|  |
| --- |
| USDA rural development rural business-cooperative service |
| Value-Added Producer Grant Program |
| APPLICATION TOOLKIT for PLANNING GRANTS |
|  |
|  |
|  |

**NOTICE TO ALL VALUE ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (VAPG) APPLICANTS**

* Use of this application template is not required (optional). However, applicants must provide the required information.
* Use of the template does not imply or ensure a favorable eligibility determination.
* In addition to the information requested in the template, applicants must complete and submit ***all required*** Federal forms and registrations, and append specified documentation to support claims for applicant and project eligibility, priority points, reserved funding, and matching funds verification; as specified by the program.
* Applications received that do not include **ALL** required materials will be considered incomplete.
* Certifications, statements, and other standard verbiage used throughout this toolkit that refer to “you,” “I”, “we,” “it”, “applicant”, “entity”, “grantee”, and other similar terms are meant to refer to the legal applicant entity applying for the Value-Added Producer Grant unless otherwise noted.”

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Program is to help U.S. agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. Awards may be made for either economic planning or working capital activities related to the processing and/or marketing of valued-added agricultural products. The maximum grant amount for a planning grant is $75,000 and the maximum grant amount for a working capital grant is $200,000. The latest [Notice of Funding Availability](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-11-25/pdf/2013-28175.pdf) (NOFA) for VAPG is available.

# DOCUMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of this **Application Toolkit** is to assist eligible applicants to navigate through the program requirements as detailed in the NOFA and the [7 CFR 4284 subpart J](http://cfr.regstoday.com/7cfr4284.aspx#7_CFR_4284pSUBPART_J) and ensure a complete application submission of all required details and documents for **PLANNING** grant proposals.

While this Application Toolkit is not required, applicants are highly encouraged to utilize this as a tool.

**NOTICE TO ALL VALUE ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (VAPG) APPLICANTS**

* Use of this application template is not required (optional). However, applicants must provide the required information.
* Use of the template does not imply or ensure a favorable eligibility determination.
* In addition to the information requested in the template, applicants must complete and submit ***all required*** Federal forms and registrations, and append specified documentation to support claims for applicant and project eligibility, priority points, reserved funding, and matching funds verification; as specified by the program.
* Applications received that do not include **ALL** required materials will be considered incomplete.
* Certifications, statements, and other standard verbiage used throughout this toolkit that refer to “you,” “I”, “we,” “it”, “applicant”, “entity”, “grantee”, and other similar terms are meant to refer to the legal applicant entity applying for the Value-Added Producer Grant unless otherwise noted.”

# CHECKLIST

*Program requirements are detailed in* [*7 CFR 4284, subpart J*](http://cfr.regstoday.com/7cfr4284.aspx#7_CFR_4284pSUBPART_J)*, and the current* [*Notice of Funds Availability*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-11-25/pdf/2013-28175.pdf) *is available online. You must become familiar with these documents before applying.*

***Before you submit your application, please be sure you have addressed all of the following elements.***

**Required forms**

☐Form SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”

☐Form SF-424A, “Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs”

☐Form SF-424B, “Assurances - Non-Construction Programs”

☐Form RD 400-4, “Assurance Agreement”

☐Form AD-3030, “Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquency Status for Corporate Applicants” (required only for corporate applicants)

**Section 1. Summary Information**

☐Legal Name of Applicant

☐DUNS #

☐SAM Registration Cage Code and Expiration Date

☐Employer Identification Number (EIN)

☐Applicant Type

☐Purpose

☐Requested Grant Amount

☐Reserve Fund Request

☐Brief Summary of Proposed Project

**Section 2. Executive Summary**

☐One page description of your proposed project.

**Section 3. General Eligibility Requirements**

☐Citizenship

☐Legal Authority and Responsibility

☐Multiple Grant Eligibility

☐Currently Active VAPG Grant

☐Certification of Federal Judgments

**Section 4. Applicant Eligibility**

☐Applicant Eligibility

☐Applicant Type Requirements

☐Emerging Market (as applicable)

**Section 5. Project Eligibility**

☐Product Eligibility

☐Product Methodology

☐Expansion of Customer Base

☐Increased Revenue

☐Purpose Eligibility

☐Use of Funds

☐Work Plan

☐Budget

**Section 6. Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

☐Performance Evaluation Criteria

☐ Applicant-suggested Performance Criteria

☐ Jobs Created/Saved

☐Proposal Evaluation/Scoring Criteria

☐Nature of the proposed venture

☐Qualifications of the Project Personnel

☐Commitments and Support

☐Work Plan and Budget

☐Priority Points (if applicable)

**Section 7. Matching Funds**

☐Certification of Matching Funds

☐Verification of Matching Funds

**Appendices**

☐Appendix A - Tribes and Tribal Entities as VAPG Applicants

☐Appendix B - Legal Authority & Responsibility

☐Appendix C - Supporting Documentation

☐Appendix D - Matching Funds Verification

☐Appendix E - Priority Points and Reserved Funds Documentation

# REQUIRED STANDARD FORMS

**Form SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”**

<http://www.grants.gov>

<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf>

**Form SF-424A, “Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs”**

http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf

**Form SF-424B, “Assurances - Non-Construction Programs”**

http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf

**Form RD 400-4, “Assurance Agreement”**

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/RD400-4.PDF>

**Form AD-3030, “Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquency Status for Corporate Applicants”**

<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad3030>

**OPTIONAL FORM**

**[INSERT INSTRUCTIONS]**

**Form AD-2106, “Form to Assist in Assessment of USDA Compliance with Civil Rights Laws”**

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/AD2106.PDF>

**IMPORTANT APPLICATION RESOURCES**

[VAPG Program Regulation 7 CFR 4284 subpart J](http://cfr.regstoday.com/7cfr4284.aspx#7_CFR_4284pSUBPART_J)

or

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/4284j.pdf>

[VAPG Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-11-25/pdf/2013-28175.pdf)

**DUNS #**

*Obtain a free DUNS number by calling 1-800-234-3867 or go to:* [*www.dunandbradstreet.com/US/duns\_update/index.html*](http://www.dunandbradstreet.com/US/duns_update/index.html)

**SAM Registration Cage Code**

*Register at no charge at:* [*https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/*](https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/)

**APPLICATION TEMPLATE**

**SECTION 1: SUMMARY INFORMATION**

**Legal Name of Applicant Entity:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**DUNS #** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Employer Identification Number (EIN)**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SAM/CCR Registration Cage Code:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Expiration Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Type – Please Check One:**

☐Independent Producer ☐Agricultural Producer Group

☐Farmer or Rancher Cooperative ☐Majority-Controlled Producer Based Business

**Raw Agricultural Commodity:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Value-Added Product:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose** ☐Planning Grant

**Requested Grant Amount** ($75,000 or less)**: $**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Grant Period Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Proposed Grant Period End Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed dates should correspond with grant period date included in SF424 and Section 5.4(2)a of the template.

**Check *one* if you are competing for Reserved Funds (See 4284.902 and Appendix E for Definitions):**

☐Reserved Funds for Beginning Farmer or Rancher

☐Reserved Funds for Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher   
☐Reserved Funds for a Mid-Tier Value Chain project

**Brief Summary of Proposed Project (limit 100 words)**

[Example: VAPG planning grant funds will be used to determine the feasibility of producing pasteurized milk, handmade cheeses and butter to be marketed as locally-produced products.]

*[Insert brief summary of proposed project]*

## 

## SECTION 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROJECT

*[Insert a more detailed description of your project containing the following information: 1) legal name of applicant entity, 2) application type (planning or working capital), 3) applicant type, 4) amount of grant request, 5) a summary of your project, 6) project goals and 7) how you intend to use the grant funds. Limit one page.]*

## SECTION 3: GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

*Use* [*7 CFR 4284.920*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-920.xml) *and* [*921*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-921.xml)*, the definitions at* [*902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml) *and the NOFA to address this section. Certify the following by reading and checking the following statements:*

**3.1 Citizenship**

☐I am an Individual Applicant who is a citizen or national of the United States, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or American Samoa; or I reside in the United States after legal admittance for permanent residence.

**OR**

☐I am an Applicant Entity that is at least 51 percent owned by individuals who are either citizens or nationals of the United States, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or American Samoa; or are legally admitted permanent residents residing in the United States; or The applicant entity is owned solely by members of one immediate family (see definition at [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)), and at least one of the entity owners is a U.S. citizen or national.

**3.2 Legal Responsibility and Authority**

☐I have or can obtain, the legal authority to carry out the purpose of the grant, and am in good standing in the State where my business is incorporated and/or in the State that is the primary location of my business operations for the VAPG project.

