USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

INDIGENOUS ANIMALS HARVESTING AND MEAT PROCESSING GRANTS (IAG)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Q: What is the Indigenous Animals Harvesting and Meat Processing Grant?

A: The Indigenous Animals Grant (IAG) Program supports traditional harvesting methods, indigenous animals, and community animal protein processing operations. The goal is to expand or enhance animal protein processing capacity in Indian Country and Alaska. Projects eligible for this program include equipment purchases, installation, and upgrades; facility construction and renovation; and mobile harvesting units.

Q: What is the Minimum and Maximum amount of the award?

A: There is no minimum funding amount and no maximum funding limit. USDA can pro-rate final awards based on need.

Q: **Are there priority considerations for the Indigenous Animals program and how were they selected?**

A: USDA can prioritize applications which focus on strengthening Tribal food access, incorporating indigenous animals, or using indigenous-informed design principles above projects which focus primarily on market-based profitability.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Q: I am a Tribal citizen, but my tribal government doesn't own my meat processing plant. How can I apply for funding?

A: USDA is investing $1 billion in expanding meat and poultry processing capacity nationwide. To view current funding opportunities for grant and loan programs for individuals and businesses, visit www.usda.gov/meat.

Q: Can we apply for a IAG program award if our non-profit (501)(c)(3) status is still pending with the IRS?

A: Yes. If an award is offered, the applicant would need to verify their (501)(c)(3) status to receive the IAG award.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Q: How can I get in touch with staff at AMS to talk about applying for an Indigenous Animals award?

A: If you have closely reviewed the RFA and still have questions, please email IAG@usda.gov.

Q: Where can I find grant writing tips?

A: Visit the Grants.Gov website. This series of tips will help you prepare a solid grant application package: https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/category/learngrants/grant-writing-basics/.

Q: Can I submit my application by fax, email, postal mail, or hand delivered?

A: USDA requires all applications to be submitted electronically through Grants.Gov. If you cannot obtain your Unique Entity Identifier or your SAM.Gov registration by the application date, please contact IAG@USDA.gov to discuss options for submitting your application on time.

Q: What kinds of design and planning documents do I need to submit with my application?

A: Design and planning documents are only required for construction projects, and only if they are necessary for the construction project. These documents should support and help demonstrate the project described in the Project Narrative Application. These include but are not limited to, blueprints, construction schedules, architectural drawings. USDA will follow the construction planning and performing development regulation at 7 CFR 4280.125

Q: Can I change the Indigenous Animals narrative form?

A: No. The narrative form template cannot be changed (text, tables or pages cannot be deleted nor margins adjusted). Changes might result in the application being removed from consideration, or reviewers will deduct points.

Q: When filling out the Indigenous Animals narrative template, how do I fill out the following sections: Business permit, License number, and State identifier?

A: For Business permits, use your EIN / UEI number. For License numbers, use your Tribal/State/County/Municipality License number. For State identifier, use applicable state name where the project will be located.

Q: What type of attachments can be submitted with the application?

A: Applicants should only include the attachments that were directly asked to be included within the application package (negotiated indirect cost rate agreements (if applicable), environmental review, financial viability documentation, founding documents/Articles of Incorporation, source documentation (including resumes) to support key personnel, applicant certifications, design and construction documents, submitted application qualification). Any additional attachments included in the application may not be read by reviewers.

Q: Does the supporting documentation count toward the Project Narrative page limit?

A: No. The supporting documentation does not count towards the 20-page limit. Examples of supporting documents are design and construction documents, financial viability documentation, etc.

Q: Do proposed projects have to address all of the outcomes/indicators as described in the RFA's project narrative?

A: Applicants are required to complete all outcomes and indicators that are relevant to the project.

Q: For whom do we need to provide resumes and CVs for within the application?

A: Resumes of the members of the Project Team should be included with the application as attachments. The Project Team is the key staff who will collectively manage the financial and operational decisions of the Indigenous Animals project.

Q: Will I have an opportunity to correct errors or missing documents in my application?

A: After the submission deadline, USDA will conduct an initial review of applications and contact applicants who are missing documents or have obvious errors in their application packages. Those applicants will have 5 business days to correct or "cure" their applications. USDA will review corrected documents submitted by those applicants for funding.

