supply chain that encompasses investment in infrastructure. The Alaska DoAG will prioritize funding projects that pertain to the following needs identified in the middle of the food supply chain in Alaska:

Food Processing Infrastructure: The current market trends in food purchases lean heavily toward prepackaged meals, which has experienced significant growth over the last several years. Consumers prefer the convenience and affordability of prepackaged meals. Facilities that process food into ready-to-eat meals, especially shelf stable product, will have more marketability, increases storage life for locally produced food versus stored fresh/ raw products, and makes shipping easier to rural communities. The addition of food processing facilities will enable food processors to add product types, increase volume, and increase packaging and labeling capacity for retail.

Shared Kitchen Infrastructure: Shared kitchen infrastructure is a critical need for small and mid-sized food processors, as Alaska currently does not have any shared commercial kitchen spaces. There is an especially active demand in Anchorage for accessible processing facilities. Institutions interested in purchasing local food for use in meal programs such as schools, hospitals, childcare facilities, and senior living facilities need access to commercial kitchen space and large-scale equipment to clean, chop, cook, slice, and preserve raw, fresh food sourced locally while extending its shelf life.

Storage: Cold, dry, and frozen storage facilities to encourage increased production and extend availability of products is a critical need in Alaska, especially in rural communities where access to temperature- controlled storage facilities would significantly improve access to fresh foods. Once product is harvested, producers need ample storage space to store product for post-harvest handling, washing, packaging, and distribution. Refrigerated trucks and vans are then needed to distribute fresh products to retail outlets. Projects that increase storage capacity will help Alaska producers increase production and post- harvest activities, ensuring more fresh, local, high-quality products get to market.

As part of the RFSI program, USDA has identified 11 specific project categories that are eligible for the RFSI grant program. The Alaska DoAG conducted outreach in the summer of 2023 to targeted industry stakeholders via listening sessions and an industry survey to identify the top 5 project priorities for Alaska. The top 5 funding priorities identified through industry survey based on ranked votes were:

1. Expanding processing capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new wholesale/ retail product lines.
2. Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packaging and labeling equipment, or delivery vehicles.
3. Modernizing equipment or facilities through upgrades, repairs, or retooling; (e.g. adapting product lines for institutional procurement or adding parallel processing capacity).
4. Increasing storage space, including cold storage.
5. Construction of a new facility.

D. Eligibility

Entities eligible for grants under the RFSI program are:

- 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.
- Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product.
- For-profit entities 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 meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards.
 - For profit entities must meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA Small Business size standards matched to industries described in the North American Industry Classification

System (NAICS). For more information on these size standards, please visit [SBA's Size Standards Website](#). For a quick check on whether your business qualifies, please use the [SBA Size Standards Tool](#).

All applicant businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and applicants' facilities must be physically located within Alaska.

Individual businesses can apply for this grant however it will be considered more competitive if it:

- Benefits: underserved farmers and ranchers; new and beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran producers; processors and middle-of-the-supply-chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals as defined by SBA.
- Projects that offer family supporting job quality and treatment/ safety of workers; focus on small and medium sized enterprises that add options and choices for consumers and producers (value added products), demonstrate local support, support underserved communities, are submitted by cooperatives, farmer- and worker owned enterprises.
- States may prioritize specific markets such as: institutions, retail, food hubs, aggregators, wholesales, and distributors, and/ or market channels that respond to food access challenges in the state.

E. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Two types of projects are available under the RFSI grant program: Simplified Equipment Only projects and Infrastructure projects. **Applicants can only apply for either an Infrastructure grant or an Equipment-only grant but cannot apply for both.**

1. Simplified Equipment Only Projects

Simplified Equipment- Only Grants will range in value from a minimum award of \$10,000 to a maximum award of \$100,000. The Simplified Equipment- Only Grant is a fixed price grant, meaning it will fund only equipment purchases (freight can be included). The final award amount will be equal to the cost of the equipment up to \$100,000. Costs associated with facility upgrades, staffing, training, etc. cannot be included in equipment only projects. This grant project does not require cost sharing or matching. Funds will be distributed no earlier than May 31, 2024, and projects must be completed by May 1, 2025.

Documentation Requirements

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 costs of freight/ delivery and installation can be covered by the grant if they are included 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 May 1, 2024.

Equipment purchases must follow [USDA AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [RFSI Specific Terms and Conditions](#).