☐In **Appendix B**, please attach a copy of, or excerpt from your organizational documents showing legal authority to carry out the purpose of the grant on behalf of your organization, along with a Certificate of Good Standing or letter from a State agency or equivalent authority. Sole proprietor/Independent producers (including representatives of steering committees) may include a copy of their IRS tax forms showing farm income *(Tribes and tribal entities should refer to Appendix A for guidance on eligibility).*

**3.3 Multiple Grant Eligibility (*check all that apply*)**

*Applicants (including separate, but related entities with greater than 75% common ownership) may not submit more than one application in response to this solicitation. Applicants for Working Capital grants may not submit applications for the same project that has previously received Working Capital funds.*

☐I am requesting only Planning grant funds, and have not previously received this type of VAPG funds for this same project proposal.

☐I am submitting only one application in response to this solicitation, including separate, but related, applicant entities with greater than 75 percent common ownership.

**3.4 Currently Active VAPG Grant (*check only one box*)**

☐I DO NOT have a currently active VAPG grant with unused funds.

☐I DO have a currently active VAPG grant with unused funds.

☐Scheduled completion date of currently active VAPG grant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3.5 No Current Outstanding Federal Judgments Against Your Property**

I, [INSERT NAME OF APPLICANT], \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, certify that the United States has not obtained an unsatisfied judgment against my property and will not use grant funds to pay any judgments obtained by the United States.

**SECTION 4: APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

*Tribes and tribal entities should refer to Appendix A for guidance on eligibility.*

**4.1 All Applicants must acknowledge and agree to the following by checking each.**

☐I currently produce and own the majority (51 percent or more) of the raw agricultural commodity to which value will be added in this project.

☐I do not produce the subject agricultural commodity under contract for another entity, nor contract out the production of the subject agricultural commodity.

☐I will maintain ownership of the agricultural commodity from its raw state through the production, marketing and sale of the value-added product during the grant funding period (except for qualifying Mid-Tier Value Chain (MTVC) projects).

**4.2 Applicant Type**

*Please address eligibility requirements for only one applicant type below*

**(a)** ☐**Independent Producer**

*See definitions at* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)*. Acknowledge that you meet the following requirements by checking the appropriate boxes and providing the requested information.*

☐I am an independent Agricultural Producer and the sole owner of my business;

or

☐100 percent of the owners or members of the applicant organization *individual* Agriculture Producers, or *entities* that are *solely* owned and controlled by Agriculture Producers, who are directly engaged in the production of the subject agricultural commodity; or are owners or members who have the legal right to access and harvest the agricultural commodity to which value will be added (Additional verification may be required upon award).

1. List names of all owners or members of the “Independent Producer” applicant organization and their individual percentage of ownership/membership.

*(Note: Tribes and tribal entities should include tribal enrollment data (number of enrolled members) along with a brief narrative description of the tribal entity or tribal members that will be directly involved in the production of the primary agricultural commodity).*

*[Insert list]*

1. Is the Applicant a **steering committee** (as defined in 7 CFR 4284.902)**?** ☐**Yes** ☐ **No**

**If yes,** do you certify that 100 percent of committee members meet the requirements for an Independent Producer in the [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml) definitions at application; and if selected to receive grant funds, the steering committee will form a legal entity that will meet the requirements for one of the four eligible applicant types; and will provide the organizational documents of this new entity to the Agency before the Agency executes the grant agreement. ☐**Yes** ☐**No**

1. Is the Applicant a **harvester?** ☐**Yes** ☐ **No**

(*Examples include, but are not limited to: A logger who has a legal right to access and harvest logs from the forest that are then converted into boards; a fisherman that has the legal right to access and harvest fish from the ocean or river that are then processed).*

**If yes**, do you certify that you have the legal right to access and harvest 51 percent or more of the agricultural commodity that will be used for the value-added product, and are currently engaged in harvesting the subject agricultural commodity?

☐**Yes** ☐**No**

*(A copy of, or reference to, written contracts, rights-of-way, Memorandums of Understanding, license, or other documentation establishing “legal rights” to access and harvest the subject agricultural commodity must be provided upon award)*

*NOTE: Agricultural harvesters are NOT individuals or entities who glean, gather, or collect only residual commodities (such as ‘slash in a forest or blemished fruit in an orchard) that result from an initial harvesting or production of a primary agricultural commodity. To be eligible, the agricultural harvester must harvest the primary agricultural commodity.*

* 1. Summarize the proposed harvesting rights and operation:

*[Insert summary]*

**Skip to Section 5**

**(b)** ☐**Agricultural Producer Group (APG)**

*See definitions at* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)*. Acknowledge that you meet the following requirements by checking the appropriate boxes and providing the requested information.*

☐We are a **formal membership** organization that represents Independent Producers; and operates with a mission that includes working on behalf of Independent Producers

☐The majority (51% or more) of the *membership* *and board of directors* is made up of Independent Producers who are *individual* Agricultural Producers, or *entities* that are *solely* owned and controlled by Agricultural Producers, and are directly engaged in the production of the agricultural commodity to which value will be added for this project.

1. What is your *total number of members*? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your *total* *number of members who are eligible Independent Producers?*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\*

\*Of this number, what is *the total number who will participate in the project*? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the *total number of individuals on the governing board?* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the *total number of individuals on the governing board who are eligible Independent Producers*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. **Describe** your organization’s mission:

*[Insert mission statement]*

1. **Identify** by name or class (general description of agricultural product or type of producer) the members who will participate in the project.

*[Insert list or identify class]*

**Skip to Section 4.3**

**(c)** ☐**Farmer or Rancher Cooperative (CO-OP)**

*See definitions in* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)*. Acknowledge that you meet the following requirements by checking the appropriate boxes and providing the requested information.*

*NOTE: Cooperatives owned and controlled by* ***agricultural harvesters*** *(i.e. fishermen, loggers, etc.) are eligible to apply only as an Independent Producer applicants and not as a Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives. It is the Agency’s position that harvesters do not meet the definition of a farmer or rancher. Harvester applicants must complete the information for IP in section 4.1(a) above.*

1. ☐ Applicant certifies that it is a business owned and controlled by *eligible* Independent Producers that is ***either***:

☐ LEGALLY INCORPORATED as a Farmer or Rancher COOPERATIVE

Indicate the State of Incorporation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**-OR-**

☐IDENTIFIED by the State in which it operates as a Farmer or Rancher owned and cooperatively operated business in the State of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the percentage of total ownership shares owned by Independent Producers? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How many Independent Producer owner/members will participate in the value-added project? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. ☐The owner/members, or class, identified below are those *Independent Producers on whose behalf the project work will be done* and each owner/member, or class of producer, is an eligible Independent Producer, in accordance with the definition at [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml).
3. **List** participating owner/member Independent Producers by name or class (general description of agricultural product or type of producer). Additional verification of the status and participation of these parties may be requested.

*[Insert list or identify class]*

**Skip to Section 4.3**

**(d)**☐ **Majority Controlled Producer-Based Business (MAJ)**

*See definitions in* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)*. Acknowledge that you meet the following requirements by checking the appropriate boxes and providing the requested information.**Note: Cooperatives should not apply in this category.*

1. ☐We are a legal entity in which more than 50 percent of the financial ownership and voting control is held by individual Independent Producers (IPs), or held by an entity(ies) solely owned and controlled by agricultural producers, and we are directly engaged in the production of the agricultural commodity to which value will be added for project.
2. ☐The owners identified below comprise 100 percent of the ownership of the organization, including both Independent Producer owners and owners that are not Independent Producers. If any *owners are entities themselves*, the ownership of those entities is also identified, by name or class (general description of agricultural product or type of producer), and confirmed as eligible. Additional verification of the status and participation of these parties may be requested.
3. **Provide** a list-by name or class-of all owners, their percentage of financial ownership of the organization, their percentage of voting control of the organization, and whether or not they are an eligible Independent Producer.

*[Insert list]*

* 1. **Emerging Market**

*If you are an Agricultural Producer Group, a Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, or a Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business, you must show that you are entering an emerging market as a result of the proposed project. To qualify, you cannot have supplied the proposed product, geographic or demographic market for more than two years at time of application submission.*

**Check** all that apply and describe your emerging market:

☐The project will provide a new value-added product

☐The project will serve a new geographic market

☐The project will serve a new demographic market

**Describe** the new product and/or geographic/demographic market):

*[Insert description]*

How many months or years have your member-producers been engaged in the specific value-added activity that is the subject of this application?

