2024 Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure

Grant Program (RFSI)

Program Guidelines For

EQUIPMENT GRANTS

As prepared by

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https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/MarketAccess/ResilientFoodSystemsInfrastructure
Grant/Pages/default.aspx

2024 RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT SIMPLIFIED EQUIPMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Prepared By

The Oregon Department of Agriculture

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1. Introduction

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award projects under the USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program (RFSI). This program is to assist Oregon agriculturalists to build resilience in the middle of the supply chain and strengthen local and regional food systems by creating new revenue streams for the state's producers. The Simplified Equipment-Only option is a Fixed Price Grant, meaning it will fund equipment purchases only (and not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs), and the amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment between $10,000 to $100,000.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) will offer two competitive grant tracks, one for equipment and one for infrastructure. Each track will require a separate application and eligible entities will only be allowed to receive funding from one track as required by the USDA program rules. We will offer technical grant assistance throughout the application process to help those who request it. ODA will not provide writing assistance to applicants but will connect them to external resources such as the USDA Regional Food Business Center for support. ODA encourages applicants and applications that are from, or benefit, small farm and food businesses, veterans, women owned companies, and other historically underserved groups.

2. Eligibility

Eligible Products

Funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat, poultry, and wild caught seafood. This program is intended to provide similar support provided in other USDA funding for meat and poultry processing, but for the non-meat and poultry sectors.

Eligible Entities

Entities eligible for grants 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.

All applicant businesses and organizations must be domestically owned, and applicants' facilities must be physically located within the 50 States of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Matching Funds Requirement

No matching funds are required for the equipment track of the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grants.

Examples of Acceptable Projects

The Simplified Equipment-Only option is a Fixed Price Grant, meaning it will fund equipment purchases only (and not associated facility upgrades, staffing, or other costs), and the amount awarded will be equal to the cost of the equipment between $10,000 - $100,000.

Examples include, but are not limited to:
- *Expanding processing capacities, including adding product types, increasing production volumes, and supporting new wholesale/retail product lines;*
- *Modernizing equipment through upgrades, repairs, or retooling; (e.g., adapting product lines for institutional procurement or adding parallel processing capacity);*
- *Purchase of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment,*
- *Increasing packaging and labeling capacities that meet compliance requirements under applicable laws (e.g. sealing, bagging, boxing, labeling, conveying, and product moving equipment);*
- *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 action goals;*
- *Modernize equipment to ensure food safety, including associated Hazard, Analysis, and Critical Control Points (HACCP) consultation.*

Allowable activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects may include:
- *Purchasing special purpose equipment: defined in section 8.2 of the AMS General Terms and Conditions. This includes the purchase of special purpose equipment for institutions or others that will benefit multiple producers through middle-of-the-supply-chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution of targeted agricultural product;*
- *Upgrades to new equipment for processing specific agricultural products, such as:*
- *Equipment associated with on-farm post-harvest processing, preservation, and storage/cold storage activities such as*
  - *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; and*
  - *Cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, fermenting.*

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
- Projects focused on meat and poultry processing or other ineligible agricultural products
- Activities that have received a Federal award from another Federal award program;
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities through an Infrastructure Grant. However, Equipment Grants may build on the successes of prior funding, such as the USDA Regional Food Business Centers Business Builder subawards, to fund subsequent activities.
- Projects that request funds for infrastructure costs (applicant may consider applying under the infrastructure track)

Complete Project Within 1 Year

Projects must be completed by August 1, 2025, or 1 year after project initiation date, whichever is sooner. The ODA must be notified at least 60 days prior to the ending date of the project if, for any reason, the project cannot be completed within the timeframe established in the agreement, extensions are awarded for very limited circumstances.

3. Funding

Applicants may request between $10,000 - $100,000 per project. Grant funds will be available for projects within a one-year time and cannot be expended before a project initiation date is given by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Matching Funds Requirement

There are no matching funds required in the equipment track of the RFSI grant program.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are not allowed in the equipment track of the RFSI grant program.

4. Priorities for the RFSI Equipment Track

Based on a 2023 survey of processors, producers, associations, commissions, and other stakeholders Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has identified the following areas as the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant funding priorities. ODA encourages the development of partnerships.

- Expand capacity of the locally and regionally produced food products in one or more of the following ways: aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution
- Enhance worker safety through adoption of new technologies or investment in equipment.
- Improve the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements.
- Modernize or expand existing facilities with manufacturing equipment or .
- Develop and/or customize 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 action goals.
- Projects that reach other goals identified by the Northwest Rocky Mountain Food Business Center that meet the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program scope and requirements.

