

## Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program Orientation and Enrollment Questions and Answers

Question 1	Answer 1
<b>The application submission period begins May 15th, when are the final applications due?</b>	Applications will be accepted until 11:59 pm EDT, August 13, 2020.
<b>How long does it take to receive a CAGE Code?</b>	It can take up to ten business days to process a CAGE Code request with a new SAM entity registration. You can use the SAM Status Tracker available from the Check Status tab at the top of each page on SAM.gov for a quick check on your registration's status. A Check Status link is also located at the bottom of each page. If you have additional questions specific to your CAGE Code processing, please contact the DLA Customer Interaction Center at <a href="mailto:dlacontactcenter@dla.mil">dlacontactcenter@dla.mil</a> or call Commercial 1-877-352-2255 or DSN 661-7766. If you notice your registration has had a status of "Submitted" for 15 business days or longer, and you have not otherwise been contacted by the IRS or the DLA to correct or update the necessary information, please contact the Federal Service Desk.
<b>How will your different priorities (geographic, interstate corridor, etc) be scored?</b>	Applicants may receive up to 3 percent of their 3 year average fuel sales volume in Administrator priorities contribution toward their overall priority score for each Geographic Diversity criteria selected and as applicable based on the fueling station's physical location.
<b>Are city and county fleet facilities eligible to apply</b>	It can take up to ten business days to process a CAGE Code request with a new SAM entity registration. You can use the SAM Status Tracker available from the Check Status tab at the top of each page on SAM.gov for a quick check on your registration's status. A Check Status link is also located at the bottom of each page. If you have additional questions specific to your CAGE Code processing, please contact the DLA Customer Interaction Center at <a href="mailto:dlacontactcenter@dla.mil">dlacontactcenter@dla.mil</a> or call Commercial 1-877-352-2255 or DSN 661-7766.
<b>The federal register announcement makes a reference on page 6 about existing sites being limited to 25% of cost. Does "existing site" mean a retailer that already has E15 or E85, or is that an existing gas station as opposed to new construction?</b>	25 % cost share for UST/systems applies to stations in existence as of May 15, 2020, when the HBIIIP application window opened.
<b>If a project is already done the planning and permitting stages, can the grant funds still be available for the remainder of the work?</b>	If you notice your registration has had a status of "Submitted" for 15 business days or longer, and you have not otherwise been contacted by the IRS or the DLA to correct or update the necessary information, please contact the Federal Service Desk.
<b>I am a single store owner who is working on a second location. My construction for the second store is scheduled for late Summer. Do I need to apply twice if I want to apply for the grant for both stores?</b>	Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million. Eligible project costs must occur during the grant period which begins once the applicant has been selected and the grant agreement is authorized by USDA and the grant recipient.
<b>A Company with multiple locations files one application including all locations. Will each site be evaluated separately or will the application as a whole be evaluated.</b>	The application will be reviewed as a whole and must comply with all HBIIIP application requirements, including meeting the \$5 million cap per applicant and \$1 for \$1 matching funds.

<p><b>At existing facilities, a 25 percent cost share is available for underground storage tank installation not to exceed \$1.25M. Does the 25 percent cost share and cap apply to tanks or all UST components located below-grade at a retail facility?</b></p> <p><b>May an applicant meeting the \$1.25M threshold use the remaining \$3.75M for above-grade components?</b></p>	<p>The 25 percent cap will apply to all UST costs, including the below ground infrastructure. If additional above ground infrastructure related to making the higher blend pumps and tank operational are required, these are eligible costs and can be funded at the 50 percent cost cap with the HBIP cost share but must comply at the same time with the 25 percent cost share for USTs not exceeding \$1.25 million.</p>
<p><b>Can a project start prior to the execution date of the grant or when the grant is awarded and still qualify?</b></p>	<p>Eligible costs for HBIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p>
<p><b>Would removal of old tanks and infrastructure and disposal costs associated with removal of the old tanks be part of the project cost allowance to coincide with installation of new tanks and infrastructure?</b></p>	<p>The 25 percent cap will apply to all UST costs, including the below ground infrastructure. If additional above ground infrastructure related to making the higher blend pumps and tank operational are required, these are eligible costs and can be funded at the 50 percent cost cap with the HBIP cost share but must comply at the same time with the 25 percent cost share for USTs not exceeding \$1.25 million.</p>
<p><b>How do we specify level 2 access in the enrollment process?</b></p>	<p>Please see the HBIP application guide for the complete checklist of the materials needed to apply at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a>. Because of the restricted circumstances brought about by COVID-19, a Level 2, E-Authentication access is no longer required for access to HBIP online application system. A Level 1 E-Authentication clearance may be used for up to 1 year while applying for the HBIP grant.</p>
<p><b>Can you discuss reporting requirements after grant awards are made?</b></p>	<p>Yes, fueling stations will include point of sale reporting for up to 5 years post project completion and for fuel distribution facilities will include reporting of throughput volumes of all fuels including Higher Blend fuels.</p>
<p><b>Will it be a first come, first serve award?</b></p>	<p>No, the application period opened on May 15 and will close on August 13th at 11:59 pm EDT. Applications will be collected, reviewed and scored for selection at that time.</p>
<p><b>What if not all the money is spent - will you then increase the \$5 million cap?</b></p>	<p>There will not be an increase to the \$5 million cap on this solicitation of applications. The number of awards will depend on the number of eligible participants and the total amount of requested funds. In the unlikely event that every successful applicant is awarded the maximum amount available of \$5 million, 20 awards will be made. The Agency intends/expects to make approximately 150 awards and provide assistance to 1,500 locations from this solicitation.</p>
<p><b>For better understanding, can a applicant apply for ethanol locations under the ethanol program, then another applicant under the biodiesel? Is the funding cap of \$5 million combined with both?</b></p>	<p>Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.</p>
<p><b>We own a family heating oil business. Does this grant apply to updating blending equipment for biodiesel into heating oil delivered to customers</b></p>	<p>Yes, approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners, and home heating oil distribution facilities), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>How long does it take to complete the DUNS/SAM/E-Authentication process?</b></p>	<p>Allow up to two business days to obtain a DUNS number, but it can occur in one business day. E-Authentication process can take up to seven days once the verification form is submitted to SAMS. Obtaining a SAM CAGE code is taking as many as 15 business days due to the restricted circumstances of COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>How did you determine geographical targets?</b></p>	<p>Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.</p>