Months \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 5: PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

*You must detail how the project meets product, purpose, and reserved funds and priority points (if applicable) eligibility requirements in* [*7 CFR 4284.922*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *and in the current NOFA. Documentation for Reserved Funds and Priority Point eligibility should be addressed in* ***Appendix E****, as applicable.*

**You must address all sections below.**

**5.1 *Raw* Agricultural Commodity and *Outcome* Value-Added Product**

**Name** the raw agricultural commodity that will be used as the *input* for the project:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name** the value-added product that will be the outcome from using one of the five value-added methodologies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5.2 Value-Added Agricultural Product Methodology (**[**7 CFR 4284.922(a)**](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml)**)**

*Based on the definitions in* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml) *please address the requirements for at least one value-added*

*methodology below that best fits your proposed value-added product(s).*

1. ☐**Change in Physical State**

*Examples include, but are not limited to, strawberries into jam, milk into cheese, wheat into flour, wool into clothing or rugs, corn into E-85 ethanol that is generated off-farm, livestock into packaged meat.*

***Explain*** *the method or process used to add value to your agricultural product, and how the change in physical state or form of the product enhances its value.*

*[Insert explanation]*

1. ☐**Produced in a Manner that Enhances the Value of the Agricultural Commodity**

*Examples include, but are not limited to, organic carrots, eggs produced from free-range chickens.*

***Explain*** *the method or process used to add value to your agricultural product, and how a non-standard agricultural production method adds value to the agricultural commodity per unit of production over a standard production method, and provide evidence via a quantifiable comparison with products produced in the standard manner.*

*[Insert explanation]*

1. ☐**Product (Physical) Segregation**

*An example is genetically modified corn that is separated from non-genetically modified corn on the farm during production and harvesting, with continued separation from similar commodities or products during the processing and marketing of the value-added product.*

***Explain*** *the method or process used to add value to your agricultural product, and demonstrate how the physical segregation of the commodity is accomplished and how it enhances the value of the commodity.*

*[Insert explanation]*

1. ☐**Farm- or Ranch-based Renewable Energy**

*Examples include, but are not limited to, dairy manure into methane and electricity generated on the farm, or corn into biodiesel generated on the farm. Generation of energy from wind, solar, geothermal or hydro sources are not eligible. Fuel or energy that is not generated on a farm or ranch owned or leased by the IP applicant/owner/member is not eligible under this methodology, but may be considered under the first methodology, change in physical state.*

***Describe*** *the renewable energy technology that will be used on-farm, and explain the process to generate on-farm renewable energy from the agricultural commodity produced by the IP applicant/owner/member. Demonstrate that the renewable energy will be generated on a farm or ranch owned or leased by the IP applicant/owner/member.*

*[Insert explanation]*

*\*For* ***Farm- or Ranch-based Renewable Energy,*** *documentation for expansion of customer base may include, but is not limited to, sales of value-added products to off-farm customers; or through use of the value-added products produced by the farm applicant organization itself to reduce its own farm operations energy costs for thermal, electric, or liquid fuel needs, such as net metering of electricity, use of thermal energy for heat or hot water, or use of bio-based liquid fuels for tractor or other farm machining operations. As applicable, emerging market requirements must be met.*

*Documentation for calculating increased revenue returns to the producer-owner(s) may include, but is not limited to, the savings that result from use of the value-added products on the farm for farming operations; and /or from the sale of the value-added products to off-farm customers. These revenue streams might include, but are not limited to, thermal, electric or liquid fuel generated on-farm from the agricultural commodity, renewable energy credits, carbon credits for greenhouse gas emission reductions and offsets, or methane; as well as revenue earned from the sale of by-products such as compost and bedding, etc.*

1. ☐**Locally-produced Agricultural Food Product**

*Examples include, but are not limited to, specific local grapes with characteristics attributable to the growing area will be sold to a processor that will produce a locally-marketed wine; or local corn advertised and sold at a premium as a fresher locally-produced alternative to non-local produce*.

***Explain*** *how value is added to your agricultural product, and demonstrate/ quantify how local sales and marketing results in added value to the product.*

*[Insert explanation]*

***ALL APPLICANTS CONTINUE AT SECTION 5.3***

**5.3 Expansion of Customer Base and Increased Revenue Derived from the Value-Added Process.**

*Please cite one or more relevant sources to support the response statements and data below. For example, planning grant response data may be based on an identified industry-norm or formula, applicant’s calculated historical success in producing and marketing the value-added product itself, or be academic in nature. Attach third-party supporting documentation to Appendix C*

1. **Discuss** the estimated expansion of customer base that results from the value-added product, including a baseline of current customers for the commodity or value-added product, and an estimated target number of customers that will result from the project:

*[Insert discussion]*

1. **Discuss** the estimated amount of the increased revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation of the agricultural commodity that will be available to the applicant’s producers of the agricultural commodity to which value is added, including a baseline of current revenues from the sale of the agricultural commodity or value-added product, and an estimated target number of increased revenues that will result from the project:

*[Insert discussion]*

**5.4 Purpose Eligibility (see** [**7 CFR 4284.922 (b)**](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) **and** [**7 CFR 4284.923**](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml) **and .924):**

***Check*** *all boxes that apply and include the documentation indicated.*

**Grant request is for a Planning Grant of $** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Use of Funds**

Applicant understands and agrees that:

☐Planning funds will only be used to pay a qualified consultant to conduct and develop a feasibility study, business plan, and/or marketing plan directly related to the processing and/or marketing of a value-added agricultural product, including any associated legal costs. See [7 CFR 4284.923 (a)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml) for examples of eligible planning activities. It is generally expected that planning grants will not exceed a one year timeframe.

☐The proposed project does NOT include costs for ineligible activities, as illustrated at [7 CFR 4284.924](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml), including but not limited to, costs for land, buildings or equipment, vehicles, preparation of the grant application, research and development, architectural or engineering design work, expenses for the production, harvesting or delivery to a processing facility of any agricultural commodity or product, owner or family member wages, goods or services from a person or entity that has a personal, professional, financial or other interest in the outcome of the project, or for costs incurred outside the grant period.

Applications that propose ineligible expenses in excess of 10 percent of total project costs will be deemed ineligible.

☐The project does NOT include costs associated with a conflict of interest for owners, employees, officers, agents, or their immediate family members having a personal, professional, financial or other interest in the outcome of the project, including organizational conflicts, or conflicts that restrict open and free competition for unrestrained trade; except as provided for in [7 CFR 4284.923 (a) and (b)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml) relating to applicant or family member in-kind contribution of matching funds for eligible activities, and limited to 25 percent of total project costs.

1. **Work Plan and Budget**

***Provide a******detailed work plan and budget below*** *that shows how the project’s goals will be accomplished in accordance with the requirements in* [*7 CFR 4284.922 (b) (5)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml)*, including a narrative description of the eligible activities and tasks associated with those activities, a budget breakdown of the estimated costs allocated to those activities and tasks; identification of the key personnel responsible for overseeing**and/or conducting the activities or tasks; timeframes for completion of the activities and tasks;**identification of the sources and uses of grant and matching funds for all activities and tasks; and a grant period that meets start and end date requirements.* ***Please note that information provided in section 5.4(2) b, c, and d will be scored as part of Section 6.2 Proposal Evaluation Criterion 6.2(4).***

1. **Grant Period Eligibility**

*Your proposed grant period should begin no earlier than the anticipated Award Announcement date identified in the NOFA and should end no later than 36 months following that date. If you receive an award, your grant period will be revised to begin on the actual date of award, defined as the date the grant agreement is executed by the Agency, and your grant period end date will be adjusted accordingly.*

*[Insert proposed grant period start and end dates]*

1. **Insert work plan narrative here (attach additional pages as needed):**

*[Insert work plan narrative]*

1. **Project Budget Summary**

*Summarize the total project budget by task. Insert additional rows as needed.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity # | Task Name, Description, and Responsible Party | Start Date | End Date | VAPG Funds | Cash Matching Funds | In-Kind Matching Funds | Total Project Costs |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL PROJECT** |  |  | **$** | **$** | **$** | **$** |

1. **Task Budget Format**

*Provide a budget table for* ***each task*** *that will be completed for* ***each main activity*** *listed above.*

*Add additional task tables as needed.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Task #1  Budget Categories | VAPG  Grant Funds | Cash  Matching Funds | In-Kind  Contributions | Total |
| Personnel |  |  |  |  |
| Fringe Benefits |  |  |  |  |
| Travel |  |  |  |  |
| Office Equipment |  |  |  |  |
| Supplies |  |  |  |  |
| Contractual |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** | $ | $ | $ | $ |

Provide explanation/clarification of the basis for the above budget figures:

*[Insert task budget explanation]*

**SECTION 6: EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**6.1 Performance Evaluation Criteria (**[**7 CFR 4284.931 (b) (2) (i)**](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-931.xml)**)**