5. Solicitation Process

TIMELINE (Dates subject to change)

Event	Date
Request for Equipment Applications (RFA) Opens	February 1, 2024
Pre-recorded Application Training https://youtu.be/IhVx9dUCFoc	January 2024
RFA Closes	February 29, 2024 at NOON
Projects Reviewed by RFSI Advisory Committee	March 2024
Projects reviewed by the ODA Director	April 2024
Subgrantees selected to participate in the RFSI	Early May 2024
Projects sent to USDA for review	Late May 2024
USDA approval of RFSI Equipment Grant projects	July 2024
Subgrantees may begin work on projects	August 2024

Outreach Sessions

Please check our website for the most up to date outreach information. https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/MarketAccess/ResilientFoodSystemsInfrastructureGrant/Pages/default.aspx

Date	Event
Monday, January 8, 2024 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM	Portland Metro Region: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Meeting Recording Jan 8 2024
Tuesday, January 9, 2024 1:00 to 2:30 PM	Central Willamette Valley: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Meeting Recording Jan 9 2024

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 1:00 to 2:30 PM	Southern Oregon: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Meeting Recording Jan 10 2024
Friday, January 12, 2024 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM	Coastal Region: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Microsoft Teams meeting **Join on your computer, mobile app or room device** Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 270 876 885 750 Passcode: nDC93p Download Teams | Join on the web **Or call in (audio only)** +1 503-446-4951,,904340207# United States, Portland Phone Conference ID: 904 340 207# Find a local number | Reset PIN Learn More | Meeting options
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 1:00 to 2:30 PM	Columbia Plateau Region: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Microsoft Teams meeting **Join on your computer, mobile app or room device** Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 230 520 390 910 Passcode: zWheGR Download Teams | Join on the web **Or call in (audio only)** +1 503-446-4951,,634970159# United States, Portland Phone Conference ID: 634 970 159# Find a local number | Reset PIN Learn More | Meeting options
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 1:00 to 2:30 PM	Central Oregon Region: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Microsoft Teams meeting **Join on your computer, mobile app or room device** Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 230 520 390 910 Passcode: zWheGR Download Teams | Join on the web **Or call in (audio only)** +1 503-446-4951,,634970159# United States, Portland Phone Conference ID: 634 970 159#

Friday, January 19, 2024 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM	Northeast Oregon Region: RFSI Infrastructure Grant Program - Office Hours to support collaboration and project ideas Microsoft Teams meeting **Join on your computer, mobile app or room device** Click here to join the meeting Meeting ID: 270 876 885 750 Passcode: nDC93p Download Teams | Join on the web **Or call in (audio only)** +1 503-446-4951,,904340207# United States, Portland Phone Conference ID: 904 340 207# Find a local number | Reset PIN Learn More | Meeting options

6. Application Procedures and Requirements

Briefly describe the project in an application proposal (template provided by ODA is mandatory). Available on the RFSI website:

Proposals must provide a general overview for the following areas of the project:

- Cover page provided within template

- Distressed Communities Index

- Project title

- Project duration

- Executive Summary

- Project purpose

- Scope of Work

- Objectives of the project

- Expected measurable outcomes

- Budget narrative

- Attachments:

  o Attachment A: Critical Resources and Infrastructure Required templet found on the RFSI website.

  o Applicants must attach documentation to substantiate the costs of each piece of equipment, which can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by license commercial entities.

Submission Details

Access to ODA's File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is available on the RFSI webpage for you to upload your submission.

https://files.oda.state.or.us/Login

Username: RFSIgrant

Password: not needed, just click log in.

When submitting your proposal for review, an applicant can upload up to 7 files within an upload session:

- Proposal
  - Cover page and project application – Templet on RFSI Website for download
  - Attachment A: Critical Resources and Infrastructure Required templet found on the RFSI website.

- Attachments verifying the cost of each requested piece of equipment.
  - Please include your applicant's name in the file name structure such as:
    - Applicantname_proposal2024
    - Applicantname_matchletter_fromname2024

Applicants may submit multiple proposals and can submit to both the infrastructure and equipment track. However, each proposal must be submitted separately, and applicants can only receive grants for either an infrastructure or an equipment project, not both.

7. Attachments

Attachment A - Critical Resource

Applicants need to provide documentation of the critical resources or infrastructure that exists to support the equipment requesting to be purchased. This is Attachment A found in the resources section of the RFSI webpage.

Appendix C – Critical Resource Templet

Attachment B - Cost of Equipment Verification

Applicants must attach documentation to substantiate the costs of each equipment item, which can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by licensed commercial entities.

8. Review Criteria and Process

Review Criteria

ODA's intent is to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Oregon agriculturalists in relation to each dollar spent.

