Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS REGARDING THIS GRANT

This document is a compilation of questions and answers the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center has received about this grant opportunity. This document will be updated regularly. Please be sure to read the full request for applications for the complete details of this funding opportunity.

If you still have questions after reading the RFA and this document, please submit your question through our Q&A Form or contact Kathryn Donovan.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
How do you define a "dairy processer"?	For the purposes of this grant program, dairy processors are those business who transform raw milk into an edible product and are regulated by the federal Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO).
Does "value-added" include fluid milk? What about A2 milk?	Alteration to raw milk, including pasteurization, which results in a dairy product for the purpose of human consumption is considered value-added.
Am I eligible to apply if I am a raw milk processor?	Raw milk, for human consumption as a fluid product, is not regulated by the federal Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) nor saleable across state lines and is therefore ineligible for grant funds through this federally funded grant program. However, if your processing business sells both fluid raw milk (regulated by state) and manufactured products (regulated by PMO), grant funds can support work that supports products regulated by the PMO. In the case that your raw fluid products will benefit from the work done under your project that primarily benefits PMO-regulated products (eg. business rebrand, website design, etc.) you will need to demonstrate that your matching funds cover

	the portion of your work that benefits non-PMO regulated aspects of your business. *Example: If you seek to have a website and ecommerce platform design and 10% of your sales are of raw fluid milk, your match should include funds to cover 10% of the website/ecommerce design.*
Do I have to hire a contractor to do my marketing and branding work for this grant or can I work with a friend I know who does that on the side?	For this grant, you must work with a professional consultant or contractor that specializes in marketing and/or branding work that is directly related to your grant activities. The consultant/contractor(s) must have a legal business entity and will need to provide a quote and portfolio to the grantee, who will include it in their grant reporting.
How do I know if my contractor charges an hourly rate that does not exceed a GD-15 step 10? What does that mean?	Because this is a federal grant, contractors should charge in alignment with rates set by the federal government. Generally, this means an hourly rate of no more than $68.81, according to the 2021 General Schedule. However, some localities may have a higher rate allowed. Check to see if your contractor is located in a Locality Pay Area in which there is a Localized Pay Schedule. The contractor's hourly pay is separate from any additional travel expenses, fridge benefits, indirect costs, or other expenses. If your contractor's hourly rate exceeds the rate, you must provide justification that aligns with 2 CFR § 200.317 - 326.
Can I use most of the funds for "implementing" the content developed by the contractor?	You may only use up to 25% of your grant for implementing. The remainder needs to be for the contractor/consultant services to develop high quality materials to be implemented.
How am I supposed to know what a contractor is going to tell me that I need to do? I don't know how to capture my project if I need a professional to tell me what I need to do!	Competitive grant applications will demonstrate that the applicant has done in-depth research and communicated with potential contractors/consultants to be able to have a handle on the planned scope of work. We also recognize that scope of the contractor as well as actual implementation costs may change over the course of the project. Changes to the use of grant funds for implementation costs should be discussed with the grant manager as they develop and before funds are spent to ensure alignment with USDA-AMS allowed costs.
What is a DUNS number and how do I get one?	A DUNS number is a unique 9-digit identifier for businesses and is required to have for grants funded by the Federal government. You can obtain a DUNS number for free.
What is SAM.gov?	SAM is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners

	in support of grants. You must have a DUNS number before applying for SAM registration: www.sam.gov
Do I need to have a DUNS number and SAM registration before I apply?	No, you are not required to have those before submitting your application. However, we recommend that you start the process of getting them ahead of submitting your application as they can take several weeks to get processed and, if you are awarded a grant, that could hold up your grant start date.
What is match?	Match can come in many forms and is a way for you to demonstrate your investment to the project. While it can certainly come from contributing cash from your business or investors, it could also come in the form of volunteer services, donations, etc. See the Matching Funds section of the RFA to learn more and see how to fully capture this in your budget.
Can I apply if I do not have a computer or access to internet?	Unfortunately, we are not able to accept paper applications, reports or invoices for this grant program. If you would like to apply, we recommend reaching out to a business viability organization in your state to learn about resources available to you regarding application assistance.
Do I need to address all the funding priorities listed in the RFA?	Applicants should describe activities that strongly align with at least one of the listed priorities.
What if the expenses that I want to pay for with these funds are not allowable?	Consider paying for those unallowable expenses out of pocket and using the grant to cover things like wages or supplies related to the project instead.
If I accidentally put in a non-eligible expense in my application, will my application automatically be disqualified?	No! If your application is positively reviewed by our reviewers and recommended for funding, we will reach out to you to make any necessary tweaks to ensure alignment with USDA requirements. If the descriptions of expenses are detailed and justify why they are necessary for the grant (in the Budget Narrative section of the application) this will increase the competitiveness of your grant.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

**All expenses for which you are requesting grant funds should be described in detail; expenses should also be well-justified as to how they support the grant project. Any costs associated with an expense category other than Contractor/Consultant are considered "Implementation Costs". These details should be provided in the Budget Narrative section of the application. Visit the 2020 AMS Terms and Conditions for full details.

	Eligible Expenses	Not Eligible
Contractor/Consultant	• Marketing/branding professional contractors that charge an hourly rate that does not exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal	• Contractors charging over the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in the contractor's area,

	employee in the contractor's area	unless sufficient justification is provided
Equipment	• Rental Equipment • Expenses that cost under $5,000 are considered to be "Supplies" • Equipment that can be reasonably broken down into separately purchased components--if under $5,000 per component—each component may be considered a "Supply"	• Purchase of equipment over $5,000 is not covered by this grant
Supplies & Materials	• Product packaging, if related to the agritourism activities • Printing cost of preparing informational leaflets, reports, manuals, and publications relating to the project	• Walls in milk room/milk plant • Plumbing
Marketing Expenses (covered in the "Other" section of the Budget and Budget Narrative)	• Promotion of dairy products • Printing and distribution of marketing materials • Advertisement of an event, activities, or promotion • Computing devices under $5000 • App/website development • Meeting rooms, demonstrations, exhibits, space rentals • Food for displays	• Reimbursement for the discount covered by a coupon or price reduction • Sponsorships • Branded items solely for giveaways