*Suggest one or more relevant criterion to be used to evaluate the performance of the grant project during its operational phase post-award, as benchmarks to assess whether or not the primary goals and objectives proposed in the work plan are accomplished during the project period. These criteria should relate to the overall project goal of creating and serving new markets, with a resulting increase in customer base and increase in revenues returning to the agriculture producers providing the agricultural commodity to the project; as well as to the practical and/or logistical activities and tasks to be accomplished during the project period.**Applicant suggested performance criteria will be incorporated into the applicant’s semi-annual and final reporting requirements, if selected for award, and will be specified in the grant agreement associated with the award.*

*Examples of Performance Evaluation Criteria for Planning Grants:*

* *Did the independent feasibility study evaluate the economic, market, technical, financial, and management feasibility characteristics of the value-added project?*
* *Is the analysis based upon verifiable data and does it contain sufficient information to determine if projected levels of income or production levels are achievable?*
* *Did the analysis identify the estimated project development and operating costs and the assumptions on which these estimates were made?*
* *Does the business plan layout the optimum structural and operational aspects of the venture and include a defined set of goals and objectives?*
* *Has a projected return on investment been estimated?*

1. Provide at least one *performance* evaluation criterion for your grant project be evaluated by, if awarded funds.

*[Insert Planning Grant Performance Evaluation Criteria]*

1. How many jobs are expected to be **created or saved** as a result of the project? Planning grant applicants should estimate the number of jobs expected to be created or saved as a result of continuing the project into its operational phase.

Number of jobs expected to be created \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or saved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**6.2 *Proposal* Evaluation Criteria (see** [**7 CFR 4284.942**](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-942.xml) **and NOFA section V. B. to respond to each criterion)**

*The Agency will select and rank applications for funding based on the score an application has received in response to the proposal evaluation criteria. For each criterion, you must demonstrate how the project has merit and provide rationale for the likelihood of success. Responses that do not address all aspects of the criterion noted in 7 CFR 4284-J and/or the NOFA, or that do not convey relevant project information will receive lower scores. VAPG is a competitive program, so your responses will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of each response. Simply addressing the criteria will not guarantee higher scores. The maximum number of points that will be awarded to an application is 100. The minimum score necessary to receive funding is 50 points. Except for the Priority Points criterion, which is scored on a lump sum basis, all points will be awarded on a graduated basis.* ***Please see the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) at section V.B. for a detailed description of the graduated scoring thresholds for each criterion.***

1. ***Nature of the Proposed Venture* (graduated score 0 - 30 points)**

*For the following sections you should reference third-party information, business financial statements, previous business experience producing or marketing the value-added product or similar product, experience in similar markets, or other successful ventures. Planning applications should address the sections below by describing the expected outcomes of the project and the rationale supporting those expectations.*

1. Describe the technological feasibility of the project (i.e. is the product currently being manufactured somewhere, what is the size constraint, is product in test phase v. full capacity, is recipe formulated, existing v. new technology, etc.):

*[Insert description]*

1. Describe the operational efficiency of the project (i.e. sufficient raw commodity, use own facility or toll processing, share a processing space, energy efficiency aspects, waste management, sufficient labor or expertise, logistics for storage or distribution of value-added product):

*[Insert description]*

1. Describe the expected profitability of the Planning project (i.e. third-party references, trends, industry-norm or formula, applicant’s historical success in producing/marketing the value-added product or similar product:

*[Insert description]*

1. Describe the economic sustainability of the project (i.e. project viability post-grant period/funding, will project reach or exceed break-even point post award, potential for market expansion):

*[Insert description]*

1. ***Qualifications of Project Personnel* (graduated score 0 – 20 points)**

*Identify each of the individuals who will be responsible for completing the proposed tasks in the work plan, including a summary of their qualifications and expertise. Describe their role and commitment to the project. Repeat all categories for each of the Project Personnel. Attach additional pages as necessary.*

1. Name of Staff/Consultant (if known) responsible for each task in budget
2. Qualifications or Experience (If staff or consultants have not been selected at the time of application, provide specific descriptions of the qualifications required for the positions to be filled)
3. Project role and responsibilities
4. Describe availability/commitment
5. ***Commitments and Support (graduated score 0-10 points)***

*Letters of commitment from producers, end-users, and third-parties should be summarized as part of your responses below AND the letters should be included in* ***Appendix C****. Summaries should include date of the letter and name and position of the author. Applications that demonstrate strong, direct financial, technical, and logistical support to successfully complete the project will receive more points than those that demonstrate less support.*

1. **Producer commitments** to the project will be evaluated based on the number of independent producers currently involved in the project; and the nature, level and quality of their contributions (i.e. evidence of cash or in-kind contributions to project, number of independent producers producing and providing the raw commodity to the project, other forms of commitment such as project-related past efforts):

*[Insert explanation]*

**End-User commitments** will be evaluated on potential or identified markets and the potential amount of output to be purchased, as shown by letters of intent or contracts from potential buyers referenced within the application (i.e. letters of interest or intent from buyers wanting to purchase the value-added product):

*[Insert explanation]*

**Third-Party commitments** to the project will be evaluated on the critical and tangible nature of the contribution to the project, such as technical assistance, storage, processing, marketing, or distribution arrangements that are necessary for the project to proceed; and the level and quality of these contributions (i.e. evidence of prior area-wide planning; consistency with strategic state or regional economic plans; pro bono or reduced fee arrangements for technical assistance, storage arrangements or distribution partnerships, critical processing arrangements or marketing partnerships necessary for the project to proceed):

*[Insert explanation]*

*Note: Letters of commitment by producers, end-users, and third-parties should be summarized as part of your response to this criterion, and the letters should be included in Appendix C.*

1. **Work Plan and Budget (graduated score 0 – 20 points):**

In accord with [7 CFR 4284.922 (b)(5)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml), you have submitted a comprehensive work plan and budget, found in Section 5 of this template. Points may not be awarded unless sufficient detail is provided to determine that both grant and matching funds are being used for qualified purposes and are from eligible sources without a conflict of interest.

1. **Priority Points (lump sum score 0 or 10 points)**

*Priority points may be awarded in both the General Funds competition, as well as the Reserved Funds competition, should Reserved Funds become available. Qualifying applicants may request priority points if they meet the requirements for only one of the following categories and provide the documentation specified in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml)*, as applicable.*

To request Priority Points, applicants must provide all documentation and responses for one of the Priority categories in **Appendix E**.

I request priority points (check only one box):

☐Beginning Farmer or Rancher

☐Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher

☐Mid-Tier Value Chain Project

☐Operator of a Small or Medium-sized Farm or Ranch that is Structured as a Family Farm or Ranch

☐Farmer or Rancher Cooperative

**-OR-**

☐Applicant does NOT request or qualify for priority points for any of the above categories.

*Note: It is the Agency’s position that harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch. Thus, harvester applicants may only request Priority Points if they are proposing a Mid-Tier Value Chain.*

1. **Administrator Priority Categories (graduated score 0 - 10 points)**

The Administrator of USDA Rural Development Business and Cooperative Programs has discretion to award up to 10 points to an application to improve the geographic diversity of awardees in a fiscal year. The applicant does ***not*** need to provide documentation for points in this category.

## 

## SECTION 7: MATCHING FUNDS

**7.1 Certification of Matching Funds**

☐ I certify that (1) the cost-share matching funds for the project will be spent in advance of grant funding, such that for every dollar of grant funds disbursed, not less than an equal amount of matching funds will have been expended prior to submitting the request for reimbursement; and (2) if matching funds are proposed in an amount exceeding the grant amount, those matching funds will be spent in advance of grant funding at a proportional rate equal to the match-to-grant ratio identified in the proposed budget.

**Print Name of Applicant’s Authorized Representative:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant’s Authorized Representative: Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**7.2 Verification of Matching Funds**

You must provide authentic documentation from the contributing source to demonstrate (1) the *eligibility of the source and use* of all matching funds, including cash and in-kind contributions; and (2) the *availability* of both cash and in-kind contributions during the proposed grant period so that all matching funds meet the definition requirements for Matching Funds and Conflict of Interest in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml). Also see [7 CFR 4284.923](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml) and [7 CFR 4284.924](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml) for eligible and ineligible uses of grant and matching funds.

Matching funds must be:

* spent on eligible planning activities
* from eligible sources without a real or apparent conflict of interest
* at least equal to the grant amount, with combined grant and matching funds equal to 100 percent of the total project costs
* provided in the form of confirmed applicant cash, loan, or line of credit; or be provided in the form of a confirmed applicant or family member in-kind contribution that meets the requirements and limitations specified in [7 CFR 4284.923 (a) and (b)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml); or be provided in the form of confirmed third-party cash or eligible third-party in-kind contribution, including non-federal grant sources.
* The value of eligible services provided by the applicant or family members as in-kind must not exceed 25 percent of total project costs. Services must be reasonably valued and the basis for the valuation provided in the verification of matching funds documentation.