USDA will not address in-depth content questions or advise applicants on the scope or substance of the proposed projects.

Q: Can an USDA staff member review a draft of my application prior to submission?

A: AMS cannot review draft applications before they are submitted through Grants.gov because this is a competitive grant application process. However, if you have specific questions about this funding opportunity, allowable costs and activities, you are welcome to reach out to us via email at IAG@usda.gov.

ALLOWABLE/UNALLOWABLE COSTS

Q: Can I use funds to purchase or lease land?

A: No, the purchase and lease of land is unallowable under this grant program.

Q: Can an applicant IAG request funding for construction of a new building?

A: Yes. An applicant for IAG may request funds to build, expand, or upgrade community indigenous meat, food-sovereignty harvesting/processing facilities. (fixed or mobile).

Q: Can funds be used to upgrade existing equipment?

A: Yes. Funds may be used to modify equipment that is not already available and readily usable in its current format.

Q: Can funds be used to purchase vehicles?

A: Only special purpose vehicles, meaning those vehicles specifically meant for mobile processing units or to transport animals for the purpose of harvest, may be purchased under this program. The purchase of personal or other vehicles that are not integral to the indigenous meat processing operation are not allowable.

Q: Can funds be used to purchase indigenous animals and meat?

A: No. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase indigenous animals and meat. Applicants and/or recipients must have or supply the indigenous animals and meat for which the project will be helping to process.

Q: In selecting a contractor, do we need to go through a procurement/bid process, or could we select one of the contractors we have used in the past?

A: Each Tribe has different procurement rules that you must follow. In addition, as outlined in the IAG RFA, procurement must be made by one of the following methods: competitive sealed bids (formal advertising); competitive negotiation; or *(in certain situations)* noncompetitive negotiation. Competitive sealed bids (formal advertising) are the preferred procurement method for construction contracts. Additional guidance is provided in subparagraphs 4280.125(f) (1)-(4). AMS highly recommends using a competitive bid process (with at least 3 bids) for any procurements. If the applicant chooses to forego that process, they must still provide justification on the application for selecting that contractor through a noncompetitive process.

GRANTS.GOV INFORMATION

Q: What does AOR stand for?

A: AOR is the Authorized Organization Representative, which is the person who has the authority to sign and submit grant applications on behalf of the company, organization, institution, or government. AOR's are authorized by their EBiz POC (E-Business Point of Contact) so they can submit applications on behalf of their organization.

Q: How do you become or register to be an AOR?

A: You would first register as an applicant on Grants.gov. Once you have a UEI and your organization has an active SAM account, your EBiz POC will receive an email notifying them that you have registered and need to be authorized.

Q: The Project Narrative Application Form uses the term ATR (Authorized Tribal Representative) instead of AOR. How are these the same or different?
A: For the purposes of the IAG program, the ATR is the same person as the AOR.

Q: What is EIN?

A: The EIN is the Employer Identification Number. This number is assigned by the IRS.

Q: How do I know if my application was submitted on time?

A: After you submit your application to Grants.gov, you (the AOR) will receive an automatic notification of receipt from the system that contains a Grants.gov tracking number and official date/time stamp of application submission. This notification ONLY indicates receipt by Grants.gov and does not indicate receipt by AMS. Grants.gov may also send you an error message if your application was not submitted correctly. If application submission passes Grants.gov validation, AOR will receive a second electronic acknowledgment of receipt. Once USDA-AMS has retrieved application from Grants.gov, AOR will receive a third email notification. Lastly, if AMS assigns its own agency tracking number/notes a fourth email is sent to AOR.

Q: How are attachments uploaded in Grants.gov?

A: The completed project narrative template must be attached to the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" on the application package. All other attachments must be attached to the Grants.gov application package using the "Add Attachments" button under Form SF-424 item #15. When uploading attachments, click the "Add Attachments" button (do NOT use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader). If you use the "paperclip" icon in Adobe Reader, the attachments will not be received with the application package.

Q: Can we apply before having the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM.gov registration?

A: No, you must first have your UEI number to register in SAM.gov. In order to apply as an organization, you must have an active SAM account.

Q: Do I have to register before I can see the requirements of the grant application?

