TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE (RFSI) PROGRAM
Request for Grant Applications (RFGA)

RFSI – Equipment Only Grant (ROUND 2)

Executive Summary

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), is entering into a cooperative agreement with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to work in partnership to make competitive subawards in the form of grants to eligible entities to support equipment needs along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain across the state.

TDA will accept applications for the Equipment-Only grant type under the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program, Texas RFSI State Plan under USDA-AMS, for Equipment-Only projects that support the expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, and/or distribution of locally and regionally produced food products including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Dates

Applications must be received by <mark>Thursday, June 12, 2025,</mark> by 11:59 pm Central Time (CT).

Agency Division

Trade and Economic Development – Grants Office, Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov

Federal Assistance Listing Number

10.190

Key Elements

Required Action	Timing to Obtain/Submit
Create a TDA-GO Profile *(see TDA-GO! Access Instructions)*	
• Obtain Your Organization's UEI Number and establish an Active SAM.gov Account (if you do not already have one)	up to 2 weeks
• Obtain a TIN/EIN (if you do not already have one) *	up to 2 weeks
• Request Access to TDA-GO! by creating a TDA-GO! profile (if you do not already have one)*	At least 48-72 hours ahead of the application submission deadline for TDA to approve account.
TDA Deadline to receive final application and all supporting materials through TDA-GO!	June 12, 2025 – 11:59 p.m. Central Time

* Text hyperlinks will direct you to applicable websites

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE (RFSI) PROGRAM

EQUIPMENT-ONLY GRANT RFGA ROUND 2

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Please read all materials before preparing and submitting the application.
Failure to follow the instructions and requirements described in this Request for Grant Application (RFGA) may result in the disqualification of the application.

Fraud Warning Disclaimer: Please be aware that certain individuals might approach you by falsely presenting themselves as representatives of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Under this false pretense, they might try to gain access to your personal information or to acquire money by claiming that they are contacting you on TDA's behalf. Such fraudulent offers and claims are usually received via email, text message, phone, etc. These claims and offers are fraudulent and invalid, and you are strongly advised to exercise great caution and disregard such offers and invitations. You will not be contacted by TDA or the government to request payment before you receive a grant. Please report any attempts to defraud you to TDA's Grants Office immediately. You may also report fraudulent activity to the Texas Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division at https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/consumer-protection/common-scams.

Statement of Purpose

Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117—2), as amended, authorizes USDA, to make grants and agreements to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.

The purpose of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program is to build resilience across the middle of the state's food supply chain for food crops/products. For this program, "middle-of-the-food-supply-chain" refers to activities and operations that occur in between post-harvesting of food crops and before food goods are being sold to either a wholesale market and/or at a retail market/store, excluding the marketing of food products or services, as well as sales, also excluding direct-to-consumer marketing and sales. These activities and operations include:

- Local food aggregation
- Local food processing
- Manufacturing food products and/or value-added food products comprised from locally grown food within Texas
- Local food storage, including but not limited to cold storage
- Local food distribution to wholesale and/or retail market outlets

This Request for Grant Application (RFGA) document pertains solely to the "Equipment-Only" grant type under the RFSI program, which will be made available to eligible entities to support the expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, and/or distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry, through eligible equipment purchases.

The RFSI program is intended to support and foster local food system(s) development throughout the state of Texas by:

1. Creating new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, including those who may not have access to value-added opportunities and/or food processing, storage, and distribution resources to meet market demand for locally grown food products and/or manufactured, value-added food products made from locally grown food.

   Market opportunities in this regard refer to the capacity by which Texas' agricultural producers can more easily, and at greater volumes, access and utilize resources to get their locally grown food products aggregated, processed, manufactured, stored, and/or distributed to wholesale and/or retail market outlets.

2. Establishing new market outlets for locally grown food products and/or manufactured, value-added food products made from locally grown food as a result of equipment

investments that increase capacity to aggregate, process, manufacture, store, and/or distribute Texas grown food produced from Texas agricultural producers.

Market outlets in this regard refer to wholesale and/or retail markets.

The RFSI Program also aims to:

- Support the development of value-added products comprised of locally grown food and made available to consumers within the state of Texas, especially in rural communities.
- Increase diversity in food processing options in terms of business model approaches, geography, and availability to agricultural communities within the state, especially in rural areas.

Please Note: While a grant project that only benefits the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations for the applicant and the applicant alone is eligible to receive RFSI funding, TDA will prioritize funding grant projects that seek to benefit multiple agricultural producers, in addition to the applicant, for the development and resilience of the local food system(s) at large for the state, region to region.

TDA is authorized by Texas Agriculture Code, Section 12.002 to encourage the proper development and promotion of agriculture, horticulture, and other industries that grow, process, or produce products in this state, as provided by law.

In accordance with applicable law, and for RFSI Program funding consideration, TDA has previously prepared and submitted, for approval by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, a State Plan to carry out the purposes of the RFSI Program.

Request for Grant Application (RFGA)

TDA is accepting grant applications to consider for the Texas RFSI State Plan to USDA-AMS for Equipment-Only projects that will support the expanded capacity for **middle-of-the-food-supply-chain** activities and operations including the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, and/or distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Projected Timeline of Events

- Application Availability   April 21, 2025
- Application Deadline   June 12, 2025
- Competitive Review of Eligible Applications Finalized by   August 31, 2025
- Preliminary Selection of projects to be included in State Plan   September 1, 2025
- Application Scores and Comments released   September 1, 2025

- Selected Projects submitted to USDA for USDA approval   October 2025
- USDA review of projects and final selection by USDA*   Estimated 3 to 6 months
- Final Award Announcements   Upon USDA approval
- Start Date of Awarded Projects   Upon USDA approval
- End Date of Awarded Projects   One-year after USDA approval

*USDA's review process includes an extensive review for program eligibility and compliance to federal regulations. The start and end dates of awarded projects are contingent on the timeframe that USDA takes to conduct their review. This timeframe is estimated at three to six months but could take longer.

Equipment Defined

The RFSI Equipment-Only grant type can only be used to purchase middle-of-the-food-supply-chain equipment items that pertain to:

- Local food aggregation
- Local food processing
- Manufacturing food products and/or value-added food products comprised from locally grown food within Texas
- Local food storage, including but not limited to cold storage
- Local food distribution to wholesale and/or retail market outlets

Per USDA-AMS regulation for this program, "Equipment" is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more.

Equipment-Only Grants are only eligible to cover the cost(s) of purchasing equipment units with a per unit cost of $5,000 or more. **No other costs are allowed**. However, sales tax and shipping costs for eligible equipment units can be covered with RFSI grant funds.

Please note:

Any item with a unit cost less than $5,000 is considered "Supplies," and is not eligible for funding through the Equipment-Only grant. However, an exception may be made if the item is a necessary component or accessory of an eligible piece of equipment—specifically, if it is required for the equipment to function properly.

Multiple parts that each cost less than $5,000 may be allowed if they come together to form a complete piece of equipment. The applicant must provide a clear justification showing how the equipment supports the program, and the request is subject to USDA-AMS approval.

For the purposes of the RFSI program, USDA-AMS defines eligible equipment items as "Special Purpose Equipment," which is defined in section 8.2 of the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

Please also note:

The Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA), enacted as part of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) on November 15, 2021, established domestic procurement preference requirements for all Federal financial assistance obligated for infrastructure projects after May 14, 2022.

This means equipment purchased through the RFSI program, i.e. the manufactured product, was manufactured in the United States; and that the majority of its manufactured components were manufactured in the United States. If this domestic procurement preference cannot be accommodated, adequate justification for the procurement of foreign manufactured equipment describing the appropriateness and applicability within the RFSI program must be provided by the applicant in order to be considered. Approval for foreign-made equipment is contingent on USDA-AMS and is not guaranteed. If an American-made alternative can be found, preference will hold with the American-made equipment. Any duties and foreign taxes incurred in the procurement of any foreign-made equipment cannot be covered by RFSI funding.

Applicant Eligibility

Applications will be accepted from the following individuals, organizations, and/or institutions:

- Agricultural producers (farmers/ranchers) or groups thereof
- Nonprofit organizations operating middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities
- For profit organizations operating middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities that meet U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standard for federal contracting
  - Food Aggregators (of eligible food items per RFSI regulations)
  - Food Processors (of eligible food items per RFSI regulations)
  - Food Co-Packers (of eligible food items per RFSI regulations)
  - Food Distributors (of eligible food items per RFSI regulations)
  - Food Manufacturers (of eligible food items per RFSI regulations)
- Local government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- Tribal government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers.

Other eligibility requirements:
- Applicants must be registered in the federal System for Award Management ([SAM.gov](#)) database and obtain a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number from the federal government. The UEI number must be submitted as a part of the applicant's application

package to be considered for funding. To receive a UEI number, visit the following website: https://sam.gov
- Applicants must have a TIN/EIN (Employer Identification Number) or if sole proprietor, a social security number.
- Qualifying applicant entities must:
  - Be organized or incorporated in the U.S., if applicable;
  - Operate in the State of Texas;
  - Be domestically owned;
  - Have the principal place of operation for the project residing in Texas.

Please Note:

- Only **one application** may be submitted **per applying entity**. If multiple applications are submitted by the same entity before the application deadline, all of them will be disqualified and deemed ineligible for funding.
- Applicants can apply as an individual **OR** under their eligible business entity but **CANNOT** apply under both. In doing so will result in the disqualification of both submitted applications in which both applications will be ineligible for RFSI funding.
- **Previous awardees** that have received either an Equipment-Only Grant award or an Infrastructure Grant award under the RFSI program **are ineligible** to receive a new Equipment-Only Grant.

Please note:

SBA's Size Standards Tool

Prospective for-profit organizations operating middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities that wish to apply must meet the SBA size standard for federal contracting in order to be considered eligible. Large for-profit organizations that exceed this size standard are ineligible for RFSI funding. To see if your organization meets the SBA size standard for federal contracting, please visit SBA's Size Standards webpage and use the Size Standards Tool.

Applicant Ineligibility

Applications will not be accepted from the following entities:

- "End-of-the-food-supply-chain" businesses (Businesses involved in direct-to-consumer marketing/sales):
  - Grocery Stores, Supermarkets, & "Corner/Convenient Stores"
  - Farmers' Markets
  - Mobile Farmers' Markets
  - Restaurants
  - Mobile Restaurants ("Food Trucks")

     o Food Pantries

- Other entities not listed in the RFGA section, "Applicant Eligibility," and/or entities not operating middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities as defined in this RFGA document.

Project & Product Eligibility

Equipment-Only Grants are only eligible to cover the cost(s) of purchasing equipment units with a per unit cost of $5,000 or more, under the criteria listed below. **No other costs are allowed**. However, sales tax and shipping costs for eligible equipment units can be covered with RFSI grant funds.

Applications will be accepted from eligible applicants whose proposed equipment project aligns with the goals of the RFSI Program as directed by the USDA and the State Plan, as follows:

- Equipment purchases that support the expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, and/or distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Fruits
  - Vegetables
  - Grains for human consumption
  - Tree nuts
  - Dairy
  - Eggs
  - Honey
  - Wine
  - Aquaculture

- Projects that seek to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas.

- Projects that establish new market outlets for locally grown food products and/or for manufactured, value-added food products made from locally grown food within Texas.

- Projects that help keep profits in rural communities allowing farmers, ranchers, and/or small food businesses along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain in these areas to retain more of the value chain dollar and/or creating more economic opportunities and resiliency for local Texas communities in rural areas.

- Applications/proposed projects that seek to better local food systems development in urban areas are eligible to receive funding and are encouraged to apply, however, TDA, will prioritize proposed projects impacting rural areas of the state.

- Projects that support the development of value-added products comprised of locally grown food and made available to consumers within the state of Texas, especially in rural communities and those that reside in rural areas of the state.

<u>Please Note:</u>

Value-added food products developed with equipment unit(s) purchased with RFSI federal grant funding must comply with the following regulations:

- At least 51% of the overall value-added product contents must be comprised of locally grown food crops/products that were produced from Texas' agricultural producers. These ingredients must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.
- Any percentage of ingredients sourced not from Texas' agricultural producers but rather from other sources, representing the minority contents of the overall value-added product, must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.

For specific examples of eligible equipment items, please refer to RFGA section, "*Project Types*," subsections, "*A – G*." Additional information can also be found in RFGA section, "*Budget Development Information*," sub-section, "*D. Eligible Expenses*."

Project & Product Ineligibility

Grant applications with equipment project proposals that include the following products are ineligible for funding:

- Meat and poultry,
- Wild-caught seafood,
- Exclusively animal feed and forage products,
- Fiber,
- Landscaping products,
- Tobacco,
- Dietary supplements, and
- Plants that are federally controlled illegal drug plants (e.g. cannabis).