The use of the verification templates included in **Appendix D** is optional, but highly recommended. Choose one or more of the five template types to match the form of your matching funds. The *contributing source* of the matching funds should complete the information on the designated form(s) for the type of matching funds being provided for the project, and sign the form where indicated. Verifications for all matching funds must be provided with this application in Appendix D.

**PROCEED TO APPENDICES**

# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: Tribes and Tribal Entities as VAPG Applicants**

Applicant Eligibility Guidance

*This is intended to provide guidance to 7 CFR Part § 4284.920 “Applicant Eligibility” to clarify the eligibility of tribal entities under the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. Tribal entities are encouraged to consult with the USDA Rural Development office in their State for further assistance. Contact information can be found at* [*http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/StateOfficeAddresses.html*](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/StateOfficeAddresses.html)*.*

Historically, because Tribes or tribal entities operated on behalf of the entire Tribe (inclusive of members not participating in agricultural production), in most instances these entities were not considered eligible for the VAPG program because they could not conform to the definition of Independent Producer requiring ownership or membership of at least a majority of Agricultural Producers. However, a broader interpretation of key program definitions may, if properly documented, allow Tribes and certain tribal entities to meet the basic applicant eligibility and definition criteria set within 7 C.F.R. § 4284.920 and 7 C.F.R. § 4284.902.

VAPG applicants must meet all definition requirements for one of four applicant types**: independent producer, agricultural producer group, farmer or rancher cooperative; or majority-controlled producer-based business venture.** Each applicant type is made up, through ownership, or membership of a majority, of *Independent Producers*, which is an individual or an entity that is solely owned and controlled by *Agricultural Producers*. An Agricultural Producer is *“an individual or entity directly engaged in the production of an agricultural commodity (or legal right to harvest) that is the subject of the value-added project. Agricultural producers may ‘directly engage’ either through substantially participating in the labor, management and field operations themselves or by maintaining ownership and financial control of the agricultural operation.”* The ‘direct engagement’ portion of this definition may allow Federally Recognized Indian Tribes or tribal entities to apply on behalf of all tribal members who are under the Tribe’s direct regulatory control (i.e. jurisdiction). Therefore, it is the position of the Agency that, where agricultural activities are carried out by the Tribe or a tribal entity for the benefit of the entire Tribe (inclusive of tribal members not performing agricultural functions), each tribal member is an agricultural producer by virtue of their direct engagement in agricultural production through ownership and financial control of the operation (per the above definition of agricultural producer).

**Key Questions**

The questions below will help you determine whether your Tribe or Tribal entity is an eligible applicant for the VAPG program. Please discuss them with your USDA Rural Development State Office and pay close attention to all of the necessary documentation requirements. Additionally, if there are other questions or clarifications Rural Development can make to improve the eligibility review process for tribal applicants, please share your recommendations with your USDA Rural Development contact.

1. Are you a Federally Recognized Tribe, a tribal enterprise, a subdivision of a Federally Recognized Tribe, a tribally chartered corporation or a Section 17 corporation?
2. If your organization is not the Tribe, how is it related to the Tribe and the Tribe’s producers?
3. How exactly are you chartered, incorporated, authorized, or organized to conduct business?
4. Is the production or collection of the commodity under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Tribe?
5. Do the benefits from the production of the agricultural commodity benefit the Tribe as a whole? Or, does the tribal entity represent an exclusive subset of agricultural producers who receive the benefit?
6. Does the tribal entity partner with non-tribal entities? In what way?
7. Does the applicant meet all of the eligibility requirements for *one of the four applicant types* according to [7 CFR 4284.920](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-920.xml)?
8. Does the proposed project meet all other *program* eligibility requirements found at [7 CFR 4284.920](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-920.xml), [921](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-921.xml), [922](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml), [923](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml), [924](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml) & [925](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-925.xml)?

**Documentation Requirements for Good Standing**

Tribal applicants may provide the following documents as *part of a complete application* to fulfill requirements related to Certification for Good Standing in the State or primary location of the applicant’s business operations for the VAPG project. If a Certificate of Good Standing from the State is not available due to the applicant’s organizational legal status, then an alternative document must be provided: (1) if the Tribe/applicant is/has a Section 17 Corporation, approval documents from the Department of Interior for that Corporation must be provided as evidence of good standing; (2) if the applicant is an entity that is incorporated under Tribal law, the Tribe itself may provide evidence of “good standing” in the form of a letter or Certificate from the Tribe, as available. These substitute documents for “good standing” do not relieve the applicant from providing all other required application elements specified in the program regulation, NOFA, and application toolkit.

## APPENDIX B Section 3.2 Legal Authority and Good Standing

**ALL APPLICANTS:** Please attach evidence of Legal Authority and Good-standing (Examples: By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation or Organization, Letter or Certificate of Good Standing from your Secretary of State or equivalent agency), as well as any applicable licenses and inspections. For sole proprietor/independent producers, provide a copy of your IRS tax form showing farm income). **Tribal entities** see page **Appendix A** for documentation requirements.

## APPENDIX C Supporting Documentation

1. **ALL APPLICANTS:** Please attach third-party documentation in support of responses to Expansion of Customer Base and Increased Revenuein **Section 5.3**.
2. **ALL APPLICANTS**: Please attach copies of letters of commitment and support in response to **Proposal Evaluation Criterion 3**.
3. **WORKING CAPITAL APPLICANTS ONLY: Section 5.4** Please attach a copy of your Feasibility Study and Business Plan or if proposing a Market Expansion project, a copy of your Marketing Plan, only.

## APPENDIX D Matching Funds Verification

*Documentation verifying eligible matching funds must be included in your application. If grant funds are awarded, this information will be re-verified upon execution of the grant agreement. Verification Templates are included in this Application Toolkit for each type of matching funds contribution to the project, and you may select the template(s) appropriate for your project: 1) Applicant cash; 2) Applicant approved loan or line-of-credit; 3) Applicant in-kind; 4) Third-Party cash; and/or 5) Third-Party in-kind.*

If you have questions about your project budget or eligible use of grant and/or matching funds, please contact your Rural Development State Office. Contact information is available for each state at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html> or <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/StateOfficeAddresses.html>.

### APPENDIX D.1 Verification of Matching Funds: Applicant Cash

Page 1 of 1

*The use of this form is optional, but highly recommended. If the applicant is contributing cash-on-hand to pay for goods and/or services during the grant period that are eligible expenses for the project, the expenditure is considered a cash match. The applicant must**sign this statement to verify (a) the amount of cash match, (b) the source of the cash match, and (c) use of the cash match. A copy of a bank statement with an ending date within one month of the application submission deadline and showing an ending balance equal to or greater than the amount of Cash Matching Funds proposed is also required at time of application.*

**Legal Name of Applicant**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Applicant’s VAPG Project**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Project Cost: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ VAPG Grant Request: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Total *Applicant Cash* Match: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Identify all source(s), amounts, and uses of **Applicant Cash Matching Funds** that your organization currently has available and committed to eligible VAPG project expenditures during the grant period proposed in the SF 424 form and Section 5.4(2)a. Include a **copy of an account statement from each source** dated within 30 days of the application submission showing an ending balance equal to or greater than the amount of Cash Matching Funds proposed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Applicant Source of Cash Funds** | **Name of Holding Institution** | **Cash Match Amount** | **Use of Funds for Project Budget Activities** |
| Checking Account |  | $ |  |
| Savings Account |  | $ |  |
| Certificate of Deposit |  | $ |  |
| Money Market |  | $ |  |
| Mutual Funds |  | $ |  |
| Other |  | $ |  |
| **Total Cash** |  | **$** |  |

Has your organization formally approved the Cash Match Amounts and Purpose at time of application?

