

## VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT Food Safety

### General

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program assists agricultural producers enter value-added activities to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. Expenses related to obtaining Food Safety certification, and to make changes and upgrades to practices and Equipment to improve Food Safety related to a post-harvest Value-Added Agricultural Product are eligible for the VAPG program.

### Some key aspects to note about Food Safety as it relates to the VAPG program:

- Food Safety refers to conditions and practices that preserve the quality of food to prevent Contamination and food-borne illnesses.
- Grant funds are available for paying costs incurred in obtaining post-harvest Food Safety certification; and using up to \$6,500 of the amount of a grant (can be matched with \$6,500 of applicant funds for a total expense of \$13,000) to purchase or upgrade post-harvest Equipment to improve Food Safety.
- If the Applicant is submitting a Food Safety related application and applying for Food Safety Reserved funds, the Applicant must describe the need or requirement for training, certifications, and/or supplies and Equipment.
- The Food Safety Simplified and Reserved Fund application is for Applicants where more than 50 percent of the Project Cost is for post-harvest Food Safety purposes related to the processing and/or marketing of a Value-Added Agricultural Product

### Example of Eligible Post-Harvest Food Safety Project Expenses:

- Cleanable food contact surfaces, sorting and prep tables, portable wash tanks, and bins. Small-scale box/produce washers, and salad spinners.
- Some reach-in coolers, cool Bot controllers for and including window air conditioning units.
- Portable handwashing and toilet stations (where Equipment is shared with pre-harvest field operations, expense should be pro-rated).
- Food and wash-water testing tools, temperature/humidity monitoring.
- Upgraded cleanable or single use product packaging, food storage containers, liners.
- Employee/visitor signage regarding proper Food Safety practices.
- Cleaning and hygiene supplies (gloves, hairnets, antibacterial soap, single use towels, first aid kits, other sanitation supplies).
- Applicant operated field packing activities.

### Example Ineligible Food Safety Project Expenses:

- Food Safety activities that are tied to any agriculture production (see 7 CFR 4284.926 (a)(11)).
- Infrastructure improvements (see 7 CFR 4284.926 (a)(3)(4), and (16)).
- Any processing, packing or packaging Equipment requiring plumbing, electrical, or other

facility alterations or upgrades (see 7 CFR 4284.926 (a)(3)(4)).

- Individual components or fittings of fixed or otherwise ineligible Equipment (see 2 CFR 200 definition of Equipment).
- GAP certifications that are cost shared with other USDA programs.

**Resources: Applications must meet ALL program requirements**

- VAPG website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>
- Application Toolkits
- [Program Regulation 7 CFR 4284-J published September 16, 2024](#)
- Program Information Sheets
- Rural Development State Offices: 1-800-670-6553, then press “1” or <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.
- Agricultural Marketing Resource Center website: <http://www.agmrc.org>