



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI)





PURPOSE OF THE WEBINAR

To provide an overview of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program and the requirements for the Infrastructure Grant and Equipment-Only Grant – Request for Proposals (RFP)

 Grant Deadline: March 15, 2024 at 11:59 pm EST.

✓ Email your proposals to RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov

✓ Webinar will be recorded and posted on MDA's website

Please put your
questions in the
Q&A

INFORMATION RESOURCES

WWW.MDA.MARYLAND.GOV



Maryland.gov State Directory State Agencies Translate

Department of Agriculture

Quick Links

- About MDA
- Newsroom
- Agriculture Mediation
- Agricultural Statistics
- Ag Land Preservation
- Bird Flu
- Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
- Farm and Crop Insurance
- Food/Feed Quality
- Farm to School
- Farm Families
- Horse Industry Board

reFRESH with local foods

reFRESH with Local Foods

RFSI Grant Opportunity Information

UPDATED: 2023 Avian Influenza Outbreak

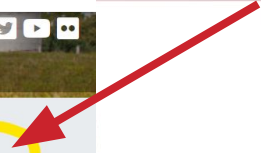
New deadline for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program / Programa de asistencia financiera contra la discriminación

Report on the Use of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Pesticides in Maryland

Deer Management Policy Development Survey

Hot Topics

- Beech Leaf Disease Information
- MD Food Business Development Needs Survey
- REPORT Spotted Lanternfly Sightings Here!
- Nutrient Management Plan Writing Updates
- 2023 Agri-Solar Summit Information



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INFORMATION RESOURCES

WWW.MDA.MARYLAND.GOV



Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program Grants

Deadline to Apply: March 15

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

Jan 24, 2024 03:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/9t0Zu6rRDirH93o1YIhaOVrIMEkmQ6pBG5>

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

Feb 7, 2024 10:00 AM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/9t0Zu6rRDirH93o1YIhaOVrIMEkmQ6pBG5>

Feb 21, 2024 10:00 AM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/9t0Zu6rRDirH93o1YIhaOVrIMEkmQ6pBG5>

rfsi.mda@maryland.gov

410-841-5773

Martin Proulx

State-Led Supply Chain Coordinator

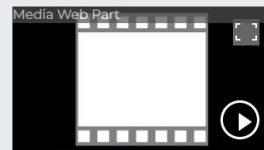
martin.proulx@maryland.gov

410-841-5985

RFSI RFP (Updated 1/22/24)

FORMS

PLEASE WATCH FIRST: Video on how to open fillable PDF applications



Infrastructure Equipment Grant application

Equipment Grant **ONLY** application

Match Verification Template Letter

Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Template Letter

RESOURCES

USDA RFSI Website

USDA RFSI FAQ's

USDA Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers
SBA Size Standards Tool