☐Yes ☐ No \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date of Approval ☐ \_\_\_\_\_\_N/A

**Print Name of Applicant/Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Applicant/Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant or**

**Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX D.2 Verification of for Matching Funds: Applicant Approved Loan or Line of Credit

Page 1 of 1

*Use of this form is optional, but highly recommended. Ask your lending institution to provide all of the information below, at time of application, to verify your approved Loan or Line of Credit that will be used as matching funds for your VAPG project during the grant period proposed in the SF424 form and Section 5.4(2)a.*

For purposes of facilitating the Work Plan and Budget Activities identified in the associated Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) application, and as an Authorized Representative of the lending institution identified below, I verify and confirm the following information:

**Legal Name and Address of Lender Providing Loan or Line of Credit for VAPG Matching Funds:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Legal Name and Address of Intended Recipient/Borrower of Loan or Line of Credit for VAPG Matching Funds (must be the same legal name as identified on the VAPG application):**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Total Amount of Loan or Line of Credit to be Used for Eligible VAPG Project Purposes:** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Description of Borrower’s Use of Loan/LOC Funds:** *[Insert description]*

**Will the Loan or Line of Credit be provided to the Borrower during the proposed grant period, or on a specific date within the proposed grant period?** ☐Yes ☐ No

**Date(s) of Transfer or Availability of the Funds to Borrower (month/day/year):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Loan/LOC Approval** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ N/A

**Print Name of Authorized Representative**

**For Lending Institution**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of**

**Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX D.3 Verification of Matching Funds: Applicant IN-KIND Contribution

Page 1 of 2

*Use of this form is optional, but highly recommended. The applicant must describe (a) the nature of the goods or services to be donated and how they will be used, (b) the value of the goods or services with an explanation of the basis of the valuation, and (c) when the goods or services will be donated, including specific dates (month/day/year) corresponding to the grant period proposed in the SF424 form and Section 5.4(2)a, or to dates within the grant period, when the contributions will be made available to the project.*

**Legal Name of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Applicant’s VAPG Project:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Project Cost: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ VAPG Grant Request: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant In-Kind Value: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name of Applicant/Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Applicant/Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant or**

**Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Only eligible goods or services provided during the grant period for which no expenditure is made can be considered in-kind. Please see* [*7 CFR 4284.924*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml) *for examples of in-kind contributions that are not eligible. Verification for in-kind contributions that are over-valued will not be accepted.*

**PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION**

1. **Applicant Owner or Family Member Time as In-Kind Match**

If you propose to use *applicant owner or family members participation* in eligible project activities as in-kind match, please provide the information below for each participant. The total value of in-kind services provided by the applicant and family members must not exceed 25 percent of total project costs. (Note: the participation of the employees of Tribes and tribal entities must be clearly documented as owner participation if it is proposed to be used as in-kind match):

1. Name of Owner or Family Member who will Perform the Services,
2. Relationship to the Owner of Applicant Organization
3. Description of Services to be Provided
4. When the Services will be Provided (month/day/year)
5. Value of services to be provided
6. Basis for valuation (attach supporting documentation) See [7 CFR 4284.923 (a) and (b)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-923.xml)
7. Total value of all services provided by the applicant owner and all family members (Total must not exceed 25 percent of total project costs).

*[Insert documentation]*

*D.3 Applicant In-Kind*

*Page 2 of 2*

1. **OTHER Applicant In-Kind Contributions**

If you propose to use other eligible goods or services contributed to the project, as Applicant In-kind Match, provide the information below for each good or service. Please see [7 CFR 4284.924](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml) for examples of in-kind contributions that are not eligible.

1. Description of the good or service
2. How the good or service will be used in the project.
3. When the good or service will be donated
4. Value of the good or service
5. Basis for the valuation (include documentation)
6. Total value for all goods and services

*[Insert documentation]*

### APPENDIX D.4 Verification of Matching Funds: Third-Party Cash

Page 1 of 1

*The use of this form is optional, but highly recommended. The Third-Party contributor must complete and sign where indicated to verify the (a) amount of cash to be donated, and (b) when it will be donated, indicating specific dates (month/day/year) corresponding to the grant period proposed in the SF424 form and Section 5.4(2)a, or to dates within the grant period, when matching funds will be made available to the project.*

For purposes of facilitating the Work Plan and Budget Activities identified in the associated FY2013 Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) application, and as an Authorized Representative of the third-party organization identified below, I verify and confirm the following information:

**Legal Name and Address of Third-Party providing CASH Matching Funds:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Legal Name of Intended Recipient of Third-Party CASH Matching Funds**:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount of Third-Party CASH Matching Funds to be Donated for Eligible VAPG Project Purposes:**

$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Will the Third-Party CASH Matching Funds be provided to the Intended Recipient during the proposed grant period?**

☐Yes ☐ No

Dates of Transfer/Availability\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (month/day/year)

**Name of Financial Institution currently holding Third-party cash matching funds to be transferred to Intended Recipient**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Does your organization understand that cash matching contributions from third-parties cannot be used to provide services which directly benefit the third-party contributor, and that contributors of cash matching funds may not limit how or where the funds are used? ☐Yes ☐ No

**Has your organization approved the Third-Party CASH transfer amount and VAPG general purpose?**

☐ Yes ☐ No Date of Approval\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ N/A

**Print Name of Authorized Representative**

**For Third-Party Organization**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­­­

**Title of Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX D.5 Verification of Matching Contribution: Third-Party In-Kind

Page 1 of 2

*Use of this form is optional, but highly recommended. The Third-Party contributor may provide a signed letter with the following information or may complete and sign this form where indicated to describe (a) the nature of the goods and/or services to be donated, (b) the value of the goods and/or services to be donated with a description of the basis for the valuation, and (c) when the goods and/or services will be donated during the grant period proposed in the SF424 form and Section 5.4(2)a, including specific dates (month/day/year) within the grant period when the matching contributions will be made available*.

For purposes of facilitating the Work Plan and Budget Activities identified in the associated Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) application, and as an Authorized Representative of the third-party organization identified below, I verify and confirm the following information:

**Legal Name and Address of Third-Party Providing In-Kind Contribution**:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Legal Name of Intended Recipient of Third-Party In-Kind Contribution**:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Value of All Third-Party In-Kind Donation* for Eligible Project Purposes**: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION**

For ***Third-Party In-Kind Contributions***, provide the following information for each good or service donated. Please see [7 CFR 4284.924](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-924.xml) for examples of in-kind contributions that are not eligible. Organizations contributing the services of affiliated volunteers must provide verification for *each individual volunteer*. Verification for in-kind contributions that are over-valued will not be accepted.

1) Description of the good or service

2) How the good or service will be used in the project.

3) When the good or service will be donated

4) Value of the good or service

5) Basis for the valuation (include documentation)

6) Total value for all goods and services

*[Insert documentation]*

D.5 Third-Party In-Kind

Page 2 of 2

**Will the third-party in-kind contribution be provided to the recipient during the proposed grant period?**

☐Yes☐No

**Anticipated Date(s) of contribution:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Has your organization formally approved the In-Kind Match contribution value and purpose at Time of Application?** ☐Yes ☐No **Date of Approval**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_☐N/A

**Does your organization understand that in-kind contributions from third-parties cannot be used to directly benefit the third-party contributor?** ☐Yes ☐ No

**Print Name of Authorized Representative**

**For Third-Party In-Kind Contributor:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Authorized Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of**

**Authorized Representative**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E Reserved Fund and Priority Point Eligibility

**Summary**

|  |
| --- |
| **For Priority Points** |
| See [7 CFR 4284.922(d)](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml). All required documentation must be provided in the application. |
| Categories include Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Socially-disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, Mid-Tier Value Chain, Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, and Operators of Small or Medium-Sized Farms structured as Family Farms—see below. |
| Beginning Farmer or Rancher: Applicant ownership or membership by beginning farmers or ranchers must be 51 percent or more of total ownership or membership, and the project must demonstrate a *contribution* *to farming opportunities* for Beginning Farmers or Ranchers. |
| Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers: Applicant ownership or membership by Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers must be 51 percent or more of total ownership or membership, and the project must demonstrate a *contribution* *to farming opportunities* for Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. Membership composition does not have to be from the same socially-disadvantaged group. |
| Applicants must *request* Priority Points and *demonstrate* eligibility for one priority category. |
| Priority Points will be awarded in both the general funds competition and the Reserved Funds competitions should Reserved Funds become available, as applicable. |
| It is the Agency’s position that Harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch. Thus, Harvester applicants are NOT eligible to receive Priority Points or Reserved Funds, as applicable, for Beginning Farmers or Ranchers, Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers, Operators of Small or Medium-Sized Farms structured as Family Farms, or Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives. Harvester operations may request Priority Points and/or Reserved Funds for a qualifying MTVC project. |

**To Request Priority Points**

Check *only one* categoryand provide the supporting documentation indicated for that *single* category to demonstrate eligibility.

☐Beginning Farmer or Rancher\*

☐Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher\*

☐Mid-Tier Value Chain Project

☐Operator of a Small- or Medium-sized Farm or Ranch that is structured as a Family Farm or Ranch

☐Farmer or Rancher Cooperative

*\*To receive* ***Priority Points*** *for a Beginning Farmer or Rancher or a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, applicant ownership or membership by BFRs or SDFRs must be 51 percent or more of total ownership or membership, and the project must demonstrate a contribution to farming opportunities for BFRs.*

**To Request** **Reserved Funds**

**Note: Per the NOFA, Reserved Funds will only be made available if FY2014 funding becomes available during the application period under the published Notice.**

Check only one category and provide the supporting documentation indicated for that single category to demonstrate eligibility.