<p><b>Can you advise on what the requirements are for reimbursement? What documentation must you provide - Cancelled checks etc?</b></p>	<p>The grant agreement will specifically outline the requirement for requesting reimbursement for awardees and will follow Standard Form (SF) protocols similar if not identical to those provided in the SF-425.</p>
<p><b>Is renewable diesel fuel eligible for these funds?</b></p>	<p>No, but approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>We are a small biodiesel blending distribution facility and are interested in utilizing this program to build a fueling station for higher blend ethanol and biodiesel. Would we apply as a fuel distribution facility or a fuel station (10 or less)?</b></p>	<p>Only one application per applicant is to be accepted. It will be at the determination of the applicant to consider how to apply. The HBIIP Notice of Funding Availability supports “fueling stations” for higher blends of ethanol -- \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher.</p> <p>A fuel distribution facility project/grant must be for implementation activities involving higher blends of biodiesel, B20 or higher; greater than 5 percent biodiesel.</p>
<p><b>What information is required in the application?</b></p>	<p>Please see the HBIIP application guide for the complete checklist of the materials needed to apply at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>Is this a one time opportunity or will the program be available on an ongoing basis?</b></p>	<p>Currently, the HBIIP is offered at \$100 million for the FY 2020 and the application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.</p>
<p><b>Please explain what fueling stations and fuel distribution facilities are? Does this include a truck stop?</b></p>	<p>A fueling station can be a truck stop in that it distributes and offers the higher blend fuel to the consumer for a transportation vehicle use.</p>
<p><b>The 25% cost share up to \$1.25 million is for what projects?</b></p>	<p>There is no allowance for using HBIIP funds on tanks at any NEW construction sites. BUT, HBIIP funds for tanks can be used on an existing fueling stations that requires upgraded, and/or retrofitted and/or additional underground storage tanks may request assistance of up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs or up to \$1,250,000, whichever is the lesser. They are eligible for any required equipment including, but not limited to, the tank, piping, piping containment sumps, underground pumping equipment, including the submersible pump or suction pump, release detection equipment, spill equipment (spill buckets), overfill equipment, fuel dispensers/pumps, or other equipment.</p>
<p><b>Will USDA be reviewing types/number of applications submitted number of apps coming in and perhaps report that our generally/state specific in the event they are lacking 40% target small retailers before applications timeline closes?</b></p>	<p>HBIIP applications are considered proprietary information. No public reporting of application status or events will be made until the date all HBIIP Awards are announced. Currently, the HBIIP is offered at \$100 million for the FY 2020 and the application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT. The Targeted Assistance Goal is a priority, as well as geographic diversity. Applicants will be informed in writing by the RBCS as to the funding determination of the application. Applicants selected for funding, will receive a signed notice of Federal award containing instructions on requirements necessary to proceed with execution and performance of the award. Applicants not selected for funding will be notified in writing and informed of any review and appeal rights. Awards to successfully appealed applications will be limited to available funding. Changes to this process are not expected.</p>
<p><b>If you submit 10 stations on a single application, is there a chance the USDA would select some stations and not select other stations within the same application?</b></p>	<p>Applications that make it into the competition will be competed in whole; no applications will be competed in part. All award considerations will be on a discretionary basis. In determining the amount of an award, the RBCS will consider the amount requested, subject to: (a) The maximum cost-share amount of 50 percent of total eligible project costs, or a lesser amount when deemed appropriate, and/or (b) the Maximum Award amount of \$5 million, and/or (c) available funds;</p>