Grant applications with project proposals beyond equipment purchases and/or that include the following proposed activities or operations are ineligible for funding:

- Marketing of food products and/or services, as well as direct food product sales to wholesale and retail market outlets;
- Marketing of food products and/or services, as well as food product sales direct-to-consumers;
- Conducting activities related to research and development;
- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding; and
- Projects that will or that have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward program(s) may not receive funding *for the same activities* through an RFSI grant, provided, however, that an RFSI grant may build on the successes of prior federal grant funding.
- Value-added food product production that does not comply with the following regulations:

    • At least 51% of the overall value-added product contents must be comprised of locally grown food crops/products that were produced from Texas' agricultural producers. These ingredients must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.
    • Any percentage of ingredients sourced not from Texas' agricultural producers but rather from other sources, representing the minority contents of the overall value-added product, must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.

For specific examples of ineligible equipment items, please refer to RFGA section, "*Project Types*," subsections, "*A – G*." For a more comprehensive list of ineligible items and activities, please also see RFGA Section, "*Budget Development Information*," sub-section, "*E. Ineligible Expenses*."

Equipment-Only Grant Framework

Equipment-Only Grants

This grant is available to eligible entities and only allows for the purchasing of equipment. Expenses can include sales tax and shipping costs on eligible equipment units. No other costs will be permitted.

Per USDA regulation for this program, "Equipment" is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more. For more information on what is considered "Equipment" per the RFSI program regulations, please see the RFGA section, "*Equipment Defined*."

Equipment-Only Grant Framework:

Funding minimum: **$10,000.00**
Funding maximum: **$100,000.00**

Match requirement: **None**

Match verification letter requirement: **Only if the proposed equipment unit(s) exceed $100,000.**
Eligibility for reduced match requirement: **Not applicable for Equipment-Only grants**

Project Implementation Period: **1-year to complete project**
Possibility of Project/Grant Contract Extension under extenuating circumstances: **No.**

Project Types

The RFSI Program will focus on funding Equipment-Only Grants with proposals that:

- Expand capacity for processing, aggregation and distribution of locally grown agricultural products to create more and better markets for Texas agricultural producers;
- Support the development of value-added products comprised of locally grown food and made available to consumers within the state of Texas;
- Purchase information technology system components related to manufacturing, tracking, and/or storage of locally grown food products.
- Enhance worker safety through investment in equipment improvements via replacements;
- Improve the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements;
- Support the purchase of specialized equipment, such as processing components, sorting equipment, packing and labeling equipment, or delivery vehicles;
- Purchase equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality; and
- Increase storage space, including cold storage.

Applications should exhibit project proposals with equipment purchases that fall within one or more of the following project types/focus areas:

A. Aggregation
TDA will consider projects that support the expanded capacity for the aggregation of local and regional food products eligible under the RFSI Program.

Eligible equipment examples include, but are not limited to:
- Forklift: to increase the efficiency of food aggregation operations.
- Grain bin: for aggregating/storing grains for human consumption.
- Information technology system software: to track, trace, store, and/or label local and regional food products for aggregation operations.
- Electric pallet jack

Aggregation project proposals should demonstrate the potential impact to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the potential impact to establish new market outlets for the locally grown food products stated.

B. Processing

TDA will consider projects that support the expanded capacity for the processing of local and regional food products eligible under the RFSI program. (meat and poultry processing is <u>not</u> eligible under the RFSI program)

Eligible equipment examples include, but are not limited to:
- Post-harvest, food product cleaning equipment such as produce or egg washing/sanitization units.
- Post-harvest grading equipment such as sizers, sorters, conveyors, etc. for food products that are eligible under the RFSI program.
- Equipment designed for drying, hulling, shelling, threshing, and/or milling food products that are eligible under the RFSI program.
- Equipment designed for dairy pasteurization

Processing project proposals should demonstrate the potential impact to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the potential impact to establish new market outlets for the locally grown food products stated.

C. Manufacturing

TDA will consider projects that support the expanded capacity for the manufacturing of local and regional food products eligible under the RFSI Program, including value-added products comprised from food crops that eligible under the RFSI Program.

Eligible equipment examples include, but are not limited to:
- Equipment designed for packing, packaging, and labeling marketable food products that are RFSI eligible, including value-added food products.
- Equipment designed to support value-added product production such as cooking, baking, juicing, distilling, dehydrating, and/or fermenting food products that are eligible under the RFSI program.
- Equipment designed to support value-added product production such as slicing, dicing, chopping, mixing, blending or that otherwise add value to food products that are eligible under the RFSI program.
- Equipment designed for jarring, canning, bottling, etc. for marketable food products and value-added food products that are RFSI eligible.

Manufacturing project proposals should demonstrate the potential impact to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the potential impact to establish new market outlets for the locally grown food products and/or value-added food products comprised from locally grown foods that are stated in the proposal.

<u>Please Note:</u>

Value-added food products developed with equipment unit(s) purchased with RFSI federal grant funding must comply with the following regulations:

- At least 51% of the overall value-added product contents must be comprised of locally grown food crops/products that were produced from Texas' agricultural producers. These ingredients must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.
- Any percentage of ingredients sourced not from Texas' agricultural producers but rather from other sources, representing the minority contents of the overall value-added product, must be eligible food crops/products per RFSI program regulations.

D. Storing

TDA will consider projects that support the expanded capacity for the storing of local and regional food products eligible under the RFSI Program, including value-added products comprised from food crops that eligible under the RFSI Program.

Eligible equipment examples include, but are not limited to:
- Cold storage equipment that will store RFSI eligible food products and/or value-added products such as freezers, refrigerators, walk-in cold storage units, etc.
- Grain Bin: for aggregating/storing grains for human consumption.
- Liquid holding tanks for eligible RFSI food products

Storing proposals should demonstrate the potential impact to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the potential impact to establish new market outlets for the locally grown food products and/or value-added food products comprised from locally grown foods that are stated in the proposal.

E. Transporting/Distribution

TDA will consider projects that support the expanded capacity for the transportation/distribution of local and regional food products eligible under the RFSI Program.

Eligible equipment examples include, but are not limited to:
- Specialized equipment such as delivery vehicles (box trucks), including refrigerated vehicles (reefer trucks), to get RFSI eligible food products and/or value-added products to either wholesale or retail market outlets for eventual/anticipated consumer purchase.
- Refrigerated trailers to get RFSI eligible food products to aggregation, processing, storage, and/or co-packer facilities for middle-of-the-food-supply-chain-operations.

Transportation/Distribution project proposals should demonstrate the potential impact to create new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the potential impact to establish new market outlets for the locally grown food products and/or value-added food products comprised from locally grown foods that are stated in the proposal.

Project Types Continued: Other Funding Areas and Priorities

The information provided below does not represent standalone project types under the RFSI Equipment-Only Grant. Instead, these are additional funding areas and priorities that may align with the eligible project types outlined in the previous RFGA section titled "Project Types," subsections A–E.

Project types that also contribute to any of the following areas will receive the corresponding scoring consideration within the evaluation and selection phase of applications, contingent on the applicant's comprehensiveness, completeness, and overall quality provided for this information, if applicable.

Food Safety

TDA will consider projects that support improved food safety along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain for the expanded capacity to aggregate, process, manufacture, store, and/or distribute locally and regionally produced food products including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:
- Purchasing equipment that will improve the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements.

Project proposals claiming improved food safety measures should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will improve food safety in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations.

Employee/Worker Safety

TDA will consider projects that support improved worker safety along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain for the expanded capacity to aggregate, process, manufacture, store, and/or distribute locally and regionally produced food products including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:
- Enhance worker safety through investment in equipment improvements via replacements

Project proposals claiming improved worker safety measures should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will improve worker safety in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations.

Environmental Stewardship
TDA will consider projects that implement measures to support environmental stewardship along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain for the expanded capacity to aggregate, process, manufacture, store, and/or distribute locally and regionally produced food products including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:
- Purchasing equipment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases efficiency in water use, improves air and/or water quality for middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities.

Project proposals claiming improved environmental stewardship should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will better support environmental stewardship in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations.

Local Food Systems Development in Rural Texas

TDA will consider projects that help keep profits in rural communities allowing farmers, ranchers, and/or small food businesses along the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain in these areas to retain more of the value chain dollar and/or that create more economic opportunities and resiliency for local Texas communities in rural areas.

Project proposals claiming local food systems development in rural Texas should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will better support local food systems development in rural areas of the state as a result of the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations with said equipment investments.

The definition of "rural," for the purposes of the RFSI program, is defined in this RFGA's section entitled "Other Information."

Project Types Continued: Ineligible Equipment Examples

The RFSI program does not support activities at the "beginning of the food supply chain", such as agricultural production—including farming and related operations—or the harvesting of food. Equipment items pertaining to such activities or operations are ineligible for funding.

Some examples of ineligible beginning-of-the-food-supply-chain equipment items include but are not limited to:

- Tractors, Balers, Plows, Cultivators, Harvesters, etc.
- Irrigation systems equipment
- Orchard cabs

- Tilling machinery
- Hay and forage equipment
- Planting and seeding equipment
- Aquaponics systems equipment
- Composting equipment
- ATVs (All-Terrain Vehicles), RTVs (Rough Terrain Vehicles), UTVs (Utility Terrain Vehicles), or a Pickup Truck used as an "On-Farm" or "On Site" vehicle for agricultural production activities including but not limited to moving/hauling supplies or structures such as drip irrigation, beehives, mobile chicken coops, row covers, farming tools, etc.
- Honey extractors
  - This is considered "harvesting," which is an agricultural production activity that occurs at the beginning-of-the-food-supply-chain.

The RFSI program does not support "end-of-the-food-supply-chain," activities or operations i.e. direct-to-market and/or direct-to-consumer activities such as the marketing of food products and/or services, as well as food product sales. Equipment items and/or proposed expenses pertaining to such activities or operations are ineligible for funding.

Some examples of ineligible end-of-the-food-supply-chain equipment items include but are not limited to:

- "Merchandiser" refrigerators, countertop models or otherwise
- E-Commerce platforms: hardware and/or software
- Signage for marketing/sales of any kind and/or any equipment that creates such signage
- Mobile Farmers' Market vehicles ("Veggie Vans" or otherwise)
- Mobile Restaurant(s) ("Food Trucks") vehicles
- Vehicles for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program deliveries i.e. "Farm Box/Food Box" subscription deliveries
- Restaurant food delivery vehicles

The above examples are considered either "direct-to-market" and/or "direct-to-consumer" marketing/sales.

Other equipment items that are ineligible for RFSI funding:

- Generators

Project Types Continued: Vehicles

Listed below are examples of eligible vehicles per RFSI program regulations.

Middle of the food supply chain – **Allowed & Eligible for RFSI funding**

- Distribution/Transport: Vehicles (post-harvest) to distribute processed local food products and/or manufactured local food products, including value-added food products comprised from local food to wholesale warehouses/centers, aggregation facilities/food hubs, and/or retail markets such as grocery stores, farmers' markets, restaurants, etc.
  - Box Trucks
  - Refrigerated Box Trucks (Reefer Trucks)
  - Trailers, including Refrigerated Trailers
  - Other vehicles, including other refrigerated vehicles that can be justified for meeting the above eligibility criteria
- Aggregation: Equipment used for local food aggregation operations in a food aggregation, processing, manufacturing, and/or storage facility.
  - Forklift
  - Electric Pallet Jack

Funding Parameters, Award Information, and Notification

- State, local, or tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges, and universities will be subject to 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

- Applicants may be awarded funding at varying levels depending on the nature of the project.

- Applications must demonstrate strong justification for the requested budget, as well as the potential for providing significant demonstrable benefits to Texas' middle of the food supply chain.

- Where more than one (1) application on an eligible project type is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between applicants or revision/adjustment to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.

- TDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications submitted. TDA is under no legal or other obligation to execute a grant agreement on the basis of a response submitted to this RFGA. TDA shall not pay for any costs incurred by any entity in responding to this RFGA.

- Written notifications on award decisions will be made to all applicants and their affiliated agencies, organizations, or institutions. Favorable decisions will indicate the amount of award, duration of the grant, and any special conditions associated with the project.

Term of Funding or Duration of Projects

TDA anticipates that applications selected to move to the USDA review will receive a preliminary selection of applications notification in August 2025, or as soon thereafter as practical. A Final Notice of Grant Award notice will be given upon approval from USDA. All approved grant projects

for the "Equipment-Only" grant type will have a grant term of one year/twelve months upon receiving USDA approval to complete their project/equipment purchases.

