

FY2017 Value-Added Producer Grant



Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of the Program
- Eligibility
- Evaluation Criteria & Scoring
- Application Requirements
- Tools for Applicants

WHAT IS VAPG?



Provides funds for economic planning activities or eligible working capital expenses to enable viable Agricultural Producers to develop businesses that produce and market Value-Added Agricultural Products and to create marketing opportunities for such businesses.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

What VAPG is NOT:

- A job training program
- Intended to teach people how to farm
- Intended as a continuous stream of capital or to pad bottom lines
- A technical assistance program



Brief History of VAPG Program

- 2000: Congress creates VAPG and provides \$20 million per year
- 2002: Congress increases funding to \$40 million per year
 - Adds production that is inherently value-added
- 2008: Congress cuts funding to \$15 million over five years
 - Adds special emphasis for MTVC, BFR, SDA, and small- and mid-sized family farms
- 2014: Congress provides \$63 million over five years
 - Adds special emphasis for veterans

Grant Types

Planning

Funds may be used to assist in the development of a feasibility study, business plan, and/or marketing plan related to processing and marketing the value-added product.

Grant Types

Working Capital

Funds may be used to pay for eligible costs associated directly with the processing and/or marketing of the value-added product.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT

- **National Competition**
- **FY2017 Available Funding: \$18 million**
- **FY2017 Application Deadline:**
 - **January 24 for electronic applications**
 - **January 31 for paper applications**
- **Maximum Award Amounts**
 - \$75,000 Planning
 - \$250,000 Working Capital
- **Matching Requirement**
 - 1-to-1 match (50% of total project costs) cash or in-kind
- **Grant Period**
 - Up to 36 months, depending on project complexity.

Funding Priorities

Reserved Funds

- Beginning & Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Rancher
- Mid-Tier Value Chains
- **Persistent Poverty Counties**

Reserved funds ensure that a minimum of 10 percent of total funds are available to be awarded to applicants from these categories.

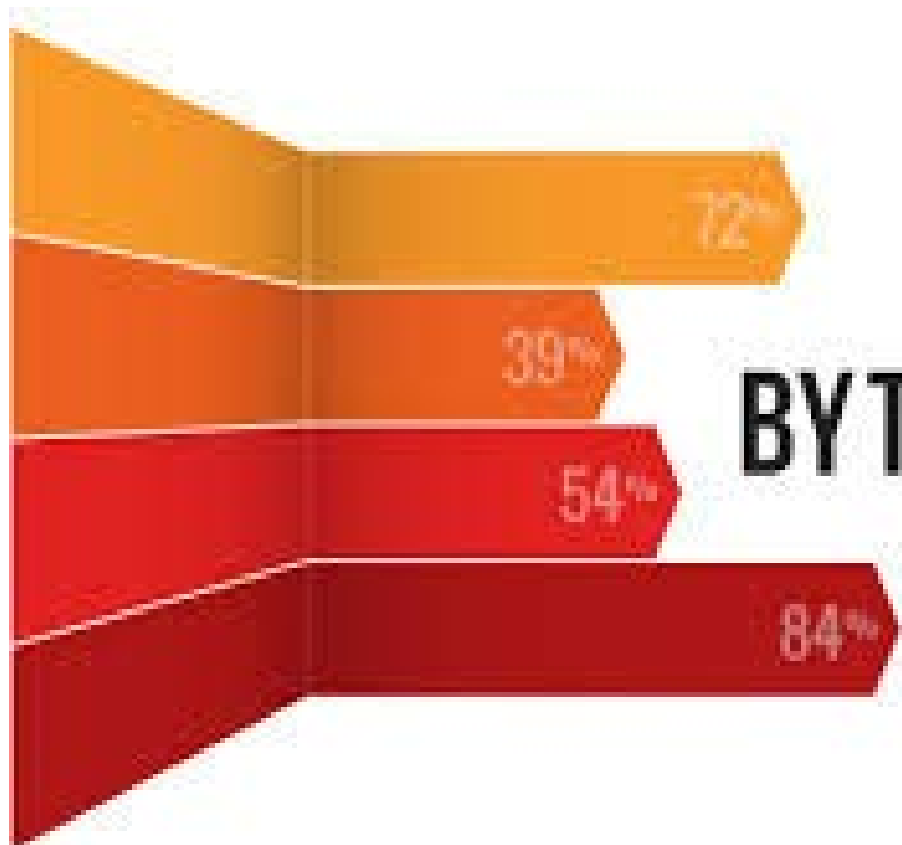
Scoring Priorities

- **Priority Points (5 pts)**
 - Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
 - Veteran Beginning Farmers
 - Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
 - Operators of Small-/Medium-Sized Farms Structured as Family Farms
 - Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives
 - Mid-Tier Value Chain Projects
- **Priority Points (up to 5 pts) ‘Group’ Applicants:** Agricultural Producer Groups, Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives, Majority Controlled Producer-Based Businesses that ‘best contribute to creating or expanding marketing opportunities for Beginning, Socially-Disadvantaged, and Small-/Medium Family Farms.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT

Examples of successful applications...