2. Infrastructure Grant Projects

Infrastructure Grants will range in value from a minimum award of \$100,000 and a maximum award of \$1,000,000. The Infrastructure Grant is a 3-year performance period with the beginning date starting May 1, 2024, and an end date of May 1, 2027. Infrastructure Grant recipients will receive a 25% advance payment to begin their project, the remainder of the funds will be distributed with proof of cost including invoices, timesheets for payroll, contracts, binding quotes, etc. Documentation accounting for expenditures paid with the advanced payment will be required to be provided to have on record. Reimbursements must be requested by using the Reimbursement Request Form provided by the Alaska DoAG. Costs must be identified as either direct or indirect costs and the specific budget category identified in the grant application.

Direct costs are costs that can be identified specifically with a project that can be directly assigned to such an activity relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Direct costs typically include, but are not limited to, compensation for employees who work directly on the awarded project including salary, fringe benefits, and travel. Equipment, supplies, and contractual work directly related to the project are also direct costs.

Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Typical examples of indirect costs include depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting. If an Infrastructure Grant recipient has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), the Alaska DoAG will honor that negotiated rate. A copy of the NICRA must be submitted with the Infrastructure Grant application. Any non-Federal applicant 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% of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

MTDC are defined 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. MTDCs exclude equipment, rental costs, and the portion of each Infrastructure Grant more than \$25,000. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis cost rate.

Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged

or inconsistently charged as both.

More information on direct and indirect costs can be found at [2 C.F.R. 200.413](#) and [2 C.F.R. 200.414](#). MTDC is defined in [2 C.F.R. 200.1](#).

For funded grant projects associated with the purchase of iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials permanently installed, awardees must follow the [Build America, Buy America \(BABA\) Act](#).

A Mandatory Match of 50% is required for this grant type.

Infrastructure grant recipients will be required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding unless they qualify for reduced matching funds. For [historically underserved farmers and ranchers](#), businesses that qualify under [SBA categories](#) of small, disadvantaged businesses, women- owned small businesses, or veteran- owned small businesses, the required matching funding will be reduced to 25% of the total proposed project cost.

In-kind contributions are defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. For example, a partner, such as a tribal community member, may volunteer their professional expertise as a match contribution to the project. 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.

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

Indirect costs may count toward the Infrastructure Grant applicant's match. Program income or any other Federal funds is an ineligible source of match or cost share.

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 using the Match Verification Template Letter on the [Division of Agriculture RFSI Grant Website](#). Signed match verification letters must be submitted with the 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 of completion of a project are in place. (Template will be provided). 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. 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 Letter** on the [Division of Agriculture RFSI Grant Website](#). The letter must be submitted with your application.

F. Grant Project Guidelines

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. Additionally, it uses resources that are specifically allocated to the work of the project and usually involves a team of people.

Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because they 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.

The RFSI program will focus on funding Infrastructure Grant projects that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted agricultural products. Examples include:

- Expanding processing capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new wholesale/ retail product line.
- Modernizing equipment or facilities through upgrades, repairs, or retooling (e.g. adapting product lines for institutional procurement or adding parallel processing capacity).
- Purchase and installation of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, or delivery vehicles.
- Modernizing manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems.
- Enhancing worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment or facility improvements.
- Construction of a new facility.
- Increasing packaging and labeling capacities that meet compliance requirements under applicable laws (e.g. sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment).
- Increasing storage space, including cold storage.
- Develop, customize, or install climate-smart equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/ or water quality, and/ or meets one or more of USDA's climate actions goals.
- Modernize equipment or facilities to ensure food safety, including associated Hazard,

Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation, plan development and employee training.

- Training on the use of all equipment purchased under the grant and associated new processes.

G. Examples of Acceptable Projects:

- Improvements, rearrangements, alterations, of an existing building or facility to use the space more effectively and to accommodate new or upgraded equipment and processes.
- Construction of new buildings or structural changes to an existing building/facility resulting in square footage expansion or requiring changes to the building's floor, foundation, and exterior or load-bearing walls.
- Purchasing special purpose equipment including special purpose vehicles relevant to the scope of work on an Infrastructure Grant project (e.g. Delivery vehicles or refrigerated trucks.) Equipment must follow [USDA AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) and [RFSI Specific Terms and Conditions](#). The purchase of special purpose equipment and/ or vehicles must benefit multiple producers through middle of the supply chain activities such as processing, aggregation, and/ or distribution of targeted agricultural product.
- Repair or update existing equipment.
- Retail-related activities such as creating distribution channels for new retail opportunities, expanding processing, and packaging capacities, adding product types, increasing production volume, and supporting new retail product lines.
- Training on the use of equipment purchased under the grant. Hiring term- limited personnel to assist with project implementation.
- 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:
 - On- farm post-harvest processing, preservation, and storage/ cold storage.
 - Post harvest cleaning and grading.
 - Aggregator warehouse and storage, including cooperatives.
 - Purchase of freezing equipment, freezer, or cold storage.
 - Processing, canning, preserving, and pasteurization.
 - Preparation and packing.
 - Drying, hulling, shelling, and milling.
 - Cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, fermenting.

H. Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein.
- Purchase of general use vehicles.
- Production activities and costs including farm equipment, tools, supplies, gardening, or production related labor and training.
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing, or other ineligible agricultural products as noted above.
- 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.
- 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.

I. Adherence to Federal Environmental Laws and Regulations

Infrastructure Grant recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and all other federal environmental laws and regulations. The Alaska DoAG is required to review projects for NEPA compliance prior to the award of Infrastructure Grant subaward funds.

For funded grant projects associated with the purchase of iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials permanently installed, awardees must follow the [Build America, Buy America \(BABA\) Act](#). The Alaska DoAG is required to coordinate with USDA AMS on any public infrastructure project funded by the RFSI grant program to ensure adherence to BABA guidance.

For such projects, the grant sub 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](#).

J. Competitive Review Process

RFSI program grants will be awarded through a competitive review process. Once the application period closes, the Alaska DoAG grant administration staff will conduct an internal review of all applications received to ensure application completeness and that the applications meet the requirements of the RFSI grant program outlined in this Request for Proposals. Applications that are incomplete and/ or do not meet the grant requirements will be disqualified. The Alaska DoAG will assemble an external review team of technical experts from various fields who have

the knowledge and understanding of Alaska’s challenges and shortcomings when it comes to infrastructure and resiliency in the state’s middle of the food supply chain. The external review committee will score each application based on the scoring criteria outlined below. The Alaska DoAG Director will chair the review committee and the Alaska DoAG staff will participate in the reviews in order to provide guidance and technical expertise on the grant requirements but will not be scoring the applications. The Alaska DoAG will average the scores amongst the committee members to determine each project’s overall rank. After the applications are ranked, the Alaska DoAG will look at the projects to make sure funding is being allocated statewide across the eligible agricultural sectors, that the amount of funding Alaska has received from USDA is being maximized, that selected project priorities are being met, and that priority is being given to underserved farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged small businesses.

Based on these factors and rankings determined by the external review committee, a funding proposal will be presented to the Alaska DoAG Director for approval. Then, the Alaska DoAG will submit its award recommendations to the USDA for review and final approval by a USDA Review Board. Successful applicants will then be notified of award and contracting will begin. The anticipated date of notification is on or around April 15, 2024, but will be dependent on the USDA Review Board’s timeline for reviewing all state and territory RFSI applications selected for funding.

K. SCORING CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS

Simplified Equipment Only Projects:

Criteria	Score Available
<p><u>Executive Summary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The name of the applicant organization that if awarded a grant will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the State has been included. - Applicant to lead and execute the project has been identified. - The project’s purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes have been identified. - Has a description of the current business operations including services being offered in the geographic focus area have been provided? 	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Excellent = 9-10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>
<p><u>Project Need:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the specific issue or need clearly identified and defined that the requested equipment project will address? - Is it clear why the equipment project is important and timely? 	<p style="text-align: center;">40</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Excellent = 35-40</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Good = 30- 34.9</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the equipment project build resilience in the middle of the supply chain? - Has where in the middle of the supply chain the requested equipment will be used been identified? (processing, aggregation, distribution, value added production, etc.). - Have agricultural food products processed with the equipment been identified? - Does the project fit into one or more of Alaska’s funding priorities? - Does the project enhance the development of value- added products available to consumers by developing local or regional markets? - Does the project increase processing and/ or storage capacity in Alaska? - Does the project contribute to more and better markets for local producers or increased/ improved access to markets? - Does the project create new economic opportunities in its community? - Does the project benefit underserved farmers and ranchers; new and beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran producers; processors and middle-of-the-supply-chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals as defined by SBA? 	<p>Fine = 20-29.9</p> <p>Poor = 10-19.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0- 9.9</p>
<p><u>Project Impact</u></p> <p>Please assign points based on the estimated number of local and regional producers and food processors who will be impacted.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5 points = 100+ producers</p> <p>4 points = 50- 99 producers</p> <p>3 points = 25- 49 producers</p> <p>2 points = 6- 24 producers</p> <p>1 point = 0-5 producers</p>
<p><u>Feasibility and measurement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the proposed expected measurable outcomes meet the defined project? - Does the project indicate how the outcomes will be monitored and evaluated? - Can the project outcomes be measured, reported, and tracked? 	<p>10</p> <p>Excellent = 9- 10</p> <p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the project’s outcomes realistic? - Are the project’s outcomes worth the total investment? - Will the equipment purchase have a significant impact on local and regional producers, market outlets and more? 	<p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>
<p><u>Budget and matching funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the budget financially realistic and reasonable for the project scope? - Is the equipment justification detailed enough to give a picture of how grant funds will be used to accomplish project goals? - Has documentation to substantiate the cost of each piece of equipment listed on the application been provided? Documentation can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by licensed commercial entities. 	<p>10</p> <p>Excellent = 9- 10</p> <p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>
<p><u>Overall quality of proposal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on your knowledge and expertise does the project indicate a high likelihood of success? - Does the organization explain its ability to complete the project within the budget and timelines as submitted? - Are the expected benefits commensurate with the total investment? 	<p>15</p> <p>Excellent = 14-15</p> <p>Good = 10- 14.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 9.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0- 2.9</p>
<p><u>Subtotal Score:</u></p>	<p>Total Available: 90</p>
<p><u>Distressed Community Score:</u></p> <p>Please assign points based on the average score of all counties listed:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">20 Points = Distressed (Score > 80)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">16 points = At Risk (Score 79- 60)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">12 points = Mid- Tier (Score 59-40)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">8 Points = Comfortable (Score 39- 20)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4 points = Profitable (Score < 19)</p>	<p>Total Score out of 110 available:</p>