Application Package

Interested applicants (Applicant) must provide the following information:

a. **Applicant Contact Information**
b. **Administrative Upload Forms**– Must upload the completed following documents:
   i) Required - Application for Texas Identification Number Form
   ii) Required - Direct Deposit Authorization Form
   iii) Required - W-9 IRS Federal Tax Form
   iv) Supplemental Uploads include:
      (1) Required - RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile
      (2) Required - RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnaire
      (3) Required - Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter
      (4) Required - Letter(s) of Support from Texas Agricultural Producer(s)
      (5) Required - Cost quote or market research to show fair estimate of expense
      (6) *Optional* – Equipment-Only Match Verification Letter, if applicable
      (7) *Optional* - Additional supporting documentation (e.g. publications, supporting data, reference list, etc.) may be included as supplemental attachments.
c. **Work Plan**
d. **Budget Narrative/Justification**
e. **Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire**
   i. Copy or hyperlink to applicant's written accounting policies and procedures.
   ii. Copy or hyperlink to applicant's written internal controls for Federal awards.
   iii. Copy or hyperlink to applicant's most recent financial audit conducted. See below for options.
      • Single Audit, if applicable
         ▪ All non-federal entities that expend $750,000 or more of federal awards in a year are required to obtain an annual audit in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for federal Awards. Additional information can be found on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Policy Statements web page;
         ▪ The Single Audit also must be submitted to any pass-through entity, if applicable; and

- Copies of the audit report must be made available to the public, which can be accomplished by posting a link to the report from the entity's website;
- Audited Financial Statements; or
- IRS Form 990.

f.   **Certification**

Failure to submit any of the required information or forms listed below will result in application disqualification (DQ), unless otherwise noted in the chart. If certain required information is missing but not grounds for disqualification (DQ), TDA will need to obtain it from the applicant before conducting an administrative and technical review or issuing a Conditional Notice of Grant Award (NOGA). If the applicant fails to provide the information on time, causing significant delays or preventing the review, the application will then be disqualified (DQ).

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Information or Form	Required (Y/N)	Grounds for DQ (Y/N)	Where to obtain from	Where to enter info or submit/upload form
EIN Number	**Yes**	No	Federal Government - IRS	1. In TDA-GO User Profile under "Organization" On the "Application for Texas Identification Number" Form
UEI Number	**Yes**	**Yes**	Federal Government – SAM.gov	1. In TDA-GO User Profile under "Organization" On the "RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile" Form
Application for Texas Identification Number Form	**Yes**	No	Download link is within the TDA-GO Online Application module	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field indicated "Application for Texas Identification Number" (where you downloaded the form)
Direct Deposit Authorization Form	**Yes**	No	Download link is within the TDA-GO Online Application module	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field indicated "Direct Deposit Authorization" (where you downloaded the form)

Information or Form	Required (Y/N)	Grounds for DQ (Y/N)	Where to obtain from	Where to enter info or submit/upload form
W-9 IRS Federal Tax Form	**Yes**	No	Download link is within the TDA-GO Online Application module	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field indicated "W-9 IRS Federal Tax Form" (where you downloaded the form)
RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile Form	**Yes**	**Yes**	Download from the TDA website	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" **There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.**
RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnaire Form	**Yes**	**Yes**	Download from the TDA website	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)"

Information or Form	Required (Y/N)	Grounds for DQ (Y/N)	Where to obtain from	Where to enter info or submit/upload form
				There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.
Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter (Template Form) *At least one*	**Yes**	**Yes**	Download from the TDA website	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" **There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.**
Letter(s) of Support from Texas Agricultural Producer(s) (Template Form) *At least one Letter of Support from a Texas Agricultural Producer must be submitted*	**Yes**	**Yes**	Download from the TDA website	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" **There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.**
Cost Quote for Equipment	**Yes**	**Yes**	Vendor of applicant's choosing	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application.

Information or Form	Required (Y/N)	Grounds for DQ (Y/N)	Where to obtain from	Where to enter info or submit/upload form
				Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" **There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.**
Equipment-Only Match Verification Letter (Template Form) *only applies to an applicant whose proposed equipment purchase(s) exceed $100,000 by any amount*	No	No	Download from the TDA website	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" **There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.**
Additional supporting documentation	No	No	Optional and created by applicant	Online Application in TDA-GO in the "Administrative Form Uploads" Section of Application. Upload the form in the field labeled "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)"

Information or Form	Required (Y/N)	Grounds for DQ (Y/N)	Where to obtain from	Where to enter info or submit/upload form
				There is no specific indicator. Upload within this section anywhere.

Risk Assessment & Monitoring

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.331(b), TDA will evaluate each awarded applicant's risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the grant award for the purposes of determining the appropriate monitoring.

To evaluate this risk and determine the appropriate level of monitoring, the applicant must complete and submit the Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire as part of the grant application package by the deadline stated in this RFGA. Responses from this questionnaire will be inserted into a program risk assessment tool.

The risk assessment is based on a score from 1 to 100 points and takes into consideration the following information:

- Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire;
- Recent history of performance with TDA grant programs (any open grants and grants closed within the last five years);
- Alignment of the pending application with the statutory authority of the grant program, as well as program regulations and policies; and
- Audits, reviews, and/or reported findings, if applicable.

Evaluation and Selection Information

The entire grant application package will be evaluated on its comprehensiveness, completeness, and overall quality. An administrative review will be conducted by TDA to determine whether the applicant was adequately responsive to the requirements of this RFGA. TDA will take into consideration the status of any open project's progress from any other grant program administered by TDA, timely expenditure of funding on previous projects/utilization rate, performance report compliance, and risk assessment score. For applicants that do not have previous grant awards from one or more of TDA's grant programs, TDA will ensure the prior considerations do not cause a disadvantage to the application submitted.

Based on the application requirements set forth above, a review panel including internal and external experts and/or stakeholders will competitively review all applications to evaluate each project's ability to support the expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, and/or distribution of locally and regionally produced food products including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

- **Project Relevance to RFSI Program Goals (Up to 12 points maximum):**
  Rate how well the applicant's proposed project meets the overall goals of the RFSI Program, as designated by USDA.

- **Overall Project Need & Potential Impact: (Up to 12 points maximum):**
  Rate how well the applicant illustrates the need for RFSI funding in their business, community/region, agricultural industry sector in Texas, and/or farmer group, as well as the potential impact of the proposed project on the local/regional food system(s).

- **Project Beneficiaries (Up to 10 points maximum):**
  Score based upon the number of agricultural producers, including groups thereof, cited as project beneficiaries. This claim should be supported through a detailed explanation in the proposal narrative of the project activities that describe who and how the cited number of agricultural producers will benefit from the equipment unit(s) investment(s).

- **Equipment Locale (Up to 6 points maximum):**
  Score based upon the location where the equipment will be physically placed within the state, using an exact address(es). Applicants must refer to the rural designation definition listed in this RFGA's "Other Information" section to determine the appropriate response for this section.

- **Project's Potential Impact Area (Up to 8 points maximum):**
  Score based upon the intended project impact area, by majority, benefiting agricultural producers in Texas, as well as the intended project impact area, by majority, increasing Texas grown-food product and/or value-added food product availability in either wholesale and/or retail markets in Texas. Applicants must refer to the rural designation definition listed in this RFGA's "Other Information" section to determine the appropriate response for this section.

- **Food Safety (Up to 4 points maximum):**
  Rate how well the applicant communicates the purchase of new and/or replacement of equipment that improves food safety measures for the corresponding middle of the food supply chain function that the equipment unit performs, if applicable to the project. Project proposals claiming improved food safety measures should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will improve food safety in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations. For example, purchasing equipment that will improve the capacity of entities to comply with federal, state, and local food safety requirements, providing specifics on which requirements are being addressed and for which food product(s) being either aggregated, processed,

manufactured, stored, and/or distributed from the equipment being purchased with RFSI grant funding.

- **Employee/Worker Safety (Up to 4 points maximum):**
Rate how well the applicant communicates the purchase of new and/or replacement of equipment that improves worker safety measures for the corresponding middle of the food supply chain function that the equipment unit performs, if applicable to the project. Project proposals claiming improved worker safety measures should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will improve worker safety in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations.

- **Environmental Stewardship (Up to 4 points maximum):**
Rate how well the applicant communicates the purchase of new and/or replacement of equipment that has environmental benefits, if applicable to the project. Project proposals claiming improved environmental stewardship should adequately communicate the degree by which said equipment investments will better support environmental stewardship in the applicant's middle-of-the-food-supply-chain operations. The potential impact in this regard includes, but is not limited to, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, increasing efficiency in water use, improving air and/or water quality, etc. for middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities.

- **Market Opportunity (Up to 10 points maximum):**
Rate how well the applicant's proposed project plans to address the following:

  o Creating new and/or better market opportunities for agricultural producers in Texas, including those who may not have access to value-added opportunities and/or food processing, storage, and distribution resources to meet market demand for locally grown food products and/or manufactured, value-added food products made from locally grown food.

    Market opportunities in this regard refer to the capacity by which Texas' agricultural producers can more easily, and at greater volumes, access and utilize resources to get their locally grown food products aggregated, processed, manufactured, stored, and/or distributed to wholesale and/or retail market outlets.

  o Establishing new market outlets for locally grown food products and/or manufactured, value-added food products made from locally grown food as a result of equipment investments

    Market outlets in this regard refer to wholesale and/or retail markets.

- **Equipment Maintenance Plan (Up to 10 points maximum):**

Rate how well the applicant communicates addressing the on-going upkeep, maintenance, and other potential recurring costs associated with equipment purchased with RFSI funds.

- **Outcomes / Performance Measures (Up to 10 points maximum):**
  Review how the applicant plans to collect and track performance measurables related to expected/stated outcomes throughout the duration of the proposed project and determine how well the applicant plans to address reaching the expected/stated outcomes. Review the selected performance measures and outcomes to determine how realistic and relevant the selections are to the proposed project. These outcomes/performance measures are recorded by the applicant on the "RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile" form as a part of their overall application submission.

EXPECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The outcomes and performance measures below provide a framework that allows grant recipients to track and evaluate project activities. Please provide expected numbers based on the projects scope of work. Select N/A if not applicable to the specific project.

OUTCOME 2: CAPACITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR LOCAL/REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS

Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
2.3	Number of processing equipment units purchased and installed:		☐
2.5	Number of aggregation, storage, distribution equipment units purchased and installed:		☐

OUTCOME 3: INCREASE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF LOCAL/REGIONAL PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS

Indicator	Description	Expected Numbers	N/A
3.2	Number of local/regional agricultural producers who benefited from the new or improved processing/aggregation/storage or distribution capacity:		☐
3.3	Number of new local/regional products processed, aggregated, stored or distributed:		☐
3.4	Number of new value-added products developed:		☐
3.5	Number of new market-outlets established:		☐

- **Budget (Up to 10 points maximum):**
  Review the Budget Narrative to determine how well the applicant demonstrates the reasonableness of the requested amount, relevance to the project's purpose and outcomes, as well as the overall justification for each and all project expenses. The budget for the project as recorded on both the TDA-GO online module and the "RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile" form portions of the overall application should match exactly.

All applications are scored by the individual evaluators that comprise the review panel for the program. Additional points are assigned based on the Risk Assessment Score. CFR, Title 2, Part 200, which outlines grant management requirements, also further defines agency requirements of completing a risk assessment prior to award funding.

Individual evaluator's scores are added together to create a cumulative proposal score and then the risk assessment score is added to determine the application's total score.

Additionally, TDA reserves the right to select project proposals that ensure both diversity in the project types being funded as well as regional representation throughout the entire state as a measure of equitable federal award spending. An application may score well, however, limited amounts of funding from USDA for the RFSI Program means that the selection of projects in these regards is also limited. Final determinations on grant award allocations are made by the USDA-AMS in cooperation with TDA.

Final evaluation scores and reviewer comments will be provided to applicants following the completion of the technical review of all applications that were submitted and deemed complete and eligible at the time of submission.

Late or Ineligible Applications

- TDA will not consider applications submitted after the published due date unless the deadline has been revised for all applicants.
- TDA will perform an administrative review to determine applicant eligibility and responsiveness to the request for grant applications (RFGA).
- Applications submitted by ineligible applicants will not receive funding consideration.
- Applications that are not fully responsive to the request for grant applications (RFGA) will not be considered during the competitive review process.
- Determinations of late or ineligible applications are final and not subject to an appeal process.
- Problems with computer systems at the applicant organization, Adobe compatibility settings issues, failure to follow instructions in the RFGA, or failure to complete required registrations (e.g., Grants.gov, Sams.gov, UEI Number, etc.) by the submission deadline are NOT considered government system issues and do not constitute grounds for an appeal.
- The RFGA explains the time required to complete these registration requirements. It is Applicant's responsibility to ensure that enough time is committed for adequate submissions by the listed due date and time.
- All required letters and attachments must be attached to the application package.
- Failure to attach documents to the application package correctly are not considered system issues.

