Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Funding Opportunity Title: Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-UAIP-20-NOFO0001013

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number (also known as Assistance Listing): 10.935

Funding Opportunity Announcement Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) requests applications for the Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The anticipated amount available for UAIP in FY 2020 is approximately $3,000,000.

This announcement provides information regarding the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and instructions needed to apply for a UAIP grant.

Applications will be accepted from eligible entities in any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Key Dates

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 06, 2020 through Grants.gov. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

A webinar will be held to provide an overview of the UAIP program purpose, project types, eligibility, and basic requirements for the submission of an application. Registration information is as follows:

Event: Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Competitive Grants Program Webinar
When: Wednesday 3 June 2020, 02:00 PM - 04:00 PM
Time Zone: (GMT-05:00) Eastern Time (US and Canada) (Please note that Daylight Saving Time (+01:00 hr) is in effect during this time)

To register now, please visit the following link:

https://usdanrcs.adobeconnect.com/egfiru3twn9f/event/registration.html

To know more about the event, please visit:

https://usdanrcs.adobeconnect.com/egfiru3twn9f/event/event_info.html

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

Approximately $3,000,000 will be available to fund applications under this solicitation. In FY 2020, NRCS intends to solicit applications and fund two types of UAIP grants. The types are entitled (1) Planning Projects and (2) Implementation Projects. The primary goal of UAIP is to assist eligible entities with projects that support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production.

Approximately $1,000,000 is available for Planning Projects (PP). The funding floor for PP is $200,000 and the funding ceiling is $500,000.

Approximately $2,000,000 is available for Implementation Projects (IP). The funding floor for IP is $100,000 and the funding ceiling is $300,000.

The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Legislative Authority

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are under section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334), (7 USC 6923).

2. Purpose and Priorities

UAIP supports the development of urban agriculture and innovative production activities by funding Planning Projects (PP) and Implementation Projects (IP) led by nonprofit organizations, local or Tribal governments, and schools that serve any of the grades K-12 in areas of the United States. PPs and IPs should target a single or multiple urban areas, suburbs, or urban clusters in the United States where access to fresh foods is limited or unavailable and should include one or more partner organizations to achieve project goals within the target area(s).

3. Project Type Descriptions

Planning Projects (PP)

The purpose of PP is to support the development of projects that will either initiate, build upon, or expand the efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. No single PP award will exceed $200,000 in any single year or $500,000 over three years. PPs may be designed to:

- Develop recommendations for implementing community gardens and farms that respond to community needs as it relates to how food is grown, distributed, and marketed in target area(s);
- Facilitate urban agriculture assessments and identify opportunities that connect community needs with the benefits of urban agriculture such as food access, nutrition education, conservation, innovation, and economic development;
- Support the development of business plans, feasibility studies, and strategies to help offset start-up costs for new and beginning farmers in urban and suburban areas;
- Provide support for municipal planning that consider policies to meet the growing needs of and zoning for community gardens and farms, rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production, green walls, indoor farms, greenhouses, high-tech vertical technology farms, and hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farm facilities; or
- Assist schools that seek to increase knowledge of food and agricultural disciplines such as nutrition, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to develop and implement programs that create future leaders, farmers, gardeners, and entrepreneurs in agriculture and innovative production.

Implementation Projects (IP)

The purpose of IP is to accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers or gardeners. IPs should improve access to local food in the target area(s). No single IP award will exceed $100,000 in any single year or $300,000 over three years. IPs may be designed to:

- Facilitate the development of entrepreneurial projects by offering needed resources, such as job training, land, equipment, mentoring, and other business development assistance to new and beginning farmers;

- Increase food production in small urban and indoor spaces with emerging technologies such as vertical farming, hydroponics, aquaponics, rooftop farms, etc.;

- Operate community gardens or nonprofit farms to educate a community on food systems, nutrition, environmental impacts, and agricultural production and/or to offer hands-on training in farming or gardening;

- Meet specific state, local, or community food and agricultural needs by assisting municipalities, food producers, community organizations, and schools with policies for community gardens and farms that address food access, soil health, emerging technologies, and agricultural business; or

- Provide schools with resources to incorporate and emphasize the importance of growing and consuming nutritious food as well as training students for careers in agriculture.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. **Estimated Funding**
   The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is approximately $3,000,000.