	whichever is least, as applicable.
<b>Is woody biomass eligible?</b>	No, the HBIIIP is an opportunity for ethanol and biodiesel biofuels.
<b>How long will they have to spend these funds. What is lowest amount you can receive in this grant.</b>	There is no minimum amount for an application. Once a grant agreement has been fully executed, the HBIIIP awardee will have 18 months to complete the construction and financially close out the grant period. Costs incurred during the grant period are the only eligible costs that can receive the HBIIIP cost share funding,
<b>Can previously planned Q2 purchases for upgrades be reimbursed through these grant funds, or do the purchases need to be made directly with grant funds?</b>	Once a grant agreement has been fully executed, the HBIIIP awardee will have 18 months to complete the construction and financially close out the grant period. Costs incurred during the grant period are the only eligible costs that can receive the HBIIIP cost share funding,
<b>when does the application process close?</b>	The application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.
<b>Just to clarify, this is not just for rural areas?</b>	The HBIIIP opportunity is open to all eligible applicants with eligible sites in the United States, regardless of their rural or metropolitan local. However, geographic diversity is a priority in terms of scoring higher in the competitive selection process. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.
<b>For those who wish to be considered for qualifying under the 40% targeted assistance goal threshold- Is this threshold limited for companies comprised of no more than 10 stations or, companies which are applying for assistance for 10 locations or fewer?</b>	The HBIIIP established a Targeted Assistance Goal for applicants ( <u>owners</u> <u>owning</u> the fewest number of transportation fueling stations/locations (and owning at least one). Approximately 40 percent of funds will be made available for activities/ investments related to upgrading or installing equipment to make a transportation fueling facilities fully compatible to dispense/sell higher blends of fuel ethanol and/or biodiesel. USDA Rural Development expects this Targeted Assistance to be exhausted by applicants owning 10 fueling stations/locations or fewer.
<b>We are in process of building a new bulk plant and considering Bio diesel, ethanol, need to evaluate cost vs benefits and any grant \$\$ available. Can you please comment?</b>	Approximately \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.
<b>We are a residential heating oil provider in the Seattle area. We also provide commercial generator fuel. It is our goal and expectation to blend biodiesel with all of our diesel starting this winter at B5 and above. We would be interested in adding an underground storage tank designated for biodiesel only, and a new loading rack that would allow us to blend the biodiesel effectively and efficiently so we can provide various blends to our customers. Would these needs qualify for your program?</b>	Yes, but only for biodiesel blends of B20 or higher, greater than 5 percent biodiesel. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners; including home heating oil distributors), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.

<p><b>Is this program currently funded, or does it require congressional approval before being funded?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the program is currently funded. CCC is making available up to \$100 million in the form of cost-share grants to eligible entities to assist with the implementation of activities to expand the infrastructure for renewable fuels derived from agricultural products produced in the United States. HBIIIP will be administered on behalf of CCC under the general supervision of RBCS.</p>
<p><b>Is it a \$5 million cap per project or per company?</b></p>	<p>The \$5 million cap applies to the owner who is the applicant. Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.</p>
<p><b>We are a public agency that owns and develops CNG fueling stations which dispense renewable natural gas. We do not dispense liquid fuel. Do we qualify for HBIIIP funding in any way?</b></p>	<p>No, HBIIIP is intended to expand access to <u>transportation biofuels</u>, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Is this program only available for projects that start after the grant has been approved. If I have a project that is scheduled to be done in late July is that project not eligible?</b></p>	<p>It is not likely that a construction taking place in July will fit into the award timeline or be beneficial when an applicant considers the following: Eligible costs for HBIIIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p> <p>The application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.</p>
<p><b>How does renewable diesel qualify for this program, if not are there other programs in the USDA that include renewable diesel, thank you</b></p>	<p>Renewable diesel does NOT fit into HBIIIP, only biodiesel fits. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation fueling</u> facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Are retrofits and upgrades on above-ground equipment eligible for 50% cost share, or 25% cost share?</b></p>	<p>Yes, retrofits and upgrades are eligible and the above ground eligible costs are awarded at a rate of 50 percent of the cost, with each applicant (not stations, but applicant combined) capped at receiving a maximum of \$5 million. However, an aboveground storage tank is still considered cost shared at 25 percent. In addition, there is no allowance for using HBIIIP funds on tanks at any NEW construction sites. BUT, HBIIIP funds for tanks can be used on an existing fueling stations that requires upgraded, and/or retrofitted and/or additional underground storage tanks may request assistance of up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs or up to \$1,250,000, whichever is the lesser. They are eligible for any required equipment including, but not limited to, the tank, piping, piping containment sumps, underground pumping equipment, including the submersible pump or suction pump, release detection equipment, spill equipment (spill buckets), overflow equipment, fuel dispensers/pumps, or other equipment.</p>
<p><b>Do rural areas get priority points? If yes, what defines 'rural'?</b></p>	<p>A focus for goals may include rural if the area fits into the geographic diversity and targeted assistance goals. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more</p>

	broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.
<p><b>We have a chain of 14 stores, what are the chances of our small chain having a chance at these funds. Seems as though you want to limit it to under 10 chains.</b></p>	<p>The likelihood of funding is based largely on the overall score of the application. A total of 60 percent of the funds is still available for owners of 10 or more transportation fueling sites. Administrator priorities and Targeted Assistance are designed to give a “nudge” not a “push” to an applicant’s priority score.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The opportunity to achieve a higher priority score is directly available to All applicants and is a function of:</li> <li>- The activities selected in the fueling station worksheet</li> <li>-The amount of requested funds.</li> <li>-The basis on which all HBIIIP applications will compete is, “gallons of HB fuels contributed to the fuel stream per dollar of requested funds,”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Even though it is a 90-day application window, are funds based on a 1st come-1st serve basis? Meaning, if a site is one of the 1st in its region to apply, will they automatically receive funds (assuming application is acceptable).</b></p>	<p>Evaluation, ranking and competing of applications deemed eligible to compete will occur after the application window closes at 11:59 pm EDT on August 13, 2020. Applications that have the same priority score and the same submittal date, both applicants will be notified and given the option to lower the grant requests and accept the remaining funds. If an applicant agrees to lower its grant request, the applicant must certify that the purposes of the project will be met and provide the remaining total funds needed to complete the project.</p>
<p><b>Would this program support the build out of a bio fuel production facility? or is it just for fuel supply stations? we are located in upstate new york are we eligible to apply since we are not in new England? thank you</b></p>	<p>HBIIIP is intended to expand access to <u>transportation biofuels</u>, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>In order to get the application in right away, should the dollar amount applied for be based on estimates if formal proposals have not been received yet for project.</b></p>	<p>Cost share estimates maybe used and should comply with the 50 percent cap and \$5 million cap per applicant. It is also prudent to consider that RBCS retains the right to make adjustments. Transportation fueling stations/facilities applications should take special care to provide evidentiary documentation in support of their proposed activities in the HBIIIP Project Technical Report. In the event of suspect, overstated, or otherwise unsubstantiated claims, the Agency reserves the right to adjust an application’s priority score accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Can you describe the environmental review documents you are looking for?</b></p>	<p>For the RBCS to consider an application, the application must include all environmental review documents with supporting documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1970 and as referenced in Section IV.B of this Notice. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of</p>

