

# Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program

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**Application Due Date:** 11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 22, 2021

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA-AMS-TM-PRS-G-21-0011

**Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number:** 10.181

## **A: What is the Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program?**

The Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant Program provides grants to small businesses in certain commodity areas including small scale specialty crop producers and processors, other select producers, meat and other processors, distributors, and farmers market to respond to coronavirus, including for measures to protect workers against novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). This program is authorized and funded under [section 751 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 \(Pub. L. No. 116—260\)](#). USDA developed the PRS Grant Program in response to extensive stakeholder feedback during listening sessions in March 2021, and written comments provided through March 30, 2021. Information from the listening sessions is available online at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/ams-covid-stimulus>.

## **B: How much funding is available and what can it be used for?**

Approximately \$650 million is available to fund applications through the Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program (PRS). Funds will be used to issue grants for costs incurred between January 27, 2020, the date upon which the public health emergency was declared by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, and December 31, 2021. Grants will cover the activities associated with:

**Workplace Safety Measures:** Workplace safety measures, including, but not limited to, personal protective equipment, sanitizer, hand washing stations, air filters, thermometers, cleaning supplies, or similar items.

**Market Pivots:** Market pivots such as transition to virtual/online sales costs (online platform development and fees, online marketing, credit card processing fees), supplies, new signage.

**Retrofitting Facilities:** Retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety (plexiglass, walk up windows, heat lamps, fans, tents, propane, weights, tables, chairs).

**Transportation:** Additional transportation costs incurred to maintain social distancing.

**Worker Housing:** Additional worker housing costs incurred to maintain social distancing or to allow for quarantining of new or exposed employees.

**Medical:** Unreimbursed costs associated with providing or enabling vaccinations, testing, or healthcare treatment of infected employees, including any paid leave.

The minimum funding request amount is \$1,500. The maximum funding request amount is \$20,000. Funding requests may range from \$1,500 to \$20,000.

## **C: Who is eligible to apply for funds?**

In this first round of PRS funding, USDA is targeting support to small businesses in certain commodity areas and farmers markets. According to stakeholder feedback, small scale specialty crop producers and processors, meat processors, and distributors, and farmers markets were all significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and received insufficient federal support to address the costs they incurred to keep workers safe and help keep the U.S. food supply intact during the crisis. To target this support, producers, food processors/manufacturers, and wholesalers/distributors denoted in Appendix A, and farmers markets are eligible to apply for funding. Appendix A details the different small business size qualifications for each eligible industry. The small business size qualifications align with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) guidelines except for specialty crop producers, where SBA set the threshold for all agriculture producers regardless of specific segment at \$1 million. USDA analysis of operations producing specialty crops, showed that the high value crops meant that a higher revenue level was needed to support a small full-time operation than agriculture producers in general and set the specialty crop small business threshold at \$5 million. To see a list of agricultural products classified as specialty crops, please visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>. A similar review of aquaculture, finfish farming, and shellfish farming operations suggests that this analysis would also be applicable to those operations. Because of similarities, the small business threshold for aquaculture, farmed finfish, and farmed shellfish producers is set at \$5 million.

The eligible entity types include:

- Small Businesses
- Nonprofits

All applicants must be domestic entities owned, operated, and located within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

While USDA is focusing this first round of funding to small businesses, USDA may expand eligibility in future rounds of funding to include additional businesses not covered by the first round. Future rounds are dependent upon availability of funds. USDA is also focusing this first round of funding on certain commodities due to the unique impacts of the pandemic on their businesses, USDA may expand eligibility in future rounds of funding to include commodities not covered by the first round.

No cost sharing or matching funds are required. All PRS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the PRS General Terms and Conditions.

**Helpful Tip:** See Appendix A for eligible industry descriptions and small business size qualifications for PRS.

## **D: How and when are applications submitted?**

PRS applications are submitted online through the PRS Grant Program application website (<https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda>). All applicants must obtain a DUNS number before applying. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found on the application website. Applicants must submit online a complete application package, which consists of the following forms:

- PRS Activity Checklist (Appendix B).
- Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 (See application website)

Due to the expected high volume of applications and to help ensure they are processed a timely manner, applications will be submitted through a website dedicated to the PRS program (<https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda>).

All applications must be received by USDA no later than **11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 22, 2021**.

### **E: What happens after an application is submitted?**

Once all applications are received, USDA will conduct the eligibility review process. Each application is reviewed using the following criteria:

- The application was submitted and received by USDA before the application deadline.
- The applicant is an eligible entity that meets the small business standards listed in Appendix A.
- The application includes the required forms noted in Section D.
- The required forms are complete and accurate.

Applications that meet the abovementioned criteria will be deemed eligible for funding consideration. If an application does not meet these requirements, it will be removed from consideration.

Funding will be awarded after the close of the application and review periods. USDA reserves the right to prorate individual award amounts if the cumulative amount of funds requested is greater than the funds available. USDA also may target funding for different sectors depending upon the total need requested in each sector. All awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the PRS General Terms and Conditions.

### **F: How are funds administered?**

If an application is approved for funding, USDA will send a Notice of Award to the application point of contact, using a secure link sent via email. The Notice of Awards will include instructions for accepting funds.

**Note:** To complete the award process and receive PRS funds, awardees must successfully register in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#).

### **G: Is there a contact for answering questions or helping with the application?**

Yes, if you have questions about applying or obtaining a DUNS number, visit the PRS application website (<https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda>) or contact the Application Helpdesk by phone at (301) 238-5550 or by emailing [usda.ams.prs@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:usda.ams.prs@grantsolutions.gov). The helpdesk hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 9AM-9PM ET.

**Stakeholder Input:** AMS seeks comments about this Request for Applications (RFA). We will consider the comments in developing the next RFA for the program. Email written stakeholder comments within one year of the publication date of this RFA to: [PRSGrants@usda.gov](mailto:PRSGrants@usda.gov). This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms. In your comments, please state that you are commenting on the **Pandemic Safety and Response RFA**.