2. **Start Dates and Performance Periods**
   Projects may be between 1 and 3 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of September 15, 2020.

3. **Type of Federal Award**
   The agency plans to award a Grant Agreement pursuant to this opportunity.

4. **Number of Awards**
   There is no commitment by NRCS to make a specific number of awards.

5. **Procurement Contracts**
   The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this opportunity.

6. **Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications**
   This is a new program in FY 2020, therefore all applications must be submitted as "new."

   Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.205(d)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types:

- Tribal governments
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
- A unit of local government
- Any school that serves any of the grades kindergarten through grade 12

Refer to section D of this opportunity announcement for required documentation supporting eligibility status.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity.

3. Other

Applicants for PP and IP awards are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities. *Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements.*

Any individual award made pursuant to this opportunity will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as “partnerships” or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner” parties. In all but exceptional cases, it must be reflected in the award as an awardee/sub-awardee relationship.

Applicants meeting the following four criteria will be given higher consideration:

a. Experience in the area of:

   1) agriculture and/or innovative production for three years or more; and
   2) serving communities in urban areas, suburbs, or urban clusters where access to fresh foods are limited or unavailable, such as listed in the USDA Food Access Research Atlas;

b. demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;

c. demonstrate a willingness to share information with researches, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results; and

d. collaborate with one or more partner organizations working in the project target area(s).

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NRCS from making an award.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

1. **Address to Request Application Package**
   All standard forms and instructions necessary for this opportunity announcement are included in the Grants.gov opportunity.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission**
   To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application for either a PP or IP grant must contain:

   a. **Proposal**

      1. **Planning Projects (PP)**
         The Project Proposal for PPs must include the below headings followed by a narrative that includes a response for each of the points noted below.

         - **Project Overview and Relationship to Program Objectives.** Present a statement of need or assessment of the problem. Define the target audience and end users of this project. Describe how this project will initiate, build upon, or expand related work or programs. Discuss how project activities and outcomes will address the purpose of the PPs as described in Part A.3. and how the project will make a difference in the targeted urban area(s) and/or suburb(s).

- **The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed.**
  Describe your approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system of the area or community to be served. Document this with data such as demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or community to be served, linking it to UAIP priorities. What is the situation that is causing concern? Why is it happening?

- **The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.**
  List the partners, organizations and community to be involved in carrying out the proposed project. Include a description of the relevant experience of each, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement with UAIP priorities, as well as success in outreach to the area or community to be served. The qualifications of key personnel involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership must reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard.

- **Project Goals and Intended Outcomes.**
  Concisely state the goal(s) and objectives of the proposed project. Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed. Identify anticipated outcomes and benefits in measurable terms. Outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people, e.g., residents, students, participants, will benefit. Describe the involvement of stakeholders in developing project objectives and implementing results.

- **Activities to Achieve the Goals.**
  Summarize the work to be performed in non-technical terms. Include a brief review of the goal(s) and present a clear, concise set of project objectives. Explain why the applicant and its partners

selected the activities proposed in the application. Include a timeline of activities with milestones and verifiable indicators to demonstrate how progress will be measured and achieved. The summary should include the relevance of the project to the priorities of UAIP.

2. **Implementation Projects (IP)**
   The Project Proposal for IPs must include the below headings followed by a narrative that includes a response for each of the points noted below.

   - **Project Overview and Relationship to Program Objectives.**
     Define the target audience and end users of this project. Describe how this project will initiate, build upon, or expand related work or programs. Discuss how project activities and outcomes will address the purpose of the IPs as described in Part A.3., and how the project will impact the targeted urban area(s) and/or suburb(s).

   - **The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed.**
     Present a statement of need or assessment of the problem. Describe your approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system of the area or community to be served. Document this with data such as demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or community to be served, linking it to UAIP priorities. What is the situation that is causing concern? Why is it happening?