	<p>Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a>.</p>
<p><b>It was mentioned that stronger consideration will be given for the Western 22 states and New England states, but will Southeast states still be eligible?</b></p>	<p>Yes, all owners with transportation fueling sites in the U.S. will be eligible to apply provided they are in compliance with all other applicable federal, state and local laws and ordinances. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/ participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.</p>
<p><b>How can we determine grant period? We are halfway in a project to add b11, e15 and e85 to a site? Thanks</b></p>	<p>Eligible costs for HBIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p> <p>The application period opened on May 15 and will close on August 13th at 11:59 pm EDT. Applications will be collected, reviewed and scored for selection at that time. Costs that are eligible will be incurred during the grant period which begins after full execution of the grant agreement following application selection.</p>
<p><b>Do you know if a similar program will be release for RNG/CNG type fueling facilities?</b></p>	<p>No, the CCC is making available up to \$100 million in the form of cost-share grants to eligible entities to assist with the implementation of activities to expand the infrastructure for renewable fuels derived from agricultural products produced in the United States. HBIP will be administered on behalf of CCC under the general supervision of RBCS. RBCS is not aware of any other similar program, but complimentary programs do exist. We encourage review of programs offered by the Department of Energy and other Rural Development Business programs, as well as those at the US Economic Development Agency.</p>
<p><b>Do we have to do the environmental checklist for new UST installs?</b></p>	<p>For the RBCS to consider an application, the application must include all environmental review documents with supporting documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1970 and as referenced in Section IV.B of this Notice. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of</p>

	Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a> .
<b>Thank you for today's information. Where can I access the slides after the presentation?</b>	The slides for this presentation and recorded webinar will be posted on the HBIIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a>
<b>Is this program for motor fuels only? Or does it cover blends of B20 and higher used for home heating as is common in New England?</b>	Yes. Although, HBIIIP is intended principally to expand access to <u>transportation biofuels</u> , namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and to fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher, including home heating oil.
<b>Does geographic preference apply to terminals/distribution facilities or just fueling stations?</b>	Not to fuel distribution facilities. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is afforded to transportation fueling stations to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.
<b>How much land is required for a truck stop?</b>	The environmental requirements of infrastructure installation sites will require more in depth and site specific review. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a> .
<b>What about biogas from wastewater treatment facilities?</b>	Biogas from wastewater treatment is not eligible for the HBIIIP grant opportunity. HBIIIP is intended to expand access to transportation biofuels, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible



	<p>implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Is dairy digester biogas/methane an eligible fuel?</b></p>	<p>A dairy digester biogas/methane is not eligible for the HBIIIP grant opportunity. HBIIIP is intended to expand access to transportation biofuels, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Assuming a company is granted and accepts funding, would there be backend/long-term commitments with USDA or any other governmental entity?</b></p>	<p>Following the successful execution of the grant expenditures and infrastructure installation, the awardee will need to bi-annually provide performance reporting. The fueling stations performance report will include point of sale reporting for up to 5 years post project completion and for fuel distribution facilities will include reporting of throughput volumes of all fuels including Higher Blend fuels.</p>
<p><b>Are we required to work with our state-level contact?</b></p>	<p>There is no requirement to work with state-level contacts, but in compliance with Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, HBIIIP is providing opportunities for consultation on proposed assistance with State and local governments. Many states have established a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to facilitate this consultation. Instructions for completing this required element and a list of States that maintain a SPOC are available in the HBIIIP online application on the HBIIIP webpage at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>Are these slides somewhere for reference?</b></p>	<p>The slides for this presentation and recorded webinar will be posted on the HBIIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>Tony, today you referenced only fueling stations. Would you anticipate fueling stations will be given high priority over distribution infrastructure?</b></p>	<p>HBIIIP is intended to expand access to <u>transportation biofuels</u>, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Will the grants be distributed through state offices?</b></p>	<p>No, the application intake is submitted electronically to the national office. After electronically submitting an application through the HBIIIP website, the applicant will receive an automated acknowledgement, specifying submission date and time, from the HBIIIP online application system. HBIIIP grants will be administered in accordance with Departmental Regulations, and as otherwise specified in the Notice published on May 5, 2020. Applicants selected for funding, will receive a signed notice of Federal award containing instructions on requirements necessary to proceed with execution and performance of the award. Applicants not selected for funding will be</p>