The ODA will prioritize Equipment Grant applications that benefit the following:
- Underserved farmers and ranchers;
- New and beginning farmers or ranchers;
- Veteran producers;
- Processors and other middle-of-the-supply businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

See Appendix B for a copy of the scoring guides.

Review and Selection Process

The first level is an administrative review to determine whether proposal requirements are met, and if applicable, assess an applicant's past ODA grant performance. This is performed by the Program Coordinator to ensure the grant is allowable within the constraints of the program.

The second level is a technical review to evaluate the merits of the proposals. The RFSI Advisory Committee and the ODA Internal Review Team will perform the Technical Review. The Advisory Committee is made up of growers, industry, public agencies, and representatives from nonprofits with technical interest and expertise in regional supply chains and food systems. *See appendix B for a copy of the scoring guides.*

The final selection process is advancement into the USDA State Plan application, this process is completed by the ODA Director. This last level of review takes into consideration all previous levels of the review process. Additionally, the group reviews other aspects of the grant application, including, but not limited to, geographic location of grant activities, connection with climate change mitigation and adaption,

demographics of the grantee as well as the groups affected by the project, crops and products impacted, and size of the grant in relation to grant activities.

Once selected for award, the application is sent to the USDA for final approval in the State Plan. After acceptance from the USDA, project activities may begin.

9. Policies and Requirements

Allowable costs, unallowable costs, and restrictions

Federal administrative requirements and cost principles are policies used to determine which costs of an activity, project, or program should be borne by the Federal Government. These policies ensure the consistent treatment of costs, regardless of whether reimbursement is received directly from the State Government or through another recipient of Federal funds. For each organization type, there is a set of Federal requirements.

All grant awards are subject to the terms and conditions, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and other considerations as described in the most recent [USDA SCBGP Terms and Conditions](#).

All costs must be allowable in accordance with the Federal cost principles outlined in [2 CFR part 200 Subpart E.](#)

Appendix A describes specific examples of funding restrictions under the RFSI grant program. This section is not intended to be all-inclusive. The applicant should consult the Federal cost principles for the applicable organization for the complete explanation of allowable costs they address.

All subgrantees are subject to those cost principles applicable to the organization concerned. All costs must be associated with project activities that build resilience in the middle of the supply chain. Please refer to the applicable cost principles when developing your project activities and budget. Please see [2 CFR 200 Uniform Guidance](#) for further guidance on cost principles.

ODA reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received;
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- Provide partial funding for specific proposal components that may be less than the full amount requested in the grant application;
- Require a good faith effort from the project sponsor to work with ODA subsequent to

project completion to develop reporting data or implement the project results, where applicable;

- Withhold any payments that do not meet grant conditions.
- Require return or refund of grant monies used for expenditures that are not allowed or unauthorized.

10.   Post-Award Management (Subject to Change Within Subaward Agreement Terms)

Subgrantees must ensure they are:

1. Making adequate progress toward achieving the grant project's goals, objectives, and targets
2. Expending grant funds in a way that meets provisions of pertinent statutes, regulations, ODA administrative requirements, and relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
3. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (circulars)
4. Aware of the requirements imposed upon them by Federal statute and regulation
5. In compliance with records retention and access requirements (6 years retention of all records and documents pertaining to award post final check received on agreement)
6. Using federal funds responsibly

Extension of Grant Agreement

Where an extension of time is required; the extension(s) must be received in writing no later than 60 days prior to the expiration date of the award. Extension will be given on an extremely limited basis.

The request must contain the following information:

1. The length of additional time required to complete project objectives and a justification for the extension
2. A summary of progress to date (status of project timeline and objectives);
3. An estimate of remaining funds on the scheduled expiration date
4. A projected timetable to complete the project for which the extension is being requested
5. Updated work plan from originally submitted project proposal
6. Signature of the Program Coordinator

Budget Changes

The project budget is subject to change. If it becomes necessary to modify the Budget, a request for the change must be submitted to the program coordinator at ODA in writing

for prior approval. The request for a Budget change shall include a description of the change and a justification for the change. Budget changes are subject to USDA formal approval as well.

11. Reporting Requirements – (Subject to Change Within Subaward Agreement Terms)

The Department will provide required templates for submission of reports.

The report template is projected to include at a minimum the following sections to detail progress:

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

12.   Disbursement Requests

Disbursement

The equipment subgrantees will receive 75% of awarded funds in an initial disbursement to place a down payment or order the equipment items. The subgrantee will demonstrate how they spent the awarded amount to receive the next disbursement of 15%. The final 10% will be reimbursed after we have received and approved a final report and expenditure workbook. Disposition instructions will be followed.

Subgrantees will request payments by submitting excel documents (templet provided by the ODA) that describe how funds were spent towards the approved expenditures under their project and what matching funding was also used. After review by the Program Coordinator, remaining balances will be issued.