   - **The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.**
     List the partners, organizations and community to be involved in carrying out the proposed project. Include a description of the relevant experience of each, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement with UAIP priorities, as well as success in outreach to the area or community to be served. The qualifications of key personnel involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership must reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard.

   - **Project Goals and Intended Outcomes.**
     Concisely state the goal(s) and objectives of the proposed project.

Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed. Identify anticipated outcomes and benefits in measurable terms. Outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people, e.g., residents, students, participants, will benefit. Describe the involvement of stakeholders in developing project objectives and implementing results. How is the situation expected to change as a result of the award?

- **Activities to Achieve the Goals.**
  Summarize the work to be performed in non-technical terms. Include a brief review of the goal(s) and present a clear, concise set of project objectives. Explain why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application. Include a timeline of activities with milestones and verifiable indicators to demonstrate how progress will be measured and achieved. The summary should include the relevance of the project to the priorities of UAIP.

- **Evaluation.**
  IP proposals should contain a strong evaluation component. Innovative evaluation strategies are especially encouraged. USDA seeks to determine best practices, including valuable lessons learned; therefore, proposals are encouraged that include both process evaluations (developing and monitoring indicators of progress towards the objectives) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met).

- **Self-Sustainability.**
  Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. Discuss how a one-time infusion of Federal funds will be sufficient for the proposed IP to advance UAIP goals and achieve sustainability. Projects should identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project after Federal funding has ended.

The text of the proposal must be single spaced and typed in New Times Roman, no smaller than 12-point font and must not exceed 15 pages. The proposal shall not exceed 10 pages of written text, and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition.

Proposals that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding. **Material exceeding stated page limits and/or**

formatting structure will not be considered. Incomplete and/or noncompliant proposals will not be considered.

b. **Application Form**: (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) See Instructions for Completing SF 424 located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

c. **Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs**. Complete this form only if the proposal does not include construction. Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF 424A located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

d. **Standard Form (SF) 424C, Budget Information – Construction Programs** Complete this form only if the proposal includes construction. Fill in the fields in column a. The fields in column b. should be left blank. Field 17 should indicate 100%.

e. **Budget Narrative.** In a separate narrative titled "Budget Narrative", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. See Instructions for Completing Budget Narrative located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

   i. As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, Federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

   ii. All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

      - Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. (Accepting the 10% de minimis rate as a condition of award constitutes establishing an approved rate.)

- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

f. **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).** Required if applicant is requesting indirect costs. See Part D.6. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA as described in Part D.6.a. See Part D.6. for use of the De Minimis rate.

g. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any Federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application AND the Federal share exceeds $100,000, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR, Subpart 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

h. **Post Award Documentation.** None required.

3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number) in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Entities must obtain a DUNS and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. A description of each is below. Entities are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number: A Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. Applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform or by calling 1-866-705-5711.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. To register, go to: https://www.sam.gov. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding DUNS or SAM issues.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must submit applications via Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on July 6, 2020. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation to determine whether applications meet the submission deadline. Grants.gov provides and automatic acknowledgement when applications are received.

5. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

6. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law, or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer in advance of incurring such costs:

- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project:
- Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto;
- Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project

objectives;

- Meals for business meals when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost;
- Alcoholic beverages, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, from the recipient to other entities;
- Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- Fines, penalties, damages and other settlements resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with, Federal, state, tribal, local or foreign laws and regulations;
- Fundraising for organized fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions, regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used;
- Goods or services for personal use of the recipient's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees;
- Political activities for development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326);
- Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and
- Management fees and profit.

Materials, supplies, and other costs related to rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production, green walls, indoor farms, greenhouses, high-tech vertical technology farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farms, and other innovations in agricultural production is allowable including but not limited to soil, seeds, shovels, gardening tools, greenhouses, and hoop houses.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person listed in this opportunity announcement.