	<p>notified in writing and informed of any review and appeal rights. Awards to successfully appealed applications will be limited to available funding.</p>
<p><b>I have a gas station in construction as we speak which will be open in July. Will I qualify for a grant</b></p>	<p>It is not likely that a construction taking place in July will fit into the award timeline or be beneficial when an applicant considers the following: Eligible costs for HBIIIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p> <p>The application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.</p>
<p><b>Is the biodiesel portion of the grant only available to terminal facilities or can a retail fueling facilities also apply?</b></p>	<p>The biodiesel portion of the HBIIIP grant opportunity is available to fueling stations and terminals. The \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>If retrofitting existing equipment is a “project engineer” required?</b></p>	<p>Consult your State and local project authorities as well as your Rural Development State Office regarding the requirements of a project engineer for your project. The environmental requirements of infrastructure installation sites may require more in depth and site specific review. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a>.</p>
<p><b>Would a continuing education school in Alabama that produces 100 gallons of Biodiesel a week be eligible for this grant to upgrade equipment?</b></p>	<p>No, HBIIIP is intended to expand access to <u>transportation biofuels</u>, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to <u>transportation</u> fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>

<p><b>Is Hawaii considered a western state?</b></p>	<p>Hawaii was not listed in as one of the Western States of—Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming - in the Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) on May 5, 2020. However, a correction is forthcoming. Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/ participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.</p>
<p><b>could the applicant spend matching dollars first before the grant is approved?</b></p>	<p>No, matching funds and eligible costs are to be incurred and applied during the grant period after application selection and grant agreement are completed.</p>
<p><b>If you do other tank work at the same time as the upgrade for the HBIIIP. How will the cost allocation be made?</b></p>	<p>The work performed on the tank at the new construction site or the existing site and that is not included in the eligible costs by choice or by prohibition under the HBIIIP rules, is not considered an HBIIIP activity. However, environmental compliance at the site is required and evidentiary proof of compliance with applicable federal, state and local ordinances may be required in the application and award processing. An application that fails to provide sufficient environmental review is an incomplete application.</p>
<p><b>Are time labor and materials associated with concrete removal/replacement and the installation of a fueling canopy eligible for grant funding? If yes, will the cost-share be at 50 percent or 25 percent?</b></p>	<p>A fueling canopy is not an eligible cost in association with either a new or existing fueling station or facility. Site preparation for pump or tank installations may be included as an eligible cost for the existing fueling stations. Please note matching funds are comprised of eligible in-kind contributions from third parties and/or cash. In-kind contributions by the applicant cannot be used to meet the matching fund requirement. Matching funds plus grant funds must equal total eligible project cost. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or eligible in-kind contributions. Matching funds/contributions and grant funds may be used only for eligible project purposes, including any contributions exceeding the minimum amount required. Eligible costs for HBIIIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p>
<p><b>What if I qualify for more than one "Applicant Type"? That is, if i have fueling stations and terminating location projects? What do I choose?</b></p>	<p>Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.</p>
<p><b>If we have more than \$5 million in projects, can we apply for more than that amount just in case some projects don't get approved?</b></p>	<p>No, only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.</p>
<p><b>If a retailer wants to retrofit its fuel dispensers and above-ground equipment to offer E15, will that be eligible for a 50% grant (rather than a 25% grant)?</b></p>	<p>Retrofits and upgrades are eligible and the above ground eligible costs are awarded at a rate of 50 percent of the cost, with each applicant (not stations, but applicant combined) capped at receiving a maximum of \$5 million. However, an aboveground storage tank is still considered cost shared at 25 percent. In addition, there is no allowance for using HBIIIP funds on tanks at any NEW construction sites. BUT, HBIIIP funds for tanks can be used on an existing fueling stations that requires upgraded, and/or retrofitted and/or additional underground storage tanks may request assistance of up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs or up to \$1,250,000, whichever is the lesser. They are eligible for any required equipment including, but not limited to, the tank, piping, piping containment sumps, underground pumping equipment, including the submersible pump or suction pump, release detection equipment, spill</p>

	equipment (spill buckets), overfill equipment, fuel dispensers/pumps, or other equipment.
<b>How long will the application process remain open?</b>	The application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.
<b>How many sites can you apply for on one grant? For example under one corp name, but several different sites?</b>	Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million. The number of awards will depend on the number of eligible participants and the total amount of requested funds. In the unlikely event that every successful applicant is awarded the maximum amount available of \$5 million, 20 awards will be made. The Agency intends/expects to make approximately 150 awards and provide assistance to 1,500 locations from this solicitation.
<b>Will the slides from this webinar be made available along with the recording?</b>	Thank you for your feedback. The slides for this presentation and recorded webinar will be posted on the HBIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a>
<b>Are urban areas eligible?</b>	The HBIIP opportunity is open to all eligible applicants with eligible sites in the United States, regardless of their rural or metropolitan local. However, geographic diversity is a priority in terms of scoring higher in the competitive selection process. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.
<b>If I own a fuel terminal and stores, how can we be considered for both?</b>	Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.
<b>If a new station is installing an extra tank for higher blend fuels (for example - retailer plans to sell E10, premium, and diesel - but would need a fourth tank to sell E15 or E85) why would that tank not be eligible for 25% reimbursement?</b>	New stations are NOT eligible to apply HBIIP cost share for any tank installations. The 25 percent cap will apply to all UST costs, including the below ground infrastructure at existing stations. The HBIIP cost share for tanks at existing stations must comply with the 25 percent cost share for USTs not exceeding \$1.25 million all eligible costs included.
<b>Are aboveground storage tanks at distribution facilities eligible? The Federal Register only refers to underground storage tanks.</b>	An aboveground storage tank is still considered cost shared at 25 percent. In addition, there is no allowance for using HBIIP funds on tanks at any NEW construction sites. BUT, HBIIP funds for tanks can be used on an existing fueling stations that requires upgraded, and/or retrofitted and/or additional underground storage tanks may request assistance of up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs or up to \$1,250,000, whichever is the lesser. They are eligible for any required equipment including, but not limited to, the tank, piping, piping containment sumps, underground pumping equipment, including the submersible pump or suction pump, release detection equipment, spill equipment (spill buckets), overfill equipment, fuel dispensers/pumps, or other equipment.
<b>Upon completion of project, how long will it take to receive reimbursement?</b>	Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with USDA to outline the terms of the grant. The grant recipient will be given 18 month from the date of grant agreement acceptance and full execution. Full financial close out of the grant is expected to conclude 90 days following the completion of construction.