Prior to issuing checks and disbursements, the Program Coordinator will review invoices for receipts, allowable costs, the budget, and the requested amount.

Example:

Equipment RFSI Grant	
Total Grant Request	$75,000
First Disbursement Amount (75% of $75,000 = $56,250)	$56,250
Second Disbursement (15% of $75,000 = $11,250)	$11,250
Final Disbursement (10% of $75,000 = $7,500)	$7,500

Required Submission Information

All disbursement must be submitted through the ODA issued Expenditure Request for Funds workbook process (Funds request form and expense tracking detail form), ODA provides each sub awardee with Excel Workbooks they will be REQUIRED to use.

Records Retention

In accordance with Federal regulations, grant recipients should retain all records relating

to the grant for a period of six years after the final financial status report has received by

ODA or until final resolution of any audit finding or litigation.

13.   Assistance and Questions

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14.   Appendix A – Allowable Cost, Unallowable Cost and Restrictions

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in this section is not intended to imply that it is allowable. Please see 2 CFR 200 Uniform Guidance for further guidance on cost principles.

The following list describes specific funding restrictions under the RFSI. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. Grantees should consult the Federal cost principles for the applicable organization for the complete explanation of the allowability of costs they address. 2 CFR 200 Uniform Guidance

15.   Appendix B – Proposal Score Sheets

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2024 Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant
Grant Proposal – Score sheet – Equipment Projects

PROJECT #:_____ REVIEWER #:_____ DATE: _____

Criteria for Infrastructure Projects	Score Available	Score Given	Notes
Executive Summary: - The name of the applicant organization that if awarded a grant will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the State Applicant to lead and execute the project, - The project's purpose, deliverables, and expected outcomes. - A description of the general tasks/activities to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal	20 Excellent = 15-20 Good = 10-14.9 Fine = 5-9.9 Poor = 2-4.9 Insufficient = 0-2.9		
Scope of Work: - Does the project address a need in the local or regional food supply chain? - Does the project increase aggregation, processing, storage, distribution or waste management capacity in Oregon? - Does the project contribute to more and better markets for local producers? - Does the project create new economic opportunities in its community?	40 Excellent = 35-40 Good = 30-34.9 Fine = 20-29.9 Poor = 10-19.9 Insufficient = 0–9.9		
Feasibility and measurement: - Do the proposed expected measurable outcomes meet the defined project? - Can the project be measured, reported, and tracked? - Can the project be completed in a 1-year time frame?	10 Excellent = 9-10 Good = 7-8.9 Fine = 5-6.9 Poor = 2-4.9 Insufficient = 0-2.9		

Approved 12/21/2023

Budget: - Is the budget financially realistic and reasonable? - Do budget line items correspond with the project activities in the work plan? - Is the budget detailed enough to give a picture of how grant funds will be used to accomplish project goals?	15 Excellent = 14-15 Good = 10-14.9 Fine = 5-9.9 Poor = 2-4.9 Insufficient = 0-2.9		
Overall quality of proposal: - Based on your knowledge 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?	15 Excellent = 14-15 Good = 10-14.9 Fine = 5-9.9 Poor = 2-4.9 Insufficient = 0-2.9		
Subtotal Score:	Total Available: 100		
Distressed Community Score: Please assign points based on the _average_ score of all counties listed:	10 Points = Distressed (Score > 80) 6 Points = Mid-Tier (Score 59-40) 2 points = Profitable (Score < 19)	8 Points -= At Risk (Score 79-60) 4 Points = Comfortable (Score 39 –20)	
		Total Score out of 110 available:	

16. Appendix C – Attachment A – Critical Resource Verification

Oregon Department of Agriculture
Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant (RFSI)
Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure
Attachment A

Applicant Organization	
Name of Applicant's Authorized Organization Representative	
Project Title	
Organization Address	

Dear _____,

     [Applicant Organization]

We are committed, approve and or grant permissions to use

_____
_____
_____
_____

     [include a statement of the critical resource or infrastructure]

for the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant project titled;

_____

     [Grant project title]

for the time period of _____ in the following way:

     [include dates of commitment within proposed project period]

[Describe the approved use of the critical resource or infrastructure approved for the project, any costs associated with its use, and any qualifying circumstances for its use.]

☐ By checking this box, I confirm that the critical resource(s) and infrastructure[1] listed above are in place and usable for the start-up, implementation and completion of the proposed project activities. If requested by AMS, I will submit supporting documentation (e.g. copy of lease agreement, licenses, permits, picture(s) of facilities, etc.) as evidence.

Sincerely,

_____

Print Name

_____

Signature

_____   _____

Date   Organization

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[1] 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.