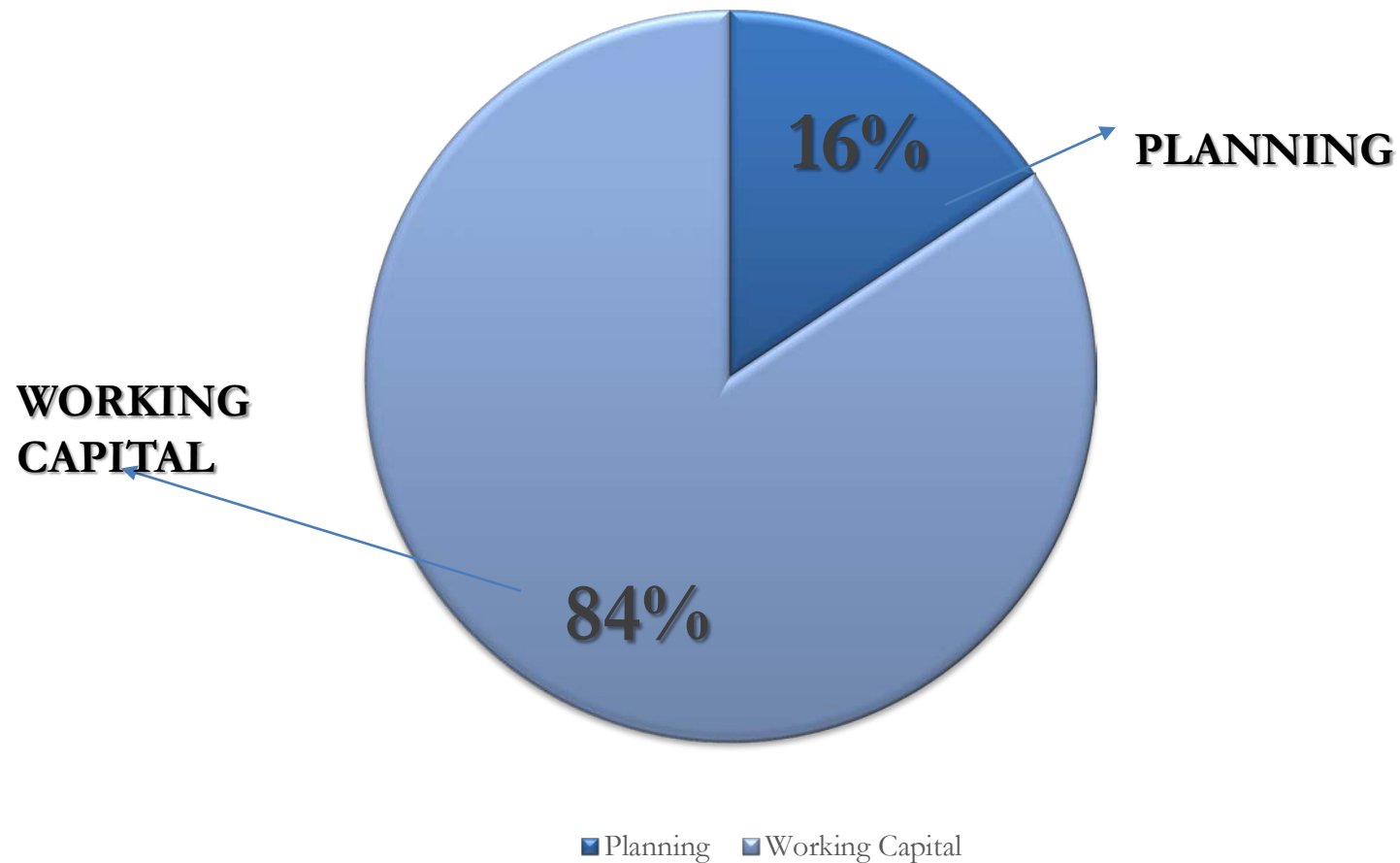
- Working capital grant funds to diversify a product line of hand-raised, all natural beef products to include a wider variety of value-added raw and ready-to-eat products.
- Working capital to help expand the market for locally-produced, non-GMO, free-range chicken products.
- Planning funds utilized to determine the feasibility of converting switchgrass into fuel and poultry bedding.
- Working capital funds used to process, package, deliver and market premium dessert quality applesauce from organically produced apples.



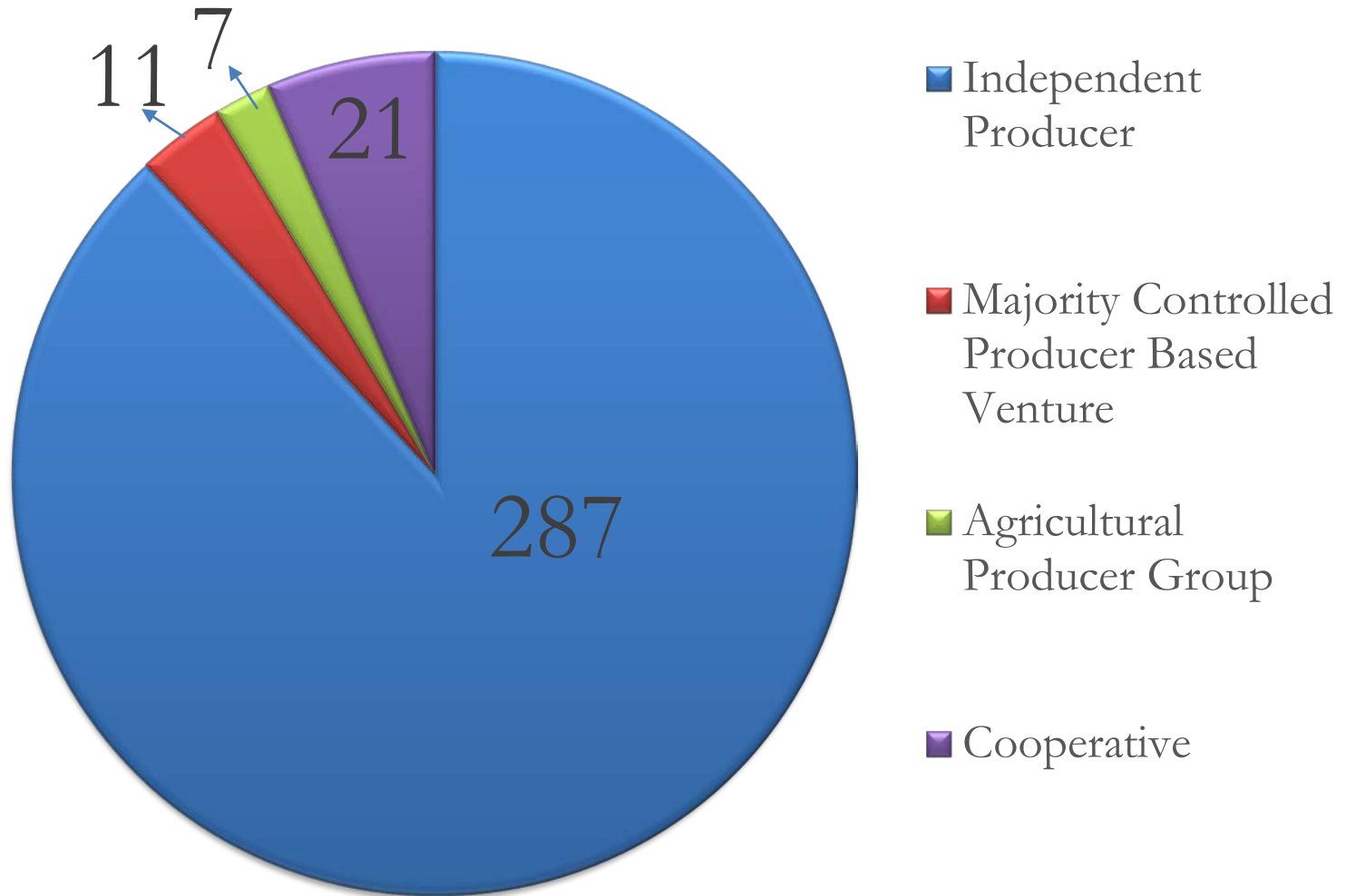
VAPG

BY THE NUMBERS

FY2016 - Awards by Grant Type