<p><b>What if we are in middle of a project, would that be okay to submit a grant for?</b></p>	<p>It is not likely that a construction taking place now will fit into the award timeline or be beneficial when an applicant considers the following: Eligible costs for HBIIIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards.</p>
<p><b>When can I submit my application to HBIIIP?</b></p>	<p>The application submission period runs from May 15 to August 13, 2020 at 11:59 PM EDT.</p>
<p><b>As an Economic Development Corporation as a small town of 2600 people, can we apply for HBIIIP to bring a truck stop to our town?</b></p>	<p>As a new construction site, there are many benefits to be applied for under the HBIIIP opportunity however please be aware that tanks are not eligible for new construction sites. The Economic Development Corporation would be required to be the owner and the applicant. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate. Finally, only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million. To get started please visit our HBIIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>Is non-biodiesel renewable diesel an eligible fuel?</b></p>	<p>No, HBIIIP is intended to expand access to transportation biofuels, namely biodiesel and ethanol. \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>As a terminal owner but not the marketer of the fuel in the terminal are we eligible to participate in the program?</b></p>	<p>Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher. If your terminal is in the biodiesel distribution market, it may be an eligible site for infrastructure installation under the HBIIIP. To further review eligibility please visit our HBIIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>So can you elaborate again on when we would be able to start project in order to take advantage of match funds? Meaning when is the earliest we could start to spend money without worry of missing out of matching funds.</b></p>	<p>Matching funds are comprised of eligible in-kind contributions from third parties and/or cash. In-kind contributions by the applicant cannot be used to meet the matching fund requirement. Matching funds plus grant funds must equal total eligible project cost. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or eligible in-kind contributions. Matching funds/contributions and grant funds may be used only for eligible project purposes, including any contributions exceeding the minimum amount required. Eligible costs for HBIIIP are to be incurred during the grant period. Any work performed before the grant period occurs will be ineligible, however, if a station performed work prior to the start of the grant period it is not necessarily an ineligible site, provided the site work is in compliance with all state and local ordinance requirements and standards. The application period opened on May 15 and will close on August 13th at 11:59 pm EDT. Applications will be collected, reviewed and scored for selection at that</p>

	<p>time. The grant period begins upon full execution of the grant agreement and environmental clearances.</p>
<p><b>Is rolling stock, tank trucks and trailers, an eligible expense?</b></p>	<p>NO. Under the HBIP, funds will be awarded to assist transportation fueling and fuel distribution facilities to convert their facilities through upgrade or installation of equipment required to ensure all equipment is fully compatible with higher blends of ethanol (i.e., greater than 10 percent ethanol) and biodiesel (greater than 5 percent biodiesel). To be eligible for this program, a project's sole purpose must be for the installation, and/or retrofitting, and/or otherwise upgrading of fuel dispensers/ pumps, related/attached equipment, underground storage tank system components, and other infrastructure required at a location to ensure the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing ethanol blends greater than 10 percent or fuel containing biodiesel blends greater than 5 percent. An eligible project must conform to all applicable Federal, State, Tribal and local regulatory requirements.</p>
<p><b>What is a match or cost share?</b></p>	<p>The program will share the costs related to the upgrading of fuel dispensers (gas and diesel pumps) and attached equipment, underground storage tank system components (which includes but is not limited to tanks, pumps, ancillary equipment, lines, gaskets, and sealants), and other infrastructure required at a location to ensure the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing ethanol blends greater than 10 percent or fuel containing biodiesel blends greater than 5 percent.</p>
<p><b>What if you have more than 10 fuel stations, but you want this grant for one of your fuel distribution facilities? will it still take 78 hours?</b></p>	<p>Yes, it still could take as many as 78 hours. Remember, only 1 application per applicant. You must decide whether to apply as an owner of fueling stations or as an owner of a fuel distribution facility, you may NOT apply for both.</p>
<p><b>What type of environmental review will be required of applicants in order to be eligible for a cost-share grant?</b></p>	<p>For the RBCS to consider an application, the application must include all environmental review documents with supporting documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1970 and as referenced in Section IV.B of this Notice. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a>.</p>
<p><b>Only terminalling projects for BIODIESEL qualify? Terminalling upgrades for ETHANOL are not qualified?</b></p>	<p>Approximately \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher. Approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling</p>