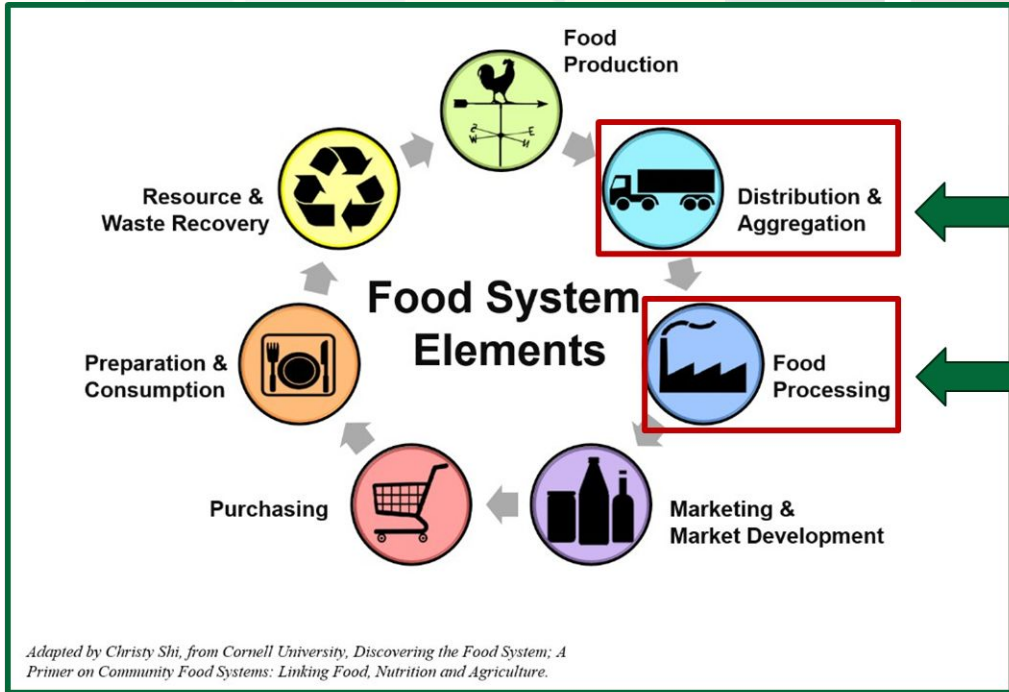
OVERVIEW



The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA Ag Marketing Services (AMS) through the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) to build the state's middle-of-the-supply-chain for food crops.

Approximately \$3.6 million will be available for competitive subaward grants to support the development of the middle-of-the-supply-chain for Maryland-based food and farm businesses.

MIDDLE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN



RFSI Focus Areas along the Middle of the Food Supply Chain

Adapted by Christy Shi, from Cornell University, Discovering the Food System; A Primer on Community Food Systems: Linking Food, Nutrition and Agriculture.

FEDERAL and STATE FUNDING PRIORITIES



State funding priorities based on statewide outreach on a listening session and survey

- Cold storage equipment
- Expanding the capacity for processing, aggregation, and distribution
- Supporting construction of new facilities
- Improving operations through employee training
- Modernizing manufacturing, tracking, storage, and information technology systems

Federal funding priorities

- Underserved farmers and ranchers
- New and beginning farmers and ranchers
- Veteran producers
- Processors and other middle of the supply chain businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

GRANTS



MDA will issue the following types of grants through the RFSI program:

- ✓ Infrastructure Grants
 - minimum of \$100,000 up to \$3 million
- ✓ Simplified Equipment-Only Grants
 - minimum of \$10,000 and maximum of \$100,000

An eligible entity may only apply for one grant type and cannot apply for both. Applicants must choose one grant type over the other.

ELIGIBLE VS. INELIGIBLE PRODUCTS



ELIGIBLE

Fruits
Vegetables
Grains for human consumption
Tree nuts
Edible flowers
Dairy
Eggs
Honey
Mushrooms
Aquaculture
Wineries

INELIGIBLE

Meat and poultry
Wild-caught seafood
Exclusively animal feed and forage products
Fiber
Landscaping products
Floriculture
Tobacco
Dietary supplements



GRANT TIMELINE



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

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES



- Agricultural producers or processors, or groups of agricultural producers and processors.
- Nonprofit organizations operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- For-profit entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities whose activities are primarily focused for the benefit of local and regional producers.
 - Must meet the eligibility requirements of the SBA small business size standards.
- Local government and tribal government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- 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 that will benefit multiple local/regional Maryland producers.

Projects that benefit an individual producer may be less competitive than a similar project that benefits multiple producers.

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS



- ✓ Infrastructure Grants
 - Minimum of \$100,000 up to \$3 million
- ✓ Match is required
 - a. 50% of the total proposed project costs.
 - i. Example: Total project costs = \$1 million - \$500,000 in federal funds and \$500,000 in match.
 - b. Reduced Match of 25% of total proposed project cost
 - i. Entities that identify as Small and Underserved Business Owners, Historically Underserved Farmers or Ranchers, or for other businesses that qualify under the Small Business Administration (SBA) categories of Small Disadvantaged Business, Women-Owned Small Business, and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses
 - ii. Example: Total project costs = \$1 million - \$750,000 in federal funds and \$250,000 in match
 - c. Need Signed Match Verification Letters

MARBIDCO



MARBIDCO funds can be used to help the grant applicant's meet their non-federal match requirement if the project involves the aggregation of local farm products for wholesale or institutional sales. Need to have 4 Certified Local Farms involved.

For historically underserved farmers, ranchers or other businesses that qualify under SBA categories of small, disadvantaged business, women-owned small business, or veteran-owned small business:
grant of up to 100% match, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

For all other eligible applicants:
grants of up to 50% match, up to a maximum of \$50,000.
Exception: If a unit of local government, rural regional council, or county school system is the applicant, the maximum award could be up to \$400,000.

INFRASTRUCTURE ELIGIBLE PROJECTS



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

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS



- Acquiring property
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program
- 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.

Infrastructure Grants may build on the successes of prior federal funded grants.

FEDERAL PERMITTING



Build America, Buy America (BABA)

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

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

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

Resource: 2 CFR Part 184 - BUY AMERICA PREFERENCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-184>

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

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

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

EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



Evidence of Critical Infrastructure is required if critical resources and/or infrastructure are necessary for the completion of the proposed Infrastructure Grant project.