A: No, you do not have to register in Grants.gov to view the opportunity and download it. Also, you can access the Request for Application, and the required documents on the program website, under the "How to apply" tab. However, you must be registered in Grants.gov to apply.

Q: Is the EBiz POC someone in my organization or a federal employee?

A: The EBiz POC is a member of your organization and is often the person that oversees the business operations. The EBiz POC is the one that registers the organization in SAM. EBiz POC is responsible affiliating and assigning roles to all applicants registered in Grants.gov on behalf of the organization.

Q: Can the EBiz POC and AOR be the same person?

A: Yes. In that case, you'd need two accounts/log-ins. One to serve in each capacity.

Q: Can an organization have multiple EBiz POC's?

A: No, you can only have one EBiz POC but may have multiple AOR's.

Q: How do I contact Grants.gov if there is an issue with my registration?

A: You may contact the Customer Contact center by either e-mail support@grants.gov or phone 1-800- 518-4726. You can also use the Self Help link https://grants-portal.psc.gov to find answers to common questions.

SAM REGISTRATION

Q: Is registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) required for all IAG applicants at application submission?
A: Applicants must be successfully registered in the SAM and provide a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number to the Agency at time of application. If the applicant provides USDA with documentation of attempts to complete the SAM registration and obtain the UEI prior to the application deadline, the USDA may accept the application. Under no circumstances will funds be disbursed without active SAM registration and a UEI.

Q: If we already have a UEI, can we go straight to SAM.gov?

A: Yes. SAM registration can take up to 2 weeks, and often longer, to complete so register early. Check the SAM.gov website for additional login procedures.

Q: If I have already had a SAM.gov account, do I have to do anything else?

A: Yes, you must be sure that your SAM.gov account is up to date. If the account expired, you must renew your account before applying.

Q: Do I have to pay to activate a SAM.gov account?

A: No, registering and renewing a SAM.gov account is completely free. If you received notification on having to pay to renew your account beware that it is likely a SCAM and should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Q: Do I need to have an active SAM.gov registration to receive payments?

A: Yes. You must have an active SAM registration for the agency to process your claims/payments. If the UEI is showing inactive in Do Not Pay the payment will not be processed. Under no circumstances will funds be disbursed without active SAM registration and a UEI. It is the responsibility of the organization to contact SAM.gov to renew the registration annually.

TERMS

Communal distribution systems. Non-market-based distribution of food within communities. Typically includes traditional or culturally appropriate foods distributed not just for nutritional purposes, but also for the continuation of communal rites or rituals.

Indian Country. As used in this RFA, this is meant to be a colloquial term generally encompassing American Indian or Alaska Native, Tribal, or Indigenous lands or communities in North America.

Indigenous-Informed Design Principles. Incorporation of traditional indigenous principles including but not limited to land stewardship, minimizing animal stress during harvest or slaughter, and applying all parts of a processed animal to provide for minimal or no by-product waste in the development of a project framework.

Joint or multi Tribal Government entities. A partnership of two or more Tribal Governments, including of their wholly owned arms or instrumentalities, collaborating for an eligible project purpose.

Market-based distribution systems. Revenue-generating distribution systems based on the production of sale of food or protein, both inside and outside of the community.

Mobile processing unit. Slaughter or harvest unit typically mounted on a vehicle that can travel to various locations to process meat, poultry, or seafood. Provides on-site service to hunters or ranchers instead of requiring transport of animals to a fixed-location facility.

Traditional Implement(s). Indigenous and/or traditional tools, techniques and cultural methods that may be used when harvesting and processing indigenous species. Tools, techniques and methods are unique, cultural-based traditions and unique to Tribes and its Peoples.

Traditional harvesting methods. Techniques that provide for field-based harvest of animals in a manner that does not unduly stress an indigenous animal.

Value-added infrastructure. Facilities or equipment that transform animals, birds, or fish into an agricultural product that has an enhanced value or higher market value, and/or has undergone a change in the physical state or form, such as transforming a whole fish into frozen fillets.

Wholly owned arms and instrumentalities of Tribal Governments. An agency, instrumentality, or subdivision of an Indian Tribal Government, or an entity established under Federal or Tribal law which is wholly owned or controlled by any of the foregoing, such as a Tribal corporation.

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