	<p>facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.</p>
<p><b>Will you see this program as a success if the entire \$100 million isn't spent?</b></p>	<p>The program will be successful if the additional infrastructure and consumer access increases significantly the sales and use of higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel and encourage a more comprehensive approach to marketing higher blends by sharing the costs related to building out biofuel-related infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Please explain 50% cost share vs. 25% cost share-what is the parameters of this-examples please.</b></p>	<p>Grants for up to 50 percent of total eligible project costs, but not more than \$5 million, are made available to vehicle fueling facilities, including, but not limited to, local fueling stations/ locations, convenience stores (CS), hypermarket fueling stations (HFS), fleet facilities, and fuel terminal operations, midstream partners, and/or distribution facilities.</p> <p>In addition, there is a matching fund (cost-sharing) requirement of at least \$1 for every \$1 in grant funds provided through the HBIIP grant cost share, which cover up to 50 percent of total eligible project costs.</p> <p>Finally, only existing fueling stations can use HBIIP funds on USTs or ASTs. Existing fueling stations that require upgraded, and/or retrofitted and/or additional underground storage tanks may request assistance of up to 25 percent of total eligible project costs or up to \$1,250,000, whichever is the lesser. They are eligible for any required equipment including, but not limited to, the tank, piping, piping containment sumps, underground pumping equipment, including the submersible pump or suction pump, release detection equipment, spill equipment (spill buckets), overfill equipment, fuel dispensers/pumps, or other equipment.</p>
<p><b>Once the grant is over what will be the time period for reporting USDA will want and want info will need?</b></p>	<p>Following the successful execution of the grant expenditures and infrastructure installation, the awardee will need to bi-annually provide performance reporting. The fueling stations performance report will include point of sale reporting for up to 5 years post project completion and for fuel distribution facilities will include reporting of throughput volumes of all fuels including Higher Blend fuels.</p>
<p><b>Do you need to provide contractor quotes for the site specific work at each locations? Will we also need to provide equipment costs quotes per site, or is it an estimated cost that we will be submitting?</b></p>	<p>Cost share estimates maybe used and should comply with the 50 percent cap and \$5 million cap per applicant. It is also prudent to consider that RBCS retains the right to make adjustments. Transportation fueling stations/facilities applications should take special care to provide evidentiary documentation in support of their proposed activities in the HBIIP Project Technical Report. In the event of suspect, overstated, or otherwise unsubstantiated claims, the Agency reserves the right to adjust an application's priority score accordingly.</p>
<p><b>From time of grant award / contract execution in September, is it 18 months to complete the project?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the application period opened on May 15 and will close on August 13th at 11:59 pm EDT. Applications will be collected, reviewed and scored for selection at that time. The grant period begins upon full execution of the grant agreement and environmental clearances.</p>
<p><b>What does level 2 access mean?</b></p>	<p>E-Auth allows for entry on to the HBIIP application system to upload all application materials. Instructions and resources for completing the online application are available on the HBIIP web page <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip">https:// www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip</a>. Applicants and their authorized/rightful users will be required to obtain an E-Auth Identification and obtain access to the secure portal. The application process requires the facility to both view and generate PDFs (Portable Document Files). The use of a Web browser such as Chrome or its equivalent is highly encouraged.</p>

<p><b>EAUTH - would applicant and those who assist register as customer or contractor?</b></p>	<p>Customer. E-Auth allows for entry on to the HBIIIP application system to upload all application materials. Instructions and resources for completing the online application are available on the HBIIIP web page <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip">https:// www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip</a>. Applicants and their authorized/rightful users will be required to obtain an E-Auth Identification and obtain access to the secure portal. The application process requires the facility to both view and generate PDFs (Portable Document Files). The use of a Web browser such as Chrome or its equivalent is highly encouraged.</p>
<p><b>Can a project involve ethanol and biodiesel?</b></p>	<p>Yes, it is possible if the infrastructure is targeted at establishing pumps and tanks at existing fueling stations. For example, a an owner of several fueling stations may choose installation of higher blend fueling positions for biodiesel and ethanol. It would not be allowable to apply as two different types, such as applying as a fueling station targeting higher blend ethanol and then as a biodiesel terminal.</p>
<p><b>Will there be a set aside for small projects? Say, \$500,000 or less?</b></p>	<p>No, however, consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate. the HBIIIP established a Targeted Assistance Goal for applicants (owners) owning the fewest number of transportation fueling stations/locations (and owning at least one). Approximately 40 percent of funds will be made available for activities/investments related to upgrading or installing equipment to make a transportation fueling facilities fully compatible to dispense/sell higher blends of fuel ethanol and/or biodiesel. USDA Rural Development expects this Targeted Assistance to be exhausted by applicants owning 10 fueling stations/locations or fewer.</p>
<p><b>Understanding that the cap is 5M, can a company submit applications in excess of 5M or will they be rejected.</b></p>	<p>No, submitting an application outside of the application requirements, such as the \$5 million cap per applicant makes the application incomplete and it will not be scored.</p>
<p><b>Is September the earliest to start ordering equipment?</b></p>	<p>Yes, it is likely that September will be the start of the successful applicant's HBIIIP grant period. The application period opened on May 15 and will close on August 13th at 11:59 pm EDT. Applications will be reviewed, evaluated, and competed for selection at that time. The grant period begins upon full execution of the grant agreement and environmental clearances. Eligible costs may only be incurred during the grant period.</p>
<p><b>Application review information says that we need to provide annual sales for the past three years OR projected sales for stations constructed during grant period. Does that mean that you must provide 3 years of sales data on any sites that you intend to retrofit and that you could submit projected for new facilities?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the application requires the inclusion of annual sales volume for the past 3 years (2017–19) or projected sales for fueling stations constructed during the grant period, for all fuels including E10 and/or B5.</p>
<p><b>“Expenses associated with reporting results and/or outcomes during the disbursement, performance, and servicing portions of this program” are considered ineligible project costs (# 11 on page 16 of the solicitation). Just to clarify, does this mean that all reporting expenses, including labor, must be paid for outside the project or did we misread something here?</b></p>	<p>That is correct. Following the successful execution of the grant expenditures and infrastructure installation, the awardee will need to bi-annually provide performance reporting. The fueling stations performance report will include point of sale reporting for up to 5 years post project completion and for fuel distribution facilities will include reporting of throughput volumes of all fuels including Higher Blend fuels. Reporting will be at the expense of the grant awardee.</p>