☐Beginning Farmer or Rancher (BFR)\*

☐Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher (SDFR)\*

☐ Mid-Tier Value Chain Project (MTVC)

*\*To receive* ***Reserved Funds*** *for a Beginning Farmers or Ranchers or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers, applicant ownership or membership by Beginning Farmers or Ranchers or Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers must be 100 percent, and the project must demonstrate a benefit to Beginning Farmers or Ranchers.*

NOTE: For **Tribal and tribal entity** applications, enrolled Tribal members that will benefit from, or receive increased opportunities as a result of the proposed project are eligible Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. Eligible Tribal and tribal entity applicants must self-certify that the proposed project contributes to opportunities for, or benefits, Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. The authorized representative of the applicant (the representative who signs form SF424) may certify on behalf of all tribal members served by the proposed project.

If a Tribal or tribal entity applicant, is serving in part Tribal members and non-Tribal member agriculture producers, a brief narrative description should be provided that explains that situation, provide a percentage breakdown of Tribal members and non-Tribal member agriculture producers included in the proposed project and provide detailed information regarding the non-Tribal member agriculture producers and whether or not they are Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.

### APPENDIX E.1 Priority Points and/or Reserved Funding

### Beginning Farmer or Rancher

*Refer to the instructions in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Priority Points and* [*7 CFR 4284.922(c)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *for Reserved Funds. Harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch and are not eligible to receive Priority Points or Reserved Funds for a BFR.*

☐I am individual directly engaged in farming who has not, or an entity in which **none\*** of the individual owners or members have owned and operated a farm or a ranch for more than 10 years; and I or the owners or members of the entity are Independent Producers directly engaged in farming or ranching, as defined in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml).

☐\*I am requesting Priority Points, and certify that ownership or membership by Beginning Farmers or Ranchers is 51 percent or more of total ownership or membership, and that the project demonstrates a *contribution* *to farming opportunities* for Beginning Farmers or Ranchers.

☐\*I am requesting Reserved Funds, and certify that my or the entity’s ownership or membership by Beginning Farmers or Ranchers is 100 percent, and that the project demonstrates a *benefit* to Beginning Farmers or Ranchers.

* Total number of owner/members of the applicant organization \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Total number of owner/members that qualify as a Beginning Farmers or Ranchers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Total percentage of ownership/membership by Beginning Farmers or Ranchers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attach documentation for items 1 – 3 below**

1. A statement from the individual owner(s) or members of the applicant organization describing the length and nature of their individual farm or ranch *ownership and operations* experience in the previous 10 years. Or, as applicable, a copy of or excerpt from the applicant’s organizational documents that shows the applicant’s composition of Beginning Farmers or Ranchers owner/members. The Beginning Farmers or Ranchers’ past experience and activity is not limited to the current farm or ranch that is the subject of the VAPG application, but must include all prior *farm* *ownership and operations* experience in the previous 10 years.

1. One IRS Form 1040 (individual) or 1065 (partnership/LLC) or some other income tax form from the previous 10 years from *each* of the individual owner(s) or members of the applicant organization showing that *each* owner or member did NOT file a Schedule F (individual) or a K1 (partnership/LLC) or some other form for farm income at least one year in the previous 10 years. In lieu of an applicable IRS Form, a letter from a certified public accountant or attorney certifying that *each* participant meets the Beginning Farmers or Ranchers eligibility requirements is acceptable.
2. A description of how the VAPG project either (1) *contributes* to farming opportunitiesfor Beginning Farmers or Ranchers for Priority Points only, or (2) *benefits* Beginning Farmers or Ranchers for Reserved Funds.

### APPENDIX E.2 Priority Points and/or Reserved Funding

### Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher

Page 1 of 2

*Refer to the instructions in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Priority Points and* [*7 CFR 4284.922(c)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *for Reserved Funds. Harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch and are not eligible to receive Priority Points or Reserved Funds for a Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher.*

☐I am an individual who is directly engaged in farming or ranching, or an *entity* solely owned by, or with 100 percent\* membership by, individuals who are directly engaged in farming or ranching, as defined in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml); and am a member of a socially-disadvantaged group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities.

☐\*I am requesting **Priority Points**, and certify that ownership or membership by Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers is 51 percent or more of total ownership or membership, and that the project demonstrates a *contribution* *to farming opportunities* for Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.

☐\*I am requesting **Reserved Funds**, and certify that ownership or membership by Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers is 100 percent, and that the project *benefits* Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.

*\*Membership composition of the socially-disadvantaged farmers or ranchers does not have to be from the same socially-disadvantaged group.*

**Attach documentation for the following items:**

1. A self-certification statement (see below) from *each* of the individual owner/members of the applicant organization to evidence their eligibility as a SDFR. Each individual owner/member of the applicant organization that identify themselves as a SDFR must complete the self-certification form below\*.
2. A description of how the VAPG project either (1) *contributes* to farming opportunitiesfor SDFRs for Priority Points only, or (2) benefits SDFRs for Reserved Funds.

*\*For Tribal and tribal entity applications, enrolled Tribal members that will benefit from, or receive increased opportunities as a result of the proposed project are eligible Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. Eligible Tribal and tribal entity applicants must self-certify that the proposed project contributes to opportunities for, or benefits, Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers. The authorized representative of the applicant (the representative who signs form SF424) may certify on behalf of all tribal members served by the proposed project.*

*If a Tribal or tribal entity applicant, is serving in part Tribal members and non-Tribal member agriculture producers, a brief narrative description should be provided that explains that situation, provide a percentage breakdown of Tribal members and non-Tribal member agriculture producers included in the proposed project and provide detailed information regarding the non-Tribal member agriculture producers and whether or not they are Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers.*

***SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMER OR RANCHER (SDFR) CERTIFICATION***

*I certify that I am a farmer or rancher AND that I am a member of a socially-disadvantaged group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice.*

E.2 SFDR

Page 2 of 2

Name of Farm Entity: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Owners: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Owners Qualifying as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total percentage of ownership/membership by SDFRs \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Signature of Each Socially Disadvantaged Owner** | **Date** | **Indicate the Race, Ethnicity or Gender of the Socially Disadvantaged Group the Owner is Identified With** |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |
| 6. |  |  |
| 7. |  |  |
| 8. |  |  |
| 9. |  |  |
| 10. |  |  |

Add additional rows or pages as necessary.

**SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMER OR RANCHER (SDFR) CERTIFICATION** (For Tribal Applicants Only)

[insert certification for tribes and tribal entities per #5 above]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorized Tribal Representative (same as SF 424)

### APPENDIX E.3 Priority Points and/or Reserved Funding

### Mid-Tier Value Chain

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*Applicants must refer to the instructions in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Priority Points and* [*7 CFR 4284.922(c)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Reserved Funds. Harvester operations may request Priority Points and/or Reserved Funds for a qualifying Mid-Tier Value Chain project.*

Applicants may only request Priority Points and/or Reserved Funds for a MTVC project if the application demonstrates the following eligibility:

**Mid-Tier Value Chain–** Local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added agricultural products in a manner that:

1. Targets and strengthens the profitability and competitiveness of small- and medium-sized farms and ranches that are structured as a Family Farm; and
2. Obtains agreement from an eligible Agricultural Producer Group, Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, or Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business that is engaged in the value-chain on a marketing strategy.

*Note: For Mid-Tier Value Chain projects only, applicant ownership of the raw agricultural commodity through the processing of the value-added product is not required, as long as the proposal demonstrates an increase in customer base and an increase in revenue returns to the applicant producers supplying the majority of the raw agricultural commodity for the project. However, applicants must currently own and produce more than 50 percent of the agricultural commodity to which value will be added.*

☐Applicant is requesting **Priority Points** for a Mid-Tier Value project.

☐Applicant is requesting **Reserved Funds** for a Mid-Tier Value project.

☐Applicant certifies that the project meets requirements for a Mid-Tier Value proposal, including development of a Local or Regional Supply Network, as defined in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml), and has attached the supporting documentation described below.

**Attach documentation for the elements below**

1. Describe how ownership of the agricultural commodity and/or value-added product will transfer through the value-chain to the ultimate benefit (increase in customer base and increase in revenue returns) of the participating Independent Producers.

*[Insert description]*

1. Demonstrate that the *project* proposes development of a *Local or Regional Supply Network* of interconnected business enterprises (see note 1) through which agricultural products move from production through consumption in a local or regional area of the USA, including a description of the network, its members, and its purpose.

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*[Insert discussion]*

1. Identify and describe *at least two* alliances, linkages or partnerships within the value chain that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market Value-Added Agricultural Products in a manner that benefits Small- or Medium-sized farms or ranches that are structured as a Family Farm or Ranch, including the names of the parties and the nature of their collaboration.