Indirect costs limitations:

a. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). In order to qualify for the de minimis rate, the recipient must have never had a NICRA. A State, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than $35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

b. Applicants with a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. If voluntarily reduced or waived, the recipient may choose to apply any unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share or match. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the recipient's approved negotiated indirect cost rate (2 CFR 200.306(c)). A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA.

c. Entities that are eligible for the de minimis rate who already have a de minimis rate agreement must use the rate and base specified in the agreement, which is modified total direct costs (MTDC) as defined by 2 CFR 200.68 and also excluding the amount of each subaward exceeding $25,000. Note that MTDC excludes certain costs from the base to which the rate is applied. A copy of the applicant's de minimis rate agreement must be provided with the application. If a recipient is eligible to use the de minimis rate, but does not have a de minimis rate agreement, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10% of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Merit/Technical Criteria

A. General

Each application whether seeking a PP or IP award will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this NFO.

Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel. Appropriate members of NRCS and other USDA agencies will review all applications submitted, and where necessary, also may seek the opinions of others who are qualified to render expert advice in the area to be supported. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. After reviews have been completed, PPs and IPs recommended for funding will be submitted to the approving official. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Chief of NRCS.

Applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant. The agency may contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their application, if deemed necessary.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The weights and evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this NFO:

1) Consistency with the UAIP's purpose and priorities presented herein (20%);
2) Quality of the plan presented to effectively support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production activities such as gardens and farms, rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production, green walls, indoor farms, greenhouses, high-tech vertical technology farms, and hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic farm facilities within the targeted area(s) (20%);
3) Potential for positive impact in targeted urban and suburban areas where limited access to heathy affordable food is an issue as listed in the USDA Food Access Research Atlas (20%);
4) Internal and external organizational support for execution of the project, including experience and expertise of key personnel in agriculture and innovation production (20%);
5) Quality of the plan for information sharing and creating partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities to achieve project objectives and outcomes (10%); and
6) Projects with budgets not including the purchase of special-purpose equipment, vehicles, land, and building space during the length of the grant (10%).

2. Risk Criteria

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a)).

To further comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.205, the agency has established the following risk review process and related standards that an applicant must meet to be considered for award:

a. Financial Stability. The applicant certifies that it maintains adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis and successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.
b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200. The applicant certifies it has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track Federal funds. It further certifies is has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.
c. History of Performance. If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it certifies that it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further that it has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards.

3. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)
Notice to applicants:

a. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a));

b. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;

c. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.205, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

4. **Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates**
   The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by August 31, 2020 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 30, 2020.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. **Federal Award Notices**
   The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency representative is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized representative for signature.

   Both successful and unsuccessful applicants with be notified of the award decision via letter.

2. **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

   All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the General Terms and Conditions; a copy of the General Terms and Conditions may be obtained by contacting the Federal Awarding Agency Contacts listed in this opportunity announcement.

3. **Reporting**
   Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the General Terms and Conditions but will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, quarterly financial status reports, and final reports.

   Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any sub awardees must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170, unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact one of the following individuals:

Administrative Contact (Primary Contact)
Name: Michele Devaney
Grants Management Specialist

FPAC Business Center
Phone Number: (801) 524-4587
Email: Michele.Devaney@usda.gov

Program Contact
Name: Annie Ceccarini
Program Analyst
Phone Number: 202-577-7462
Email: annie.ceccarini@usda.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Stakeholder Input

NRCS welcomes your comments about this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO). We will consider the comments in developing the next NFO. Email written stakeholder comments within 90 days of the announcement of the publication date of this NFO to: annie.ceccarini@usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting proposals or forms.) In your comments, please include the following words on the subject line of your email "Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Competitive Grants Program" and indicate in the body of your message that you are providing comments on the NRCS Notice of Funding Opportunity.

2. Questions

Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Administrative Contact identified above via email with the Opportunity Number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by June 05, 2020. A questions and answers document addressing all questions will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this opportunity in Grants.gov by June 12, 2020.

3. Technical Issues

For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

4. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

5. **Government Obligation**
   The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized Federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement
In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.