<p><u>External Project Support (recommended but not required for equipment only grants)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project include more than one producer across sectors and/ or across the region to leverage impact? - Does the project indicate what stakeholders outside the organization support this project and how? - Does the project indicate how the organization and stakeholders will work together? <p>Additional 5 points if Equipment Only Project Demonstrates external project support.</p>	<p>Final Score out of 115 available:</p>
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Infrastructure Grant Projects:

Criteria	Score Available
<p><u>Executive Summary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The name of the applicant organization that if awarded a grant will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the State has been included. - Applicant to lead and execute the project has been identified. - The project’s purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes have been identified. - A description of the general tasks/ activities to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal has been provided and is complete. 	<p>10</p> <p>Excellent = 9-10</p> <p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>
<p><u>Project Need:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the specific issue or problem clearly defined, including a description of how the project benefits industry? - Is the project clear why it is important and timely? - Does the project build resilience in the middle of the supply chain? - Does the project express how it fits into one or more of Alaska’s funding priorities? - Does the project enhance the development of value- added products available to consumers by developing local or regional markets? - Does the project increase processing and/ or storage capacity in Alaska? 	<p>40</p> <p>Excellent = 35-40</p> <p>Good = 30- 34.9</p> <p>Fine = 20-29.9</p> <p>Poor = 10-19.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0- 9.9</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project contribute to more and better markets for local producers or increased/ improved access to markets? - Does the project create new economic opportunities in its community? - Does the project define innovative and/ or creative solutions? - Does the project benefit underserved farmers and ranchers; new and beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran producers; processors and middle-of-the-supply-chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals as defined by SBA? 	
<p><u>Project Impact</u></p> <p>Please assign points based on the estimated number of local and regional producers and food processors who will be impacted.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>5 points = 100+ producers</p> <p>4 points = 50- 99 producers</p> <p>3 points = 25- 49 producers</p> <p>2 points = 6- 24 producers</p> <p>1 point = 0-5 producers</p>
<p><u>External Project Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project include more than one producer across sectors and/ or across the region to leverage impact? - Does the project indicate what stakeholders outside the organization support this project and how? - Does the project indicate how the organization and stakeholders will work together? - Is the work plan clear and indicates a planned execution of the project activities? - Is it clear how producers, growers, and/ or processors will be actively involved in the project? 	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>Excellent = 9- 10</p> <p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0- 2.9</p>
<p><u>Feasibility and measurement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the proposed expected measurable outcomes meet the defined project? 	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>Excellent = 9- 10</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project indicate how the project will be monitored and evaluated? - Can the project be measured, reported, and tracked? - Are the project’s outcomes realistic? - Are the project’s outcomes worth the total investment? - Do project activities to reach the outcomes markedly move an industry within the 3-year duration or substantially thereafter? 	<p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>	
<p><u>Budget and matching funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the budget financially realistic and reasonable for the project scope? - Do budget line items correspond with the project activities in the work plan? - Are justifications provided for each budget line item? - Is the budget detailed enough to give a picture of how grant funds will be used to accomplish project goals? - Does the project exhibit collaboration and cooperation through cash and in-kind match contributions? - Is there the correct amount of matching for the project? (50% match unless applicant qualifies for reduced match to 25%) 	<p>10</p> <p>Excellent = 9- 10</p> <p>Good = 7- 8.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 6.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0-2.9</p>	
<p><u>Overall quality of proposal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on your knowledge and expertise does the project indicate a high likelihood of success? - Does the organization explain its ability to complete the project within the budget and timelines as submitted? - Are the expected benefits commensurate with the total investment? 	<p>15</p> <p>Excellent = 14-15</p> <p>Good = 10- 14.9</p> <p>Fine = 5- 9.9</p> <p>Poor = 2- 4.9</p> <p>Insufficient = 0- 2.9</p>	
<p><u>Subtotal Score:</u></p>	<p>Total Available: 100</p>	
<p><u>Distressed Community Score:</u> Please assign points based on the average score of all counties listed:</p>	<p>20 Points = Distressed (Score > 80)</p> <p>16 points = At Risk (Score 79- 60)</p> <p>12 points = Mid- Tier (Score 59-40)</p> <p>8 Points = Comfortable (Score 39- 20)</p> <p>4 points = Profitable (Score < 19)</p>	<p>Total Score out of 120 available:</p>