Grant Recipient Responsibilities and Accountability

Selected applicants (Grant Recipient) will be responsible for the implementation of the grant project and for the results described in the application. Each Grant Recipient shall monitor the day-to-day performance of the grant funds to assure adherence to statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions. The Grant Recipient must carry out the activities described in the approved scope of work.

Grant Recipients will be accountable for documenting the use of grant funds and must ensure funds are used solely for authorized purposes. Grant Recipients must ensure:

- Funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project,
- Funds are not used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of the grant agreement or applicable law, and
- All required performance reports are completed in a timely manner.

Each Grant Recipient must ensure it has an adequate accounting system in place and good internal controls to ensure expenditures and reimbursements are properly reported to TDA. Complete records relating to the grant project, including accounting records, financial records, performance reports and other documentation, must be maintained for four (4) years after the conclusion of the project or longer if required by TDA.

Reporting Requirements

Grant Recipients will be required to submit periodic performance reports during the grant project implementation period as well as equipment retention/disposition reports after grant project close out until certain conditions are met, outlined below:

Periodic performance reports during the grant project implementation period will include quarterly reports and a final report.

Equipment retention/disposition reports after grant project close out will include an annual equipment property condition and inventory report each year until the depreciated value of each equipment unit depreciates below $5,000 fair-market value.

Reporting timelines are incorporated into the grant agreement. As part of TDA's ongoing monitoring of grant funds, Grant Recipients must demonstrate programmatic and financial progress toward achieving project goals. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in withholding requests for reimbursement and/or termination of the award.

> *Performance Reports due thirty (30) days after the reporting period concludes. This report must be in a narrative format prescribed by TDA and detail the accomplishments of the project objectives for that period. The RFSI Equipment-Only grant will have quarterly performance reporting periods.*

> *The Final Performance Report is due thirty (30) days after project completion, or termination of the Grant Agreement, whichever occurs first. This report must be in a narrative format prescribed by TDA. The final performance report will be provided to USDA documenting Texas' progress on the RFSI State Plan for Texas.*

The following schedule is an example e of the reporting terms for "Equipment-Only" grantees. These dates are not finalized. The dates will be finalized after receiving USDA approval on project proposals submitted for funding, if any.

GRANTEE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS for "Equipment-Only" grantees		
Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program		
Contract Term: 12/1/2025 - 11/30/2026		
	Due Date	Reporting Period
Performance Report 1	3/31/2026	12/1/2025 - 2/28/2026
Performance Report 2	6/30/2026	3/1/2026 – 5/31/2026
Performance Report 3	9/30/2026	6/1/2026 – 8/30/2026
Performance Report 4	12/31/2026	9/1/2026 – 11/30/2026
Final Performance Report	12/31/2026	12/1/2025 - 11/30/2026

Budget Development Information

A. **Payment.** *Grant funds will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis.* Grant Recipients will be required to submit payment requests at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly, in order to show significant financial and programmatic progress. Payment requests must include sufficient documentation that details each expense. Acceptable documentation may include, but is not limited to, invoices, receipts, or detailed information regarding allowable costs, as determined by TDA, in its sole discretion. *Payment requests shall only be submitted by the Grant Recipient to TDA for reimbursement after the Grant Recipient purchases the approved budget item.*

B. **Payment Schedule.** In order to be eligible for reimbursement of a payment request, all reporting requirements must be current. Grant funds shall be paid according to the following schedule:

   a. Up to 90% of the total grant award may be disbursed provided the work for which payment is requested has been completed and proper documentation to substantiate the request has been submitted.
   b. The remaining 10% will only be disbursed once all reporting requirements have been met, including, but not limited to, the Equipment – Acquisition and Retention/Disposition of Property Forms associated with the program and the Final Performance Report.

C. **Advance Payment Options** "Equipment-Only" grants will have no option for a one-time-only advance payment of grant funds.

D. **Eligible Expenses.** All RFSI funded awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the [USDA-AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).

1. Capital Expenditures – Special Purpose Equipment: "Equipment" is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more. For the purposes of the RFSI program, USDA-AMS defines eligible equipment items as "Special Purpose Equipment," which is defined in section 8.2 of the USDA-AMS General Terms and Conditions Failure to secure written approval from TDA will result in disallowance of the cost. Sales tax and shipping for eligible equipment items are allowable expenses that can be covered with RFSI grant funds.

2. Other costs that could potentially be allowed, but contingent on USDA-AMS approval, is what could be considered as "limited installation." Limited installation refers to the set-up of equipment that would not require expenses related to infrastructure costs, such as minor alterations and/or renovations of current infrastructure or the construction of infrastructure for electrical, plumbing, or other utility needs needed to operate the equipment. "Limited installation" can only include cost associated with the assembly of equipment and/or placement of assembled equipment inside the applicant's facility. Adequate justification describing the appropriateness and applicability within the RFSI program must be provided by the applicant in order to be considered for such cost(s).

E. **Ineligible Expenses.** Certain expenses may be prohibited by state or federal law or determined to be ineligible by program guidelines. Some common ineligible expenses for this program include but are not limited to the following:
1. Alcoholic beverages;
2. Entertainment;
3. Tips/ gratuity
4. Contributions, charitable or political;
5. Expenses falling outside of the contract period, including pre-award cost(s);
6. Expenses for items not listed in the project budget or that fail to meet the intent of the program;
7. Expenses that are not adequately documented;
8. Food and Meal reimbursements related to travel, meetings, conferences, or other events;
9. Expenses to hold meetings, a conference, or other events;
10. Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein;
11. Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding;
12. Costs that have been or will be reimbursed by a third party;
13. Costs that support or oppose union organizing;
14. Costs associated with conducting research and development;
15. Costs that only support existing processing capacity for a facility;

16. Indirect Costs
17. Equipment items, including vehicles, pertaining to "beginning-of-the-food-supply-chain," activities/operations i.e. agricultural production activities such as planting, growing, farming, and/or harvesting.
18. Equipment items, including vehicles, pertaining to "end-of-the-food-supply-chain," activities/operations i.e. direct-to-market and/or direct-to-consumer activities such as the marketing of food products and/or services, as well as food product sales.
19. Proposed activities and/or purchases that are not considered "middle-of-the-food-supply-chain" equipment purchases.
20. Project proposals that include the following products are ineligible for funding:
    • Meat and poultry
    • Wild-caught seafood
    • Exclusively animal feed and forage products
    • Fiber
    • Landscaping products
    • Tobacco
    • Dietary supplements
    • Plants that are federally controlled illegal drug plants (e.g. cannabis)

Please reference Allowable and Non-allowable Costs Contained in [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#) for additional guidance.

General Information

Grant Awards.
   • The announcement of preliminary grant awards will be made by the date outlined in this RFGA or as soon thereafter as practical. Selected applicants will receive a Conditional Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) letter from TDA, which will communicate their project being nominated to USDA for funding consideration. Upon USDA approval, selected applicants will receive a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) and a grant agreement from TDA. The NOGA is not legally binding until the grant agreement is fully executed.
   • All grant awards are subject to the availability of appropriations and available funding, as well as necessary authorizations by the Texas Legislature.
   • TDA reserves the right to fund multiple projects partially or fully. TDA reserves the right to negotiate individual elements of any application and to reject any and all applications. Where more than one application is awarded and is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between Grant Recipients or revisions/adjustments to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.

Applications.
   • TDA reserves the discretion and right to reject all applications and is not liable for costs incurred by the applicant in the development, submission, or review of the

application; all costs incurred by the applicant prior to the effective date of a grant award agreement, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.

- TDA reserves the right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if TDA deems any such action to be in the best interest of TDA and of the State of Texas. The decision of TDA will be administratively final in this regard.

Public Information

- In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall process such request in accordance with §552.305 of the Texas Government Code. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel regarding disclosure issues and to take appropriate precautions to safeguard trade secrets or any other proprietary information.
- All applications submitted under this program are subject to release as public information unless the application or specific parts of any such application can be shown to be exempt from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code.

Additional Information

- Assistance is available in English and Spanish. Please call (512) 463-7448 to request assistance.

- In accordance with federal civil rights laws and 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, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact TDA for assistance. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact TDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or Texas Relay 7-1-1. 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, which can be found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html 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.

Reporting Fraud in State Government
- TDA is committed to promoting a culture of integrity within the agency. As part of the agency's commitment, TDA has instituted a Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Prevention Program to provide its employees with the necessary guidance and support to prevent, detect, and eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within the agency. TDA's Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Prevention Program complies with Executive Order RP-36 of July 12, 2004.

- Reports of suspected fraud or illegal activities involving state resources may be made by:
  - contacting the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) Hotline by calling (800) TX-AUDIT (892-8348);
  - visiting the SAO website at (https://sao.fraud.texas.gov/ReportFraud/);
  - contacting TDA by calling the TDA Fraud Prevention Hotline at (512) 475-3423 or (866) 5-FRAUD-4 (866) 537-2834; or
  - sending a written complaint to:
    - ➢ by mail: Texas Department of Agriculture
      1700 N. Congress Avenue
      Austin, TX 78701
    - ➢ by email: fraud@texasagriculture.gov.

General Compliance Information

1. Grant Recipient (an applicant who receives a grant under this program) must comply with TDA's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by a Grant Recipient to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by TDA and shall not relieve the Grant Recipient of his/her responsibilities to TDA for performance of those duties.
2. Grant Recipient must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.
3. Grant Recipient must keep separate records and a bookkeeping account (with a complete record of all expenditures) for a project. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of four (4) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the four-year retention period, then all records and accounts must be retained until their destruction is authorized in writing by TDA. TDA and SAO reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project, including all electronic records, at any time throughout the duration of the agreement until all litigation, claims, negotiations, audits or other action pertaining to a grant is resolved, or

until the expiration of the four-year retention period or a final judgment in litigation, whichever is longer. TDA and SAO shall have access to: all electronic data or records pertaining to the grant project; paper or other tangible documents or records, including the physical location where records are stored; and all locations related to project activities.

4. If Grant Recipient has a financial audit performed during the time Grant Recipient is receiving funds from TDA, upon request, TDA shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, any schedules, and the final report or result of such audit.

5. Grant Recipients must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783 (Uniform Grant and Contract Management Act) and the Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS), along with USDA-AMS General Terms and Conditions;, 2 CFR Parts 200 and 400, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

6. Eligible activities and purchases for the RFSI Program will be subject to the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act.

   Guidance on BABA requirements for USDA sub-award recipients is available here.

7. Grant Recipients must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related applicable agency regulations and instructions, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), other laws and regulations as outlined therein, and any applicable state, local, or tribal laws. A review for NEPA compliance is required prior to the award of grant funds. If selected for an award, applicants must provide all requested information to support compliance with NEPA, NHPA, ESA, and all other federal environmental laws and regulations.

   A Citizen's Guide to NEPA (doe.gov) is a relatively short guide that provides an overview of NEPA requirements.

Other Information

Rural and Rural Area

As defined in 7 CFR 4284.1103, the term, "rural" means any area of a state not in a city or town that has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants according to the latest decennial census of the United States and not in the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants. The terms, "rural" and "rural area" shall be determined as defined in 7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13).

Distressed Communities Index (DCI)

At the direction of the USDA-AMS agency, the Distressed Communities Index (DCI) is a data set being utilized for the RFSI program to understand where equipment investments are being placed/located throughout the state. The Distressed Communities Index can be found here and

is also hyperlinked within the required USDA form, what TDA in this RFGA is referring to as, the "RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile."

DCI score information must be submitted on the USDA developed "RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Profile" Form and must be reflected at the county level. The DCI score at the zip code level will not be accepted. In the event that an applicant records the zip code score on their form, TDA will require the applicant to record the county level score, if selected for a conditional Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) / Preliminary Award Offer from this RFGA opportunity.

SBA's Size Standards Tool
Prospective for-profit organizations operating middle-of-the-food-supply-chain activities that wish to apply must meet the SBA size standard for federal contracting in order to be considered eligible. To see if your organization meets the SBA size standard for federal contracting, please visit SBA's Size Standards webpage and use the Size Standards Tool.

Deadline for Submission of Responses & Contact Information

Applicants must submit one complete, electronically signed application through the TDA-GO system before TDA **11:59 p.m. CT on Thursday, June 12, 2025** (see submission instructions below). Applications may not be supplemented after the submission deadline. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the timely receipt of the application and all required materials.