Applicants must submit evidence that critical resources and infrastructure necessary to support the initiation and completion of a project are in place.

Land, structures, and other critical resources must be in place and in working condition. The letter must indicate the critical resources that are necessary for initiation and completion of the project and certify that they are in place and committed prior to the start date of the project.

Letter must accompany the Infrastructure Grant proposal at the time of application to the State. A template is located on [MDA's website](#).

SIMPLIFIED EQUIPMENT-ONLY GRANT



✓ Simplified Equipment-Only Grants

- Minimum of \$10,000 and maximum of \$100,000 for equipment-only, fees, and delivery
- Fixed price grant, meaning it will fund only equipment purchases.
- It will not fund associated facility upgrades, staffing, installation, or other costs.
- Documentation can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by licensed commercial entities. The cost of delivery can be covered by the grant if they are listed in the official bid
- Must comply with Federal and State Permitting
- No Match required

EQUIPMENT DISPOSITION



USDA recently gave the states guidance on Equipment Disposition. Subgrantees must account for the equipment acquired with Federal funds at the time of grant closeout. There maybe additional state requirements. We'll put the information into the FAQ's when we find out additional information.

INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT ONLY APPLICATION PACKET



Infrastructure OR Equipment-Only Grant Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Download the Infrastructure Grant Application OR Equipment-Only Application (PDF file) from MDA's website. Either Grant Proposal must be completed in the PDF Format.• Complete the application in its entirety
Match Verification Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Download the Match Verification Letter Template (Word document) from MDA's website.• Complete the template for EACH source of matching funds/resources• Ensure each letter is signed by an authorized organization representative from each source of matching funds• Upload the completed, signed match verification letter(s) in PDF format
Eligibility Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W9• Obtain an UEI Number on SAM.gov - up to 2 weeks to obtain EIN• 3 Letters of Support• Screenshot of being in "Good standing with the State"

INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT ONLY APPLICATION PACKET



Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Download the Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure Letter Template (Word document) from MDA's website.• Complete the template for EACH critical resource/piece of infrastructure (necessary land, buildings, or other resources)• Ensure each letter is signed by an authorized organization representative from each source of matching funds• Upload the completed, signed match verification letter(s) in PDF format
Construction Documents (Infrastructure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your project includes a construction component, provide design documents, supply lists, etc. that illustrate the scope of the construction project
Submit to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All documents must be in a PDF. Send application and related materials to: RFSI.MDA@maryland.gov, March 15 at 11:59 pm

DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES INDEX



You must use the Distressed Communities Index (DCI) at the County level and not Zip Code level.

A screenshot of the Economic Innovation Group website. The page has a navigation bar with links for RESEARCH, POLICY, ISSUE AREAS, ANALYSIS, NEWS & EVENTS, and ABOUT. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar with the text "SEARCH STATE, DISTRICT, COUNTY, ZIP CODE" and a "MAP VIEW" button. The search bar contains the text "National" and "x". The "MAP VIEW" button has three radio buttons: "State", "District", and "County". The "County" radio button is selected and circled in red. A red arrow points from the text on the left to the "County" radio button. Below the search bar, there is a map of the United States showing the Distressed Communities Index (DCI) at the county level. The map is color-coded by risk level, with a legend at the bottom right titled "5 TIERS OF COMMUNITIES". The legend shows five tiers: Prosperous (dark blue), Comfortable (light blue), Mid-tier (orange), At Risk (red), and Distressed (dark red). The map shows that many counties in the central and southern United States are in the "At Risk" or "Distressed" categories. The map also shows state boundaries and major cities. The map is powered by Mapbox and OpenStreetMap.

SUPPLY CHAIN COORDINATION

MDA Resources and Assistance:

- Regulatory Navigation
- Data and Information

Additional Programming

- Award/Project Dependent

USDA Regional Food Business Center

- Technical Assistance
- Future Opportunities



Use this as a call out for information OR delete the text box and red box if not needed.

EXAMPLE



Dry Herbs

- Local considerations (zoning)
- State licensing
- Federal regulations & permitting (if applicable)

UPCOMING VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS



Feb 7, 2024 10:00 AM

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvcuquqz4pE9YP96_RLlyCIMKqPbGP_HAN



Feb 21, 2024 10:00 AM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYpfuGqpj4vEtK5YwwqWIYj0zeYh9z2wSmZ>

QUESTIONS?



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