L. Grant Management and Reporting:

Grant Award Agreement and Payment

Prior to beginning work on the proposed project or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Award Agreement (Agreement) with the Division indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Division to monitor the progress of the proposed project. In addition to obtaining a UEI¹ number (required prior to application submission), successful applicants will be required to register with the federally run System for Award Management, sam.gov. As a potential sub recipient of federal money, you must have an active and clear profile that matches your UEI number and provide this information with your application. Registration is free.

Agreements must be signed and returned to the Division within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the Agreement within 30 days of receipt will result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the grantee.

Site Visits

The Alaska DoAG will be conducting site visits throughout the grant performance period to monitor grantee project progress and performance. The Alaska DoAG will notify grantees prior to conducting a site visit. However, the Alaska DoAG does reserve the right to conduct an unannounced site visit if misuse of grant funds, inadequate progress, or State and Federal noncompliance is reported or suspected.

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be expected to carry out their project, maintain clear and consistent communication with the Alaska DoAG, keep detailed records, and report progress in a timely manner. Annual and Final Reports are contractual requirements as part of the grant program.

The Division reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to the Division will be a public record.

Annual Reports (Infrastructure Grants Only)

Annual reports summarizing the project's activities and progress every twelve months of the project's period of performance and are due 30 days after the end of each grant year. The annual performance reporting template will be provided to grantees by the Alaska DoAG.

¹ Obtaining a UEI number: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Grantees must detail the project status and how grant monies were used to achieve project outcomes outlined in the project proposal submitted with the grant application packet. Reports must include a detailed financial report that tracks all expenditures against the project budget submitted with the grant proposal.

Grantees will be expected at a minimum to report on:

- Detailed narrative of project activities
- Budget breakdown
- Progress towards project outcomes
- Challenges and Developments
- Upcoming Activities
- Other project activities reporting as needed

Final Reports

A final report is required 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. For Simplified Equipment-Only Grant projects, the final report is due June 1, 2025. For Infrastructure Grant projects, the final report is due June 1, 2027.

The final performance reporting template will be provided to grantees by the DoAG.

The final report will include:

- Project Summary
- Outcomes and Measures Achieved
- Project Beneficiaries
- Lessons Learned
- Contact Person
- Additional Information
- Budget Summary

Reporting Compliance: Applicants who do not submit the semi-annual reports or who submit reports that do not meet all of the above reporting requirements will be required to return all previously disbursed funds to the Division.

Budget Adjustments: If a material change (10% or greater) in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request may be made to the Division to reallocate budget funds between budget categories. However, the total budget amount as dictated by the approved grant award cannot be adjusted.

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program Background

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (RFSI) FISCAL YEAR 2023 RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the RFSI at a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the RFSI with all stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the agricultural community, and the public.

- Each project submitted in the State Plan must include at least one of the seven outcomes listed below, and at least one of the indicators listed underneath the selected outcome(s). If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, select at least one.
- If the indicator(s) below the selected outcome(s) are not relevant to a project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed which will be subject to approval by AMS.
- The progress of each indicator must be reported in the Annual Performance Report and the result in the Final Performance Report.
- AMS will aggregate the data collected to assess the overall impact of the program and report to OMB and Congress on these national outcome measures.
- AMS will review the quality of the information we receive in subsequent performance reports and modify the outcomes and indicators as needed over time to lead to better results in showing the impact of the RFSI.