For questions regarding submission of the application and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office at (512) 463-6616 or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov. TDA staff is available to answer questions regarding the RFSI Program and to provide clarifying information concerning this RFGA. TDA staff will not review any grant proposals prior to the application deadline. Mailed, faxed, emailed or hand-delivered applications will not be accepted.

The online system will date and time stamp the submission for receipt documentation purposes. Click the link to access TDA-GO or copy and paste the following in your browser: https://tda-go.intelligrants.com/.

An automated receipt email will be sent from the TDA-GO system indicating the application has been received.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring their application is submitted in a timely manner. TDA highly recommends applicants submit their application early to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. Late applications due to technical problems or errors will not be accepted.

Program Contacts

Grant Program and Application Support - Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (CT)

TDA staff are available to answer questions regarding the Grant Program and to provide clarifying information concerning this RFGA. TDA staff will not review any grant proposals prior to the application deadline.

<u>Grant Program Support</u>

Ryan Horsak
Grant Specialist
Phone: (512) 463-6616
Email: FoodSystems@TexasAgriculture.gov

Kat Neilson
Lead Grants Specialist
Phone: (512) 463-6695
Email: Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov

Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application. Staff will not be available after 5:00 PM on the date of deadline.

TDA-GO! Access Instructions

Click here to access the TDA-GO website or copy and paste the following in your browser: https://tda-go.intelligrants.com/

Step 1: Accessing Grant Opportunity

The following describes how to access the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Equipment-Only Grant opportunity via TDA-GO! for returning users.

- **Returning users - Log in with your current username and password**
- **New Users – See RFGA section "*TDA-GO! New User Instructions*"**

Dashboard

After logging in, your Dashboard will appear (Figure 1).

- **My Tasks** are documents/applications that are in process;
- **Initiate New Application** are blank grant applications.

Figure 1. Landing page after logging in

Choose the **Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program** by scrolling down the **Initiate New Application** box and select **RFSI - Equipment Grants** (Figure 2 & 3).
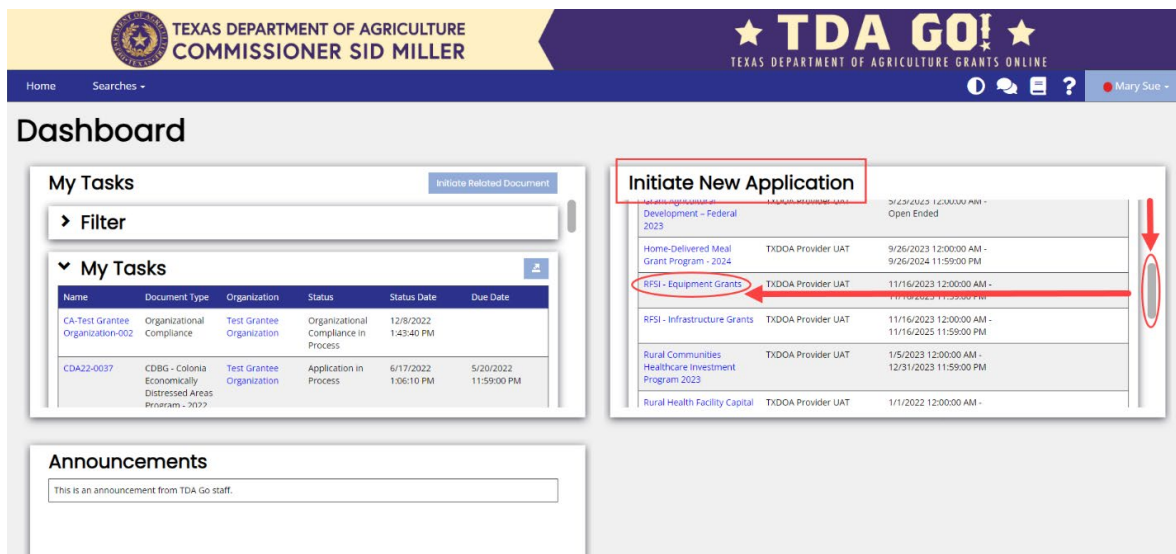
Figure 2. Initiate New Application Box and location of scrolling tool
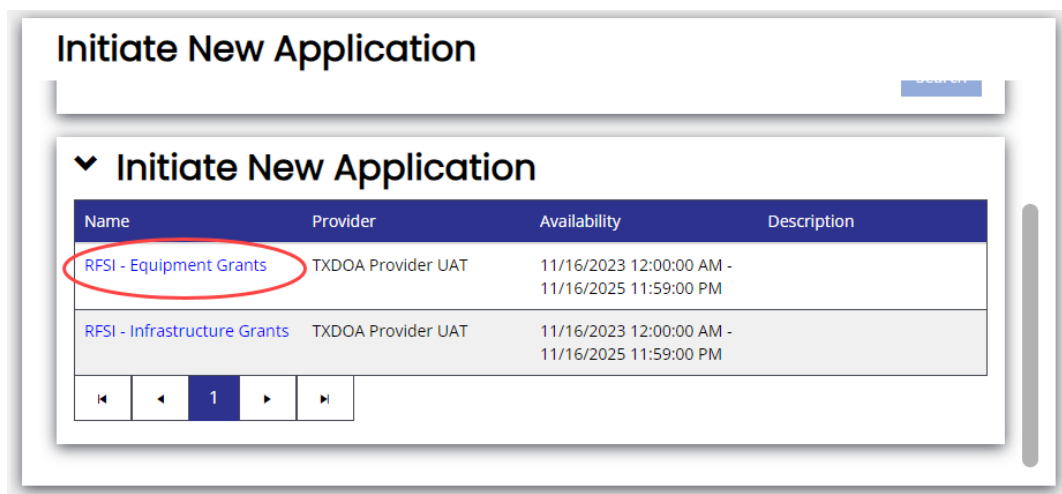
Figure 3. Selection for RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Application. Please note dates are for testing purposes only.

A brief description and agreement language appears (Figure 4). Read and select **Agree**.

Figure 4. Brief Description and Agreement Language

Document Landing Page

After Agree is selected, the Document Landing Page will appear (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Document Landing Page

The left column has your unique Grant Project Number at the top, then four drop down menus: **Forms, Status Options, Tools, and Related Documents.**

- **Forms** is a list of required information including Applicant Contact Information, Administrative Upload Forms, Work Plan, Budget Narrative, Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionaire, and Certification.
- **Status Options** is where the application can be submitted or cancelled.
- **Tools** include Add/Edit People who can access the application, Status History, Attachment Repository, Modification Summary, Document Validation, Notes, and Print Document ability.
- **Related Documents** is not applicable to the application submisson process. You will not need this function to submit your application.

Application Form Guidance

The following section provides additional guidance regarding selected sections of the application. As a reminder, this is a competitive grant application; TDA staff is available to answer questions regarding the program and to provide clarifying information concerning this RFGA. TDA staff will not assist any prospective applicant in writing or crafting their RFSI application package.

TDA staff will not review any grant proposals prior to the application deadline.

Tip: Save your application often. The TDA-GO! System times out and any information you have entered will be lost.

Step 1: Start Application

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Application Contact Information** (Figure 6).
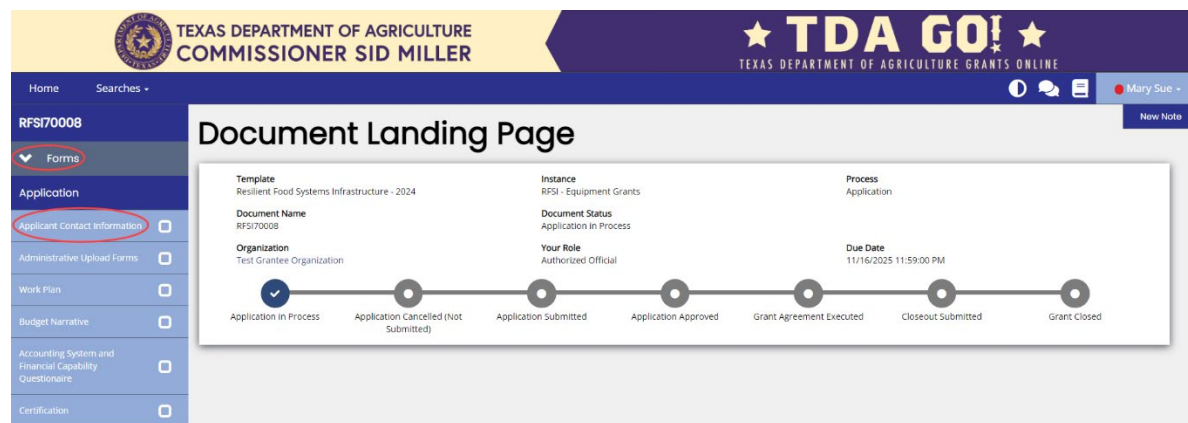
Figure 6. Application Contact Information location

All sections of the Application Form must be completed. See below for specific instructions.

NOTE: All required fields are marked with a *. An error message will appear and the application may not be submitted if these required fields are not filled out (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Example of Required Fields

NOTE: Any field with a Plus (+) button has the ability to add an additional row (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Add additional rows by clicking the plus (+) button

You can delete additional rows by pressing the red minus (-) button (Figure 9)
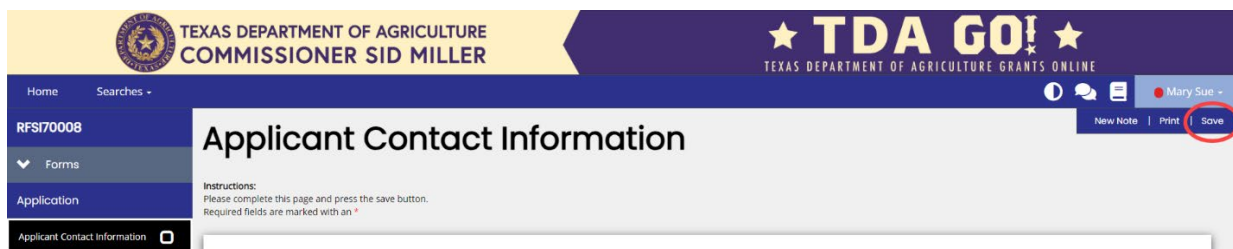
Figure 9. Subtract additional rows by clicking the minus (-) button

After completing the form, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 10). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Regularly save your work by clicking the save button in the upper right hand corner

Figure 11. Error Message of missing required information

Step 2: Complete Administrative Form Uploads

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Administrative Form Uploads** (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Administrative Upload Forms and Supplemental Uploads location

Upload all appropriate documents in Administrative Form Uploads. See below for specific instructions.

NOTE: If a question has a **Select** button in the answer box, you will need to upload the appropriate documentation if applicable (Figure 13). Click on the **Select** button to open the file selection screen.
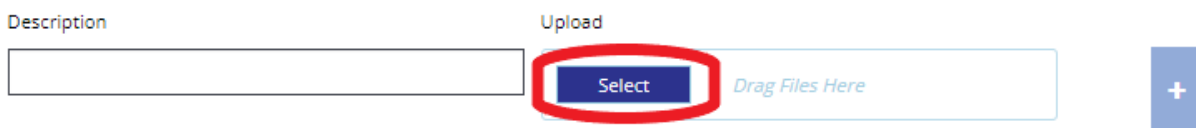
Figure 13. The Select button allows applicant to select and upload the appropriate documentation

Required Financial Forms:
You may download the following forms (Figure 14) by clicking the name of the document in TDA-GO:
- o Application for Texas Identification Number
- o Direct Deposit Authorization
- o W-9 IRS Federal Tax Form

YOU MUST USE THESE FINANCIAL FORMS. NO OTHER FINANCIAL FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Figure 14. Select hyperlinked text to download the appropriate documentation

These required financial forms must be uploaded into the online RFSI Application using the "Select" button feature (Figure 13). Use the below photo as a guide (Figure 15):

Figure 15. Upload completed financial forms here, using the "Select" button feature.

Other Required Supporting Documentation: Applicants must upload all required and relevant additional documentation in the "Supplemental Uploads" field(s). Click the **Select** button to add a file. Additional documents may be added by clicking the **plus** (**+**) button (Figure 13).

The following forms detailed below must be downloaded from the TDA RFSI website:

The following forms detailed below must be uploaded into the online RFSI Application as seen here using the "Select" button feature (Figure 13) for the "Supplemental Uploads" option (Figure 16):

Figure 16. Upload completed forms, which were originally obtained by the applicant from TDA's website. Use the "Supplemental Uploads" option.