*[Insert discussion]*

1. Demonstrate how the project will increase the profitability and competitiveness of *at least two small- or medium-sized farms or ranches that are structured as a Family Farm or Ranch* (see note 2*)*.

*[Insert discussion]*

1. Document that the eligible Agricultural Producer Group, Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, or Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business*\* applicant organization* has obtained at least one agreement with another member of the supply network that is engaged in the value chain on a marketing strategy; OR that the eligible *Independent Producer* *applicant* has obtained at least one agreement from an *eligible* Agricultural Producer Group, Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, or Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business\* engaged in the value-chain on a marketing strategy (see note 3);

*[Insert discussion]*

1. Demonstrate or reference discussion in the Applicant Eligibility section of the application that the *applicant organization*  currently owns and produces more than 50 percent of the raw agricultural commodity that will be used for the value-added product; AND

*[Insert discussion or reference]*

1. Demonstrate or reference discussion in the Project Eligibility section of the application that the project will result in an increase in customer base and that a greater portion of the revenue derived from the marketing, processing, or physical segregation of the agricultural commodity will be available to the *applicant producers* supplying the majority of the raw agricultural commodity for the project.

*[Insert discussion or reference]*

*[Note 1: Examples of business enterprises in the supply chain may include Agricultural Producers for aggregation to meet demand, processors, storage facilities, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, consumers, and entities that organize or provide technical or marketing assistance for development of such agricultural based networks.]*

*[Note 2: The application must include sufficient documentation to demonstrate that each of the benefitting small- or medium-sized farms or ranches are structured as a Family Farm or Ranch (ownership and operations), and do not exceed the three-year average maximum gross sales of agricultural products. See the definitions at* [*7 CFR 4284.902*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml) *for Small Farm, Medium-sized Farm, Family Farm, and Immediate Family. Farms that are NOT 100 percent owned by blood-related or married parties or immediate family members, or do not meet the family labor and management requirements or annual gross sales of agricultural commodity limitations do not qualify as small or medium-sized Family Farms.]*

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*[Note 3: For Planning Grants, examples of agreements may include letters of commitment or intent to partner on marketing, distribution or processing; and should include the names of the parties with a description of the nature of their collaboration. Independent Producer applicants must provide documentation to confirm that the APG/CO-OP/MAJ\* partnering entity meets program eligibility definitions in 7 CFR 4284.920, 923, and 924. In this context, the applicant IP’s APG/CO-OP/MAJ\* partnering entity does not need to supply any of the raw agricultural commodities for the project.*

\* APG = Agricultural Producer Group

CO-OP = Farmer or Rancher Cooperative

MAJ = Majority Controlled Producer-based Business

MTVC = Mid-Tier Value Chain

### APPENDIX E.4 Priority Points

### Operator of a Small- or Medium-sized Farm or Ranch

### Structured as a Family Farm or Ranch (SMFFR)

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*Applicants must refer to the instructions in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Priority Points for SMFFR.*

*Applicants may only request* ***Priority Points*** *for a SMFFR if the application demonstrates the following eligibility:*

1. *Applicant is structured as a* ***Family Farm or Ranch*** *that produces agricultural commodities for sale in sufficient quantity to be recognized as a farm and not a rural residence, where owners are primarily responsible for the daily physical labor and management, hired help only supplements family labor, and all owners are related by blood or marriage or are Immediate Family; AND*
2. *Applicant has* ***averaged $1,000,000 or less in annual gross sales*** *of agricultural commodities in the* ***previous three years.***

*Examples of qualifying applicants in this category might include a farming operation owned by a sole proprietor, a husband and wife, a parent and child, a brother and sister, or a partnership or Limited Liability Company where all the owners are related by blood, marriage, or are immediate family members; whose owners are primarily responsible for the daily physical labor and management activities on the farm; and the farm has averaged $1,000,000 or less in annual gross sales of agricultural commodities in the previous three years.*

***Not Eligible:***

* *Applicant organizations that are not 100 percent owned by blood-related or married parties or Immediate Family members, or that does not meet the family labor and management requirements or annual gross sales of agricultural commodity limitations.*
* *A traditional Agricultural Producer Group (APG), Farmer or Rancher Cooperative (CO-OP) or Majority-Controlled Producer Based Business (MAJ) applicant type does NOT qualify for Priority Points in this category because the applicant organization is not legally structured as a Family Farm or Ranch. Even if the APG, CO-OP or MAJ applicant represents Family Farms, these applicant types do NOT qualify for Priority Points in this category.*
* *It is the Agency’s position that Harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch. Thus, Harvester applicants are not eligible to receive Priority Points for a FFR.*

☐I certify that I am the Operator of a small or medium-sized farm or ranch that is structured as a Family Farm or Ranch, and that its ownership and operations meet all associated program requirements in the definitions in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml) for ***Family Farm*, *Immediate Family***, and ***Small Farm* or *Medium-sized******Farm***, including having averaged $1,000,000 or less in annual gross sales of agricultural commodities in the previous three years.

☐ I am requesting **Priority Points** for a SMFFR and have provided the information below.

**Complete the following information:**

List your farm’s Annual Gross Sales of agricultural commodities for *each* of the previous three years, then add these together to get your Total Annual Gross Sales for the previous three years, and then divide by 3 to get the Average Annual Gross Sales in the previous 3 years:

YR 2012: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ + YR 2011: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ + YR 2010: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ =

Total Annual Gross Sales for YRS 2010-2012: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Divided by 3 (years) = Average Annual Gross Sales in Previous 3 Years: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(Small Farm Operator = $250,000 or less; Medium Farm Operator = $1,000,000 or less)

List the names of all owners of the applicant farm or ranch and identify the blood, marriage or immediate Family relationships of all owners of the farm:

*[Insert list]*

Are all owners of this farm or ranch related by blood, marriage, or are Immediate Family members, as defined in the [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml)? ☐YES ☐ NO

List the primary daily physical labor and management tasks necessary to operate the farm, and indicate which owner(s) are primarily responsible for these tasks:

*[Insert list]*

Are the owners of this farm or ranch primarily responsible for the daily physical labor and management of the farm? ☐YES ☐ NO

Does hired help *only* supplement family labor on this farm? ☐YES ☐ NO

Describe the daily physical labor and management of the farm**.**

*[Insert description-attach additional pages if needed]*

### APPENDIX E.5 Priority Points

### Farmer or Rancher Cooperative (CO-OP)

*Applicants must refer to the instructions in* [*7 CFR 4284.922(d)*](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-922.xml) *to document eligibility for Priority Points for a CO-OP. Note: It is the Agency’s position that Harvester operations do not meet the definition requirements for a Farm or Ranch. Thus, Harvester applicants are not eligible to receive Priority Points for a CO-OP.*

☐I certify that my organization meets eligibility requirements for a Farmer or Rancher Cooperative, as defined in [7 CFR 4284.902](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title7-vol15/xml/CFR-2013-title7-vol15-sec4284-902.xml); and is a business owned and controlled by *eligible* Independent Producers that is ***either*** LEGALLY INCORPORATED as a Farmer or Rancher COOPERATIVE, or is IDENTIFIED by the State in which it operates as a Farmer or Rancher owned and cooperatively-operated business.

☐ I am requesting **Priority Points** as a **Farmer or Rancher Cooperative** and have provided all applicable certification statements and supporting documentation indicated for this single category in the Applicant Eligibility section of this application.

**No additional supporting documentation required for Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives**

**Optional Feedback**

Please note that your response is “OPTIONAL” only and will not affect your application submission and ability to receive an award.  This is merely an option to allow us the opportunity to understand your experience during this application process as well as listen to additional suggestions you may have to improve future processes.

1. Which VAPG Grant Type did you apply for?

* Planning
* Working Capital

1. On a scale of 1 through 5, please rate the overall format and organization of the application toolkit.

* 1 extremely dissatisfied
* 2 dissatisfied
* 3 somewhat satisfied
* 4 satisfied
* 5 extremely satisfied

1. On a scale of 1 through 5, please rate the clarity of the requirements and instructions in the application toolkit.

* 1 extremely dissatisfied
* 2 dissatisfied
* 3 somewhat satisfied
* 4 satisfied
* 5 extremely satisfied

1. To develop and submit your application, did you request assistance from the following?

* USDA RD State Office Staff
* USDA RD National Office Staff
* AgMRC Website or Training
* Private Grant Writer
* Other Grant Recipients
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please provide additional comments and suggestions on how we might improve the application process for VAPG:

Please submit to cp-grants@wdc.usda.gov

Thank you for your interest to the VAPG program.