<p><b>Is there any value in being an early applicant or will all applications through the application window be evaluated evenly?</b></p>	<p>Yes, in the event of insufficient funds. Application scoring determines the success of the application in this competitive process. However, If available funds are insufficient to fund the total amount of an application: (a) The applicant will be notified and given the option to lower the grant request and accept the remaining funds. If the applicant agrees to lower the grant request, the applicant must certify that the purposes of the project will be met and provide the remaining total funds needed to complete the project. (b) <b>If two or more applications have the same priority score and the same submittal date, both applicants will be notified and given the option to lower the grant requests and accept the remaining funds.</b> If an applicant agrees to lower its grant request, the applicant must certify that the purposes of the project will be met and provide the remaining total funds needed to complete the project.</p>
<p><b>We have stores in California, permit approval is lengthy, does the project need to have permit approvals prior to solicitation for the grant?</b></p>	<p>For the RBCS to consider an application, the application must include all environmental review documents with supporting documentation in accordance with 7 CFR part 1970 and as referenced in Section IV.B of this Notice. Any required environmental review must be completed prior to obligation of funds. Applicants are advised to contact RBCS to determine environmental requirements as soon as practicable to ensure adequate review time. Applicants should also submit to RBCS the compatibility verification of equipment to be funded. EPA regulations found in 40 CFR 280.32 require demonstrating compatibility of systems storing fuel containing greater than 10 percent ethanol or greater than 20 percent biodiesel, so RBCS collecting this information in advance is not an additional burden for applicants. It will ensure that grant funds are used for purposes that expand the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel. More information can be found in this June 2019 compliance advisory from the EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks: <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf">https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/compliance_advisory-ust-regs-06-2019.pdf</a>.</p>
<p><b>When it says "sole station" does that mean sole fueling station selling biofuels, or sole fueling station in general.</b></p>	<p>The sole station reference located in the May 5, NOFA under the criteria looks to establish the reported or projected incremental increase in higher blend fuel volume. The intention is to record the impact a single fueling station (the only one within a 1-mile radius) has on realized or projected sales volume.</p>
<p><b>What monitoring of the project will assure continued use of the facility for Hi-Blend fuels?</b></p>	<p>Following the successful execution of the grant expenditures and infrastructure installation, the awardee will need to bi-annually provide performance reporting. The fueling stations performance report will include point of sale reporting for up to 5 years post project completion and for fuel distribution facilities will include reporting of throughput volumes of all fuels including Higher Blend fuels. Reporting will be at the expense of the grant awardee. Failure to perform or meeting the reporting requirements could result in the request to return HBIIIP grant funds.</p>
<p><b>Where is the priority scoring point document located?</b></p>	<p>The HBIIIP online application, "Project Worksheet with Priority Scoring Criteria for Transportation Fueling Stations/Facilities," is interactive and designed to indicate an applicant's priority score based on— HBIIIP activities (e.g., fuel dispensers, related equipment and infrastructure installations), Administrator's geographic diversity priorities, Targeted Assistance Goals (if applicable), and the amount of requested funds. Applicants may directly influence their priority score by the activities they select in the worksheet and by the amount of grant funds they request. The worksheet is posted on the HBIIIP web page at <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program</a></p>
<p><b>So you can't apply for the biodiesel grant and apply for the ethanol, so we have both at our sites and would want move to higher blends on both?</b></p>	<p>That is correct. Only one application per applicant will be accepted. Owners of more than one station who wish to include some or all of their</p>

	stations will use one application that complies with the single applicant cap of \$5 million.
<b>Is there a rural location requirement for HBIIIP? For example, REAP requires small businesses to be located in an area with a population less than 50K.</b>	The HBIIIP opportunity is open to all eligible applicants with eligible sites in the United States, regardless of their rural or metropolitan local. However, geographic diversity is a priority in terms of scoring higher in the competitive selection process. Consideration for Geographical Diversity and markets underserved by higher blends is also afforded to applicants/participants based on the location of the proposed transportation fueling stations/facilities. This consideration is intended to work in concert with the Targeted Assistance Goal (aimed at applicants with 10 or fewer stations/locations) to distribute program funds more broadly across a greater number of states that may not otherwise participate.