You must download the following forms **from the TDA RFSI website. These forms are to be completed and then uploaded into the "Administrative Form Uploads" section using the "Supplemental Uploads" field(s)** as explained above:

- o RFSI Equipment-Only Project Profile Form
- o RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnaire Form
- o Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter
- o Letter(s) of Support from Texas Agricultural Producer(s)

Other required documentation to be uploaded **into the "Administrative Form Uploads" section using the "Supplemental Uploads" field(s)** as explained above:

- o Equipment Cost quote or market research to show fair estimate of equipment expense(s).

Optional documentation to be uploaded **into the "Administrative Form Uploads" section using the "Supplemental Uploads" field(s)** as explained above:

- o Match Verification Letter, if applicable.
    - o Only if equipment item(s) exceed $100,000.
- o Additional supporting documentation (e.g. publications, supporting data, reference list, resumes, etc.) may be included as supplemental attachments.

Below is a breakdown of the required forms mentioned above:

RFSI Equipment-Only Project Profile Form:

This Project Profile form (Figure 17) is required by USDA-AMS for the RFSI grant program. This form captures the project narrative sections of the overall application package.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RFSI EQUIPMENT-ONLY GRANT PROPOSAL

The RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Proposal should include a project narrative that describes the overall scope of the project and how it aligns with the program goals and priorities. Applicants must attach documentation to substantiate the costs of each piece of equipment, which can include contracts, catalog pricing, or binding quotes provided by license commercial entities.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Organization Name:

UEI:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Physical Address

Street:

City:

State:

Zip:

Mailing Address (If different from above)

Street:

City:

State:

Zip:

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

List the person who will be the main contact for any correspondence and is responsible for signing any documentation should the grant be awarded.

Name:

Title:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

1

Figure 17. First page of the RFSI Project Profile form

This form must be dowloaded from the TDA RFSI website, completed, and then uploaded into the online application..

An instructional video for how to download, open, and view the form is posted on the TDA RFSI website for applicants to reference. This video was made by USDA-AMS and given to TDA for this purpose.

Key Section: Applicant must ensure the section depicted below (Figure 18) from the Project Profile form is complete is complete.

DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES INDEX

Using the Distressed Communities Index Map, provide the community distress score for the county(ies) benefiting from your project.

Note: U.S. Territories are not required to submit Distressed Communities Index data.

Click the + or - button to add or remove items as needed.

FOR EXAMPLE:

County 1: Enter County name   Distress Score1: Enter County Distress Score
County 2: Enter County name   Distress Score2: Enter County Distress Score

+	County	Distress Score
-		
-		

Figure 18. Distressed Communities Index section on Project Profile form.

The Distressed Communities Index can be found here and is also hyperlinked within the USDA form. **The DCI score must be at the county level**. The DCI score at the zip code level will not be accepted.

RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnaire Form:

This form depicted below (Figure 19), must be dowloaded from the TDA RFSI website, completed, and then uploaded into the online application in the applicable section .

This is a required supplemental form to capture information necessary to conduct the technical review of the application for the RFSI program.

Figure 19. First page of the RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnare form

Applicants will need a pdf file reading sofware such as Abode Acrobat in order to complete/fill in the form fields.

Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter (Template):

Dowloaded this required form depicted below (Figure 20) from the TDA RFSI website, complete, and then uploaded into the online application in the applicable section.

This letter(s) is required to identify the key resources and infrastructure that the applicant organization currently has or can access (such as through partnerships with other organizations or their own resources). These resources must work together with the equipment being purchased using the grant funds to support activities in the middle of the food supply chain, like aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, or distribution.

Replace information in grey
Delete information in yellow

[On Letterhead of Organization Providing the Critical Resource or Infrastructure]

Texas RFSI Equipment-Only Grant Project Proposal
EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

[Name of Applicant Organization's Authorized Official (AO)/Project Director]
[Applicant Organization Name]
[City, State, Zip Code]

[Enter date]

If another organization/multiple organizations will be contributing resources to the project that will work in concert with the equipment being purchased with grant funding to perform a middle-of-the-food-supply chain function, then a letter should be addressed from each partner organization contributing the critical resource/infrastructure that will make the project happen/perform the middle-of-the-food-supply chain function and be addressed to the lead applicant.

For example, an organization other than the lead applicant will be housing the equipment at their facilities because the lead applicant does not have the critical infrastructure/resources to house the equipment being purchased.

Dear [Lead Applicant Organization's Project Director]:

If the lead applicant has all critical resources and infrastructure that will make the project happen in their possession and/or there are no other partner organizations that will be contributing resources to the project that will work in concert with the equipment being purchased with grant funding to perform a middle-of-the-food-supply chain function, then this letter can be addressed to TDA and USDA stating such.

Dear TDA & USDA-AMS:

We [include a statement about committing/approving/granting permission, etc. of the critical resource or infrastructure that will work in concert with the equipment being purchased with grant funding to perform a middle-of-the-food-supply chain function, stating said function] to the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program in Texas under the project proposal titled, " [Grant Project Title], within the twelve month implementation period in the following way:

[Describe the approved use of the critical resource or infrastructure approved for the project, any costs associated with its use, and any qualifying circumstances for its use.

Some examples of what Critical Resources and Infrastructure can be:

- Aggregation, processing, manufacturing, and/or storage facilities for local food
    o If owned by a partner or the lead applicant organization, please state such and provide a full address.
    o If leased by a partner or the lead applicant organization, please state such and provide a full address (this organization is attesting that they have received permission from the facility owner).

Figure 20. First page of the Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter Template

Applicants will need word processing sofware such as MicroSoft Word in order to complete the letter(s) needed for their project.

Please note: *At least one "Evidence of Critical Resources and Infrastructure" letter must be submitted.*

Letter(s) of Support from Texas Agricultural Producer(s) (Template):

This required form depicted below (Figure 21), must be dowloaded from the TDA RFSI website, completed, and then uploaded into the online application in the applicable section.

This letter(s) is required to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project in "creating new and/or better market opportunities for small and mid-sized agricultural producers in Texas."

Replace information in grey
Delete information in yellow

[On Letterhead of Organization, if applicable]

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE

[Name of Authorized Organizational Representative]
[Organization Name]
[City, State]

Dear USDA-AMS & the Texas Department of Agriculture,

[Short introduction describing organization's location, operations/mission, and how its applicable to the RFSI Applicant's proposed project.]

The grant project proposed by [RFSI Applicant's Name] will help my organization to / by... [choose one or more of the following:]

- Aggregate more of my Texas-grown food for wholesale or retail markets
- Purchasing higher volumes of my Texas-grown food products from my organization
- Providing my business access to process more of my Texas-grown food products
- Allowing my business to have the capacity/access to manufacture value-added products from my Texas-grown food
- Allowing my business to have the capacity/access to store more of my Texas-grown food products
- Distribute my products to wholesale and/or retail markets in Texas
- Allowing my company's products to have more market outlets for
    - Choose:
        - Aggregating
        - Processing
        - Manufacturing
        - Storing
        - Wholesale or retail market distribution
- Other appropriate and applicable activity/activities that meet RFSI program goals

Provide specifics based on the response above (location/geography, estimated food product quantities, etc.)

We look forward to working with [RFSI Applicant's Name] in the future [or similar sentiment].

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Printed Name
Title (e.g., Executive Director, Owner, etc.)
Address and telephone number, if that information is not already on the letterhead

Figure 21. First page of the Support Letter from Texas Agricultural Producer(s) Template

Applicants will need word processing sofware such as MicroSoft Word in order to complete the letter(s) needed for their project.

Please note: *At least one Letter of Support from a Texas Agricultural Producer must be submitted.*

If no other agricultural producers, besides the applicant, are benefiting from the proposed project, the required support letter should come from an individual or food business in the community/local food product market space that can attest to, and provide information on, how the applicant's proposed project will benefit, and lead to the further development of, the local/regional food system(s) of their area within the state of Texas.

If the applicant fails to provide at least one letter(s) of support, the application will be considered incomplete and ineligible for funding.

Cost quote to show fair estimate of equipment expense(s):

This is required documentation that must be submitted by the applicant in order to be considered for funding. Cost quotes should be provided by a vendor supplying eligible middle-of-the-food-supply chain equipment items and include a description of the item that indicates what the item's function is, base price of the product, sales tax, shipping, and grand total cost.

Cost quotes including pictures/depictions of the equipment item are encouraged but not mandatory.

Cost quote documentation must be uploaded into the online application as explained above.

Match Verification Letter, if applicable:

This is **not required** documentation and only applies to an applicant whose proposed equipment purchase(s) exceed $100,000 by any amount. The applicant will fill out this template letter, depicted below (Figure 22) to indicate that they, the applicant, will cover all cost(s) exceeding $100,000 and that this funding has been secured by the applicant prior to application submission to the RFSI program.

This documentation, if applicable, should be uploaded into the online application in the applicable section. If missing from the application, the application will still be considered for funding provided that all required documentation was submitted. If an application in this scenario gets selected for a conditional Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) / Preliminary Award Offer contingent on USDA approval, the applicant will need to provide this letter/documentation at that time to TDA.

Replace information in grey

[Use Letterhead of Organization Providing the Match]

RFSI Equipment-Only Grant
MATCH VERIFICATION LETTER

[Applicant Organization Name]
[Applicant Organization Address]
[Date]

Dear USDA-AMS and TDA:

We, [Applicant Organization Name], attest to provide any and all additional financial funding for an eligible equipment unit or units that exceed the maximum award threshold of $100,000 allowed under the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) grant program for the Equipment-Only Grant type for application: [Grant Project Title].

1. We attest that cash in the total amount of $XX, which we will provide during the grant implementation period as dictated by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), has been secured prior to our application submission to the grant program.

   a. Funds will be used to cover the remaining monetary difference in the purchase of [provide the specific item(s) corresponding to the budget narrative]

[Signature of Applicant Organization's Authorized Official]
[Printed Name of Applicant Organization's Authorized Official]
[Title]
[Email, address and phone number if not already included on letterhead.]

Figure 22. First page of the (not required) Match Verification Letter Template.

Optional - Additional Supporting Documentation

Optional: Applicants may choose to upload additional supporting documents such as publications, supporting data, reference list, resumes, etc. that are not required by the RFSI Program.

This documentation, if elected by the applicant for voluntary submission, should be uploaded into the online application in the applicable section.

"Administrative Form Uploads" Section, in Review, at a Glance

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In the "Administrative Form Uploads" section, download the required financial forms using the hyperlinks (Figure 14) (Figure 23 depicted below):

Figure 23. Select hyperlinked text to download the appropriate financial forms/documents.

Complete the required financial forms and then upload said completed forms into the "Administrative Form Uploads" section where indicated by the hyperlinked names (Figure 13) (Figure 15) (Figure 24 depicted below):

Figure 24. Upload completed financial forms here, using the "Select" button feature.

Add at least five *supplemental uploads fields* using the "+" button (Figure 8) for the field that reads, "Supplemental Uploads (Press + for additional row)" (Figure 16) (Figure 25 depicted below). This will be for the required forms and information as cited in this section of the RFGA. **Please note**: These required forms do not have a place-holder indicator and can be uploaded into this section in any order.

Figure 25. Upload completed forms, which were originally obtained by the applicant from TDA's website. Use the "Supplemental Uploads" option.

Add any additional rows for additional, optional documentation or if the applicant needs more upload fields for required information such as equipment cost quotes. Additional optional documentation can include: Match Verification Letter and/or the other examples mentioned previously in this section of the RFGA.

==EXTREMELY IMPORTANT INFORMATION BELOW:==

After uploading all required forms, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 10). After clicking the **Save** button, an error message will **appear only if the required financial forms are missing!** (Figure 11). An error message WILL NOT appear if any of the other required forms are missing (the forms uploaded into the "Supplemental Uploads" section described above. These fields cannot be designated with an asterisk in our system. All applicants must ensure the following are in the "Supplemental Uploads" fields in this section (Figure 16) (Figure25):

- o RFSI Equipment-Only Project Profile Form
- o RFSI Equipment-Only Supplemental Questionnaire Form
- o Evidence of Critical Resources & Infrastructure Letter (Template)
- o Letter(s) of Support from Texas Agricultural Producer(s) (Template)
- o Equipment cost quote or market research to show fair estimate of equipment expense(s).

Reminder: The forms and letter templates mentioned above are available and accessed from the TDA RFSI website.

Step 3: Complete Work Plan

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Work Plan** (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Work Plan location. Add additional rows by clicking the plus (+) button on the right hand side.

Instructions: Detail the steps it will take to complete the project, even if the steps include activities that cannot be directly funded by the RFSI Equipment-Only Grant type. For example, if the equipment being purchased with grant funding needs a concrete slab created to support the unit. Although the grant funding cannot directly pay for this activity to occur, the activity needs to occur regardless in order for the equipment to be utilized.

Please include who will complete each task and any resulting deliverable. The timeline should be given for each activity/deliverable and should be progressive (including month and year) to show when each activity will start and end. Be sure to include performance monitoring and reporting.

Examples of Work Plan activities and deliverables, in no particular order (chronological or otherwise) for the RFSI program's Equipment-Only Grant type could look like the following:

Example Activity	Example Deliverable
Clean-up/stage the area in the facility where equipment will be placed/housed	Designated equipment placement area is fully staged, clean-up, and ready for equipment placement.
Land clearing or levelling/ground disturbance, vegetation removal, create concrete slab form, and pour concrete slab.	Concrete slab created to hold equipment unit (for example, cold storage unit) in designated area on property/farm for food aggregation.
Procure/purchase equipment unit number 1 for project site A, located at [address].	Equipment unit number 1 is delivered to project site A, located at [address].

Example Activity	Example Deliverable
Procure/purchase equipment unit number 2 for project site B, located at [different address].	Equipment unit number 2 is delivered to project site B, located at [different address].
Ground trenching with machinery to implement utility lines and three-phase power (or phase converter) to food processing facility.	Electrical power is implemented at food processing facility. Facility is now utility/electrical ready for equipment.
Conduct quality assurance testing on equipment unit number 1 (2,3,etc.) upon receiving equipment unit from vendor	Equipment unit number 1 tested for operational efficieny and quality assurance.
Prepare reimbursement documentation for equipment unit number 1 (2,3,etc.) for submission to TDA	Reimbursement documentation for equipment unit number 1 submitted to TDA via TDA-GO platform. Grant project financial tracking speadsheet/records updated.
Complete required performance report for Project Quarter 1 (2,3,etc.) to USDA/TDA	Performance report for Project Quarter 1 (2,3,etc.) submitted to USDA/TDA
Complete required Final performance report to USDA/TDA.	Final performance report for full project submitted to USDA/TDA.

These are abbreviated examples and the applicant should elaborat in their own application, if applicable, in a proposed Work Plan as a part of an applicant's RFSI Equipment-Only Grant application submission.

After completing the Work Plan, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 10). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 11).

Step 4: Complete Budget Narrative

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Budget Narrative** (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Budget Narrative location. Budget Summary will auto-populate the circle fields.

Instructions: Complete Equipment budget category as applicable to the project. The Budget Summary at the top will auto-populate as the individual categories are completed (Figure 15).

Only Equipment costs are eligible expenses covered by this grant type in the RFSI Program. All other costs are ineligible and should be left blank. Add additional rows by clicking the plus (+) button on the right hand side. The following is specific instruction related to certain budget areas for the RFSI Program Equipment-Only Grant.

NOTE: EQUIPMENT - Please indicate the item description for each piece of equipment listed. Include desired acquisition date and funds requested. (Figure 28)

Figure 28. Equipment example fields

After completing the Budget Narrative, click the **Save** button in the top right hand corner (Figure 10). After clicking the **Save** button, if any required sections are missing, an error message will appear (Figure 11).

Step 5: Complete Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionaire** (Figure 29).

Figure 29. Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire location

Step 6: Complete Review and Certification

Before completing Step 7 Certification, please review application for completeness and accuracy. Once the application is certified and submitted, an applicant *CANNOT* make any additional changes.

Review each section ensuring all information is correct and there are no error messages. If there are no errors, the section label in the drop down menu will have a check next to it (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Completed section with check mark

If there are error messages in a section, the section label in the drop down menu will have an exclamation point next to it (Figure 31). Return to the applicable section to review and resolve any error messages.

Figure 31. Incomplete section with error messages

Once all error messages are resolved and each section has a check mark as seen in Figure 18, the application may be certified and submitted.

Expand the **Forms** drop down menu and select **Certification** (Figure 32). This section requires an electronic signature from the Authorized Official, so the Authorized Official must be logged into their account.

NOTE: *Only the Authorized Official for your organization may Certify an application.*

To certify your application, the Authorized Official will check the box (Figure 32). The section is then complete. Click **Save** (Figure 10) (Figure 32) in the top right corner.

Figure 32. Certification and check box location

Proceed to step number 7 from this point in the application process.

Step 7: Application Submission

Once the application is certified (e-signed) and complete, you must submit the application within the TDA GO! system.

Expand the **Status Options** drop down menu (Figure 33). Select **Submit Application.**
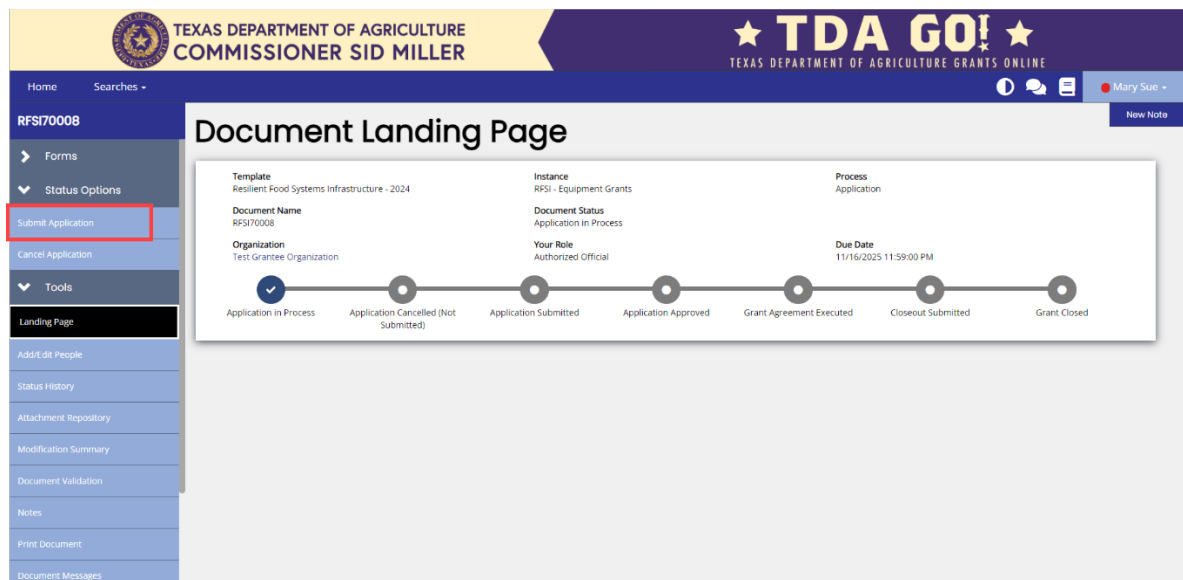
Figure 33. Status Options drop down menu and Application Submitted button location

NOTE: If errors remain, a **Document Validation** message will pop up noting what sections still have errors (Figure 34). You may click on each section name to be directed to the errors.

Figure 34. Document Validation message will appear if you try to submit application with errors

If no errors are detected, the system will ask if you are sure. Once you select submit, you will then be taken back to the **Landing Page** (Figure 35).
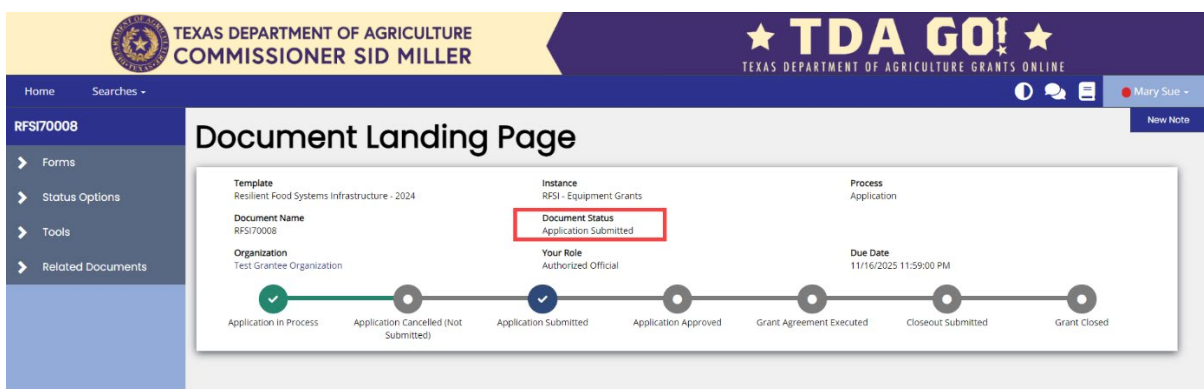
Figure 35. After application submission, you will return to the Document Landing Page.

NOTE: Applications must be submitted by the opportunity due date. The online application will no longer be available after that time. Times identified are based on TDA headquarters (Central Time Zone) and are displayed on your TDA GO! home screen.

Confirmation Email

After submitting your application, you will receive a confirmation email (Figure 36).

From: websites@agatesoftware.com <websites@agatesoftware.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:57 AM

Subject: Application HDM-2021-TGO-00005 Submitted

WARNING: This email originated from outside of the Texas Department of Agriculture email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you expect them from the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you for submitting Application HDM-2021-TGO-00005 for Test Grantee Organization. TDA staff will review and contact the persons identified in the application with any questions or concerns

Figure 36. Example of confirmation email

TDA-GO New User Instructions

Step 1: Registering a New User in TDA-GO!

The following describes how to access the TDA-GO! online grant system by setting up a new user. The applicant must set up a new user acc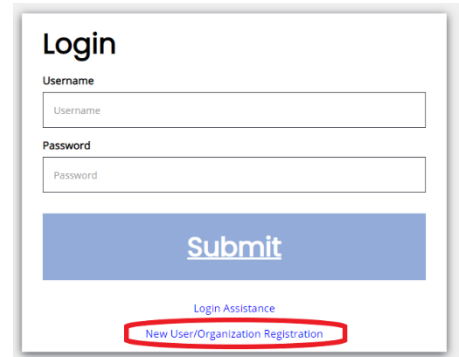ount to access the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Grant application. **THIS MUST BE DONE 48-72 HOURS PRIOR TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION!**

Overall Steps to Getting Access:
- Complete New User Registration
- TDA will approve New User Registration
- New User will receive email of approval
- Once approved, New User can access and complete grant application

To register a New User, complete the following steps:
1) Go to the TDA-GO! website: https://tda-go.intelligrants.com/
2) Click on the **New User/Organization Registration** link found in the Login box on the right side of the webpage.
3) Fill in the required fields and any optional fields desired. See Legend below for specific field instructions. Click on the **Register** button.

Login

Username

Password

Submit

Login Assistance

New User/Organization Registration

Legend
First Name (Required)
Last Name (Required)
SAM (UEI) Number/ FEIN (Required) – enter the FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number) and UEI (Unique Identity Number, also knows as the SAM number for the organization. *See instructions below for Consultant/Researcher role.*
Organization (Required) – Enter FIRST AND LAST NAME (applicant).
Title –(Required)
Street Address (Required)
State (Required)
County (Required)
City (Required)
Zip Code (Required)
Email (Required)
Phone (Required)
Username (Required) –Use your email address.
Password/Verify Password (Required) – the password the registering user (applicant) wishes to register for.
Notes: Enter "***RFSI Grant Applicant***".
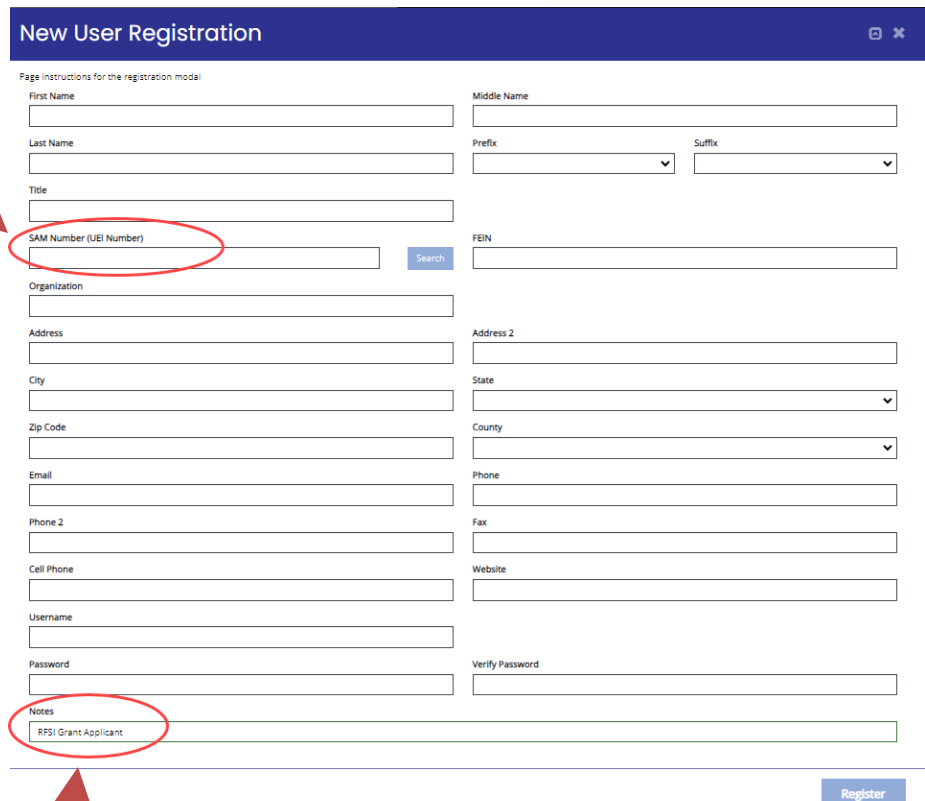
New User Registration

Page instructions for the registration modal

First Name

Middle Name

Last Name

Prefix   Suffix

Title

SAM Number (UEI Number)   FEIN

Search

Organization

Address   Address 2

City   State

Zip Code   County

Email   Phone

Phone 2   Fax

Cell Phone   Website

Username

Password   Verify Password

Notes

RFSI Grant Applicant

Register

4) Click **Register.** The registration for the New User will be sent to TDA staff for approval. You will receive an email indicating approval within 48-72 hours. After approval, the New User can log on and access the TDA-GO! platform.

> **NOTE: If a user attempts to access the system before they have been approved, the system will show their password as invalid.**

You will receive an email confirming registration approval. Once for the organization and another for the user.
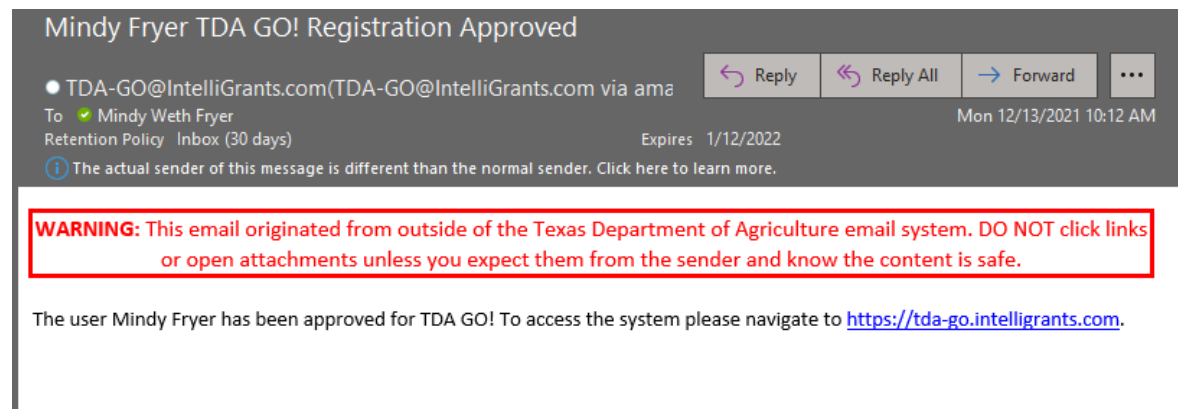

TDA-GO User Roles:

Authorized Official (AO) for Applicant Organizations
Who:	Person authorized to enter into legal agreements on behalf of the organization
Created By:	Initially, the AO is created when the Organization account is established. Additional AO's may be added once Organization account is approved.
TDA-GO tasks:	• Create new user accounts for organization members
	• Initiate an application
	• Complete all required application fields
	• Certify and Submit an application
	• Execute Grant Agreements
	• Initiate/Complete/Submit Payment request/Performance reports

Project Director (PD) for Applicant Organizations
Who:	Personnel involved in grant administration
Created By:	The organization's AO creates and manages PD users
TDA-GO tasks:	• Create new user accounts for organization members
	• Initiate an application
	• Submit an application
	• Complete all required application fields

- Initiate/Complete/Submit Payment request/Performance reports

Consultant/Researcher (C/R)

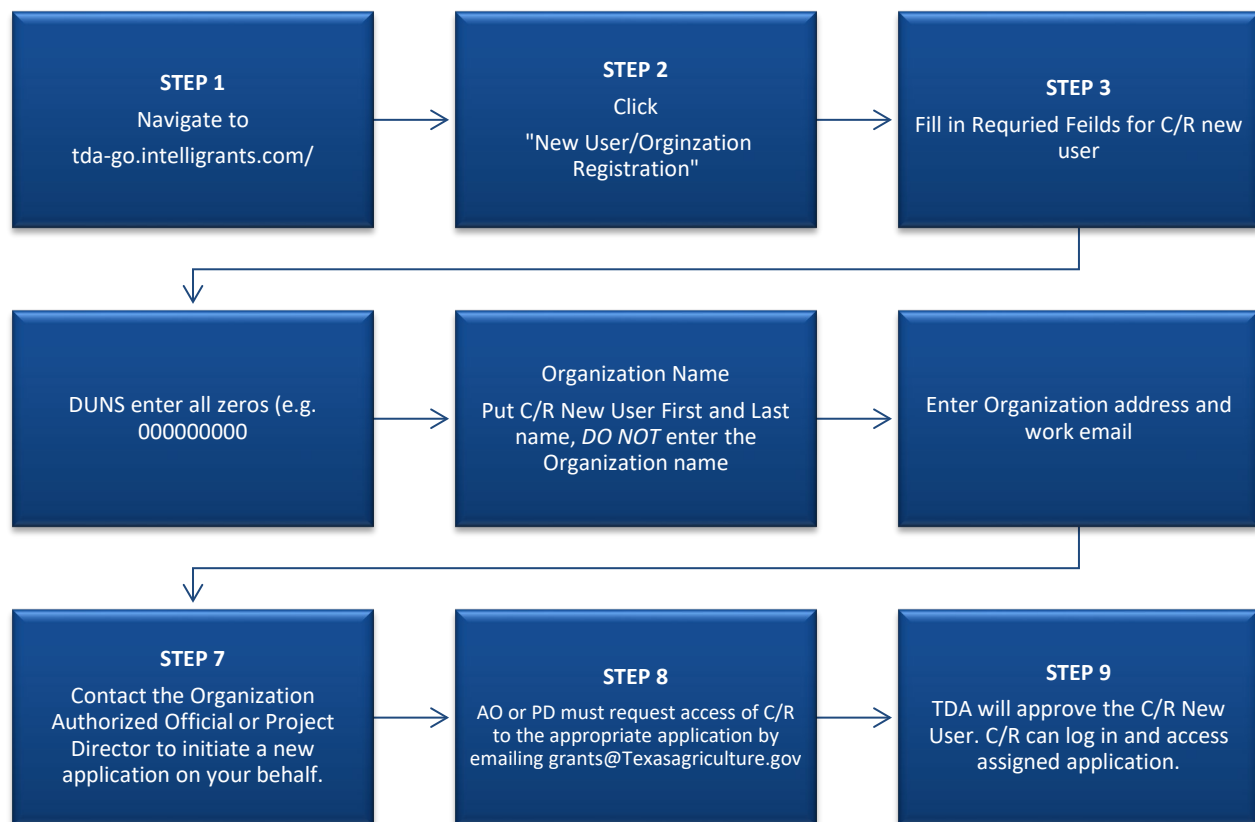|	
Who:	A third-party person assisting with a *single* grant application or employee/researcher/staff/PIs/professors assisting with a *single* grant application.
Created By:	The C/R registers individually as a New User. The AO *DOES NOT* create C/R users.
TDA-GO! tasks:	• Complete all required application fields • Initiate/Complete Payment request/Performance reports

Adding Consultants/Researchers

General Overview for Consultant/Researcher Role

The TDA-GO! System allows organization Staff/Researchers/PIs/Professors or third-party consultants to work directly on a particular application using the Consultant/Researcher (C/R) role. This role allows the organization to maintain privacy and confidentiality of all grant applications and projects in TDA-GO!. The following high-level chart outlines the steps needed for the C/R to gain access to the application. See the following pages for step-by-step instructions.

Note: The Project Director role does not work for project Staff/Researchers/PIs/Professors because this role allows access to all information under the Organization.

See the next page for a flow chart.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Navigate to tda-go.intelligrants.com/	Click "New User/Orginzation Registration"	Fill in Requried Feilds for C/R new user

DUNS enter all zeros (e.g. 000000000)	Organization Name Put C/R New User First and Last name, *DO NOT* enter the Organization name	Enter Organization address and work email

STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9
Contact the Organization Authorized Official or Project Director to initiate a new application on your behalf.	AO or PD must request access of C/R to the appropriate application by emailing grants@Texasagriculture.gov	TDA will approve the C/R New User. C/R can log in and access assigned application.

To register a Consultant/Research New User, complete the following steps:

1) Navigate to TDA-GO! Portal website: **tda-go.intelligrants.com**
2) Click on the ***New User/Organization Registration*** link.

Login

Username

> Username

Password

> Password

Submit

Login Assistance

New User/Organization Registration

3) Fill in the required fields and any optional fields desired. See **Legend** below for specific field instructions. Click the ***Save*** button.

Legend

First Name (Required) – the first name of Consultant/Research (C/R) New User.

Middle Name – the middle name of C/R.

Last Name (Required) – the last name of C/R.

UEI/SAM & DUNS (Required) –Enter all zeros if you are a C/R at a University/College (e.g. 000000000).

Organization (Required) – Enter the name of the C/R New User. *Do not enter the name of the organization.*

Title – the position title of the C/R.

Street Address (Required) – the street address of the organization.

State (Required) – select the state of the organization using the state drop-down menu.

County (Required) – select the county where the organization is located using the county drop-down menu.

City (Required) – the name of the city of the organization.

Zip Code (Required) – the zip code of the organization.

Email (Required) – the email address of the C/R.

Phone (Required) – the phone number of the C/R.

Username (Required) – create a username for the C/R.

Password/Verify Password (Required) – create a password for the C/R.
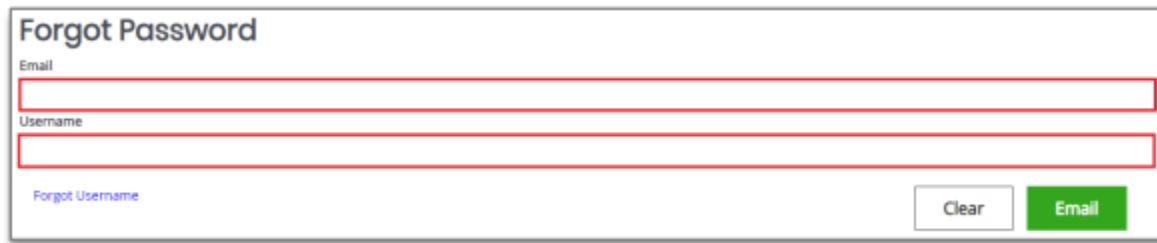
Notes: Enter "*RFSI Grant Applicant*"

4) Once saved, contact the A/O or P/D to initiate the new application the C/R will be accessing.

5) The A/O or P/D must request access for the C/R by emailing Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.

6) Once the request is received, the C/R New User will be approved by TDA-GO! portal staff. Please allow 1 – 2 business days for approval. After approval, the C/R can log on and access the TDA-GO platform.

NOTE: If a user attempts to access the system before they have been approved, the system will show their password as invalid.

Login Assistance

The TDA-GO! portal allows the user to request a password reset be generated and sent to their email address. To do so, complete the following steps:

1) Click on the Login Assistance link.

2) Enter the username and email address. Click on the Email button. A reset link will be sent to the email address supplied.

Forgot Password

Email

Username

Forgot Username   Clear   Email

3) An email like the following will be sent to reset your password:

From: TDA-GO@IntelliGrants.com <TDA-GO@IntelliGrants.com>
Sent: Monday, June 26, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Mindy Weth Fryer <Mindy.Fryer@TexasAgriculture.gov>
Subject: Password Reset

WARNING: This email originated from outside of the Texas Department of Agriculture email system. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you expect them from the sender and know the content is safe.

You have requested a password reset. Please use the link below reset your password. It will expire in 15 minutes.
Reset Password

If you did not request this reset and would like to invalidate and cancel the request, please click here.

4) At that point, the user will be brought directly to the Profile page and requested to create a new password into the Password and Confirm Password fields are available.

NOTE: The password field is case sensitive and will not recognize characters of the wrong case. Precision when entering the password into the password field will decrease the risk of error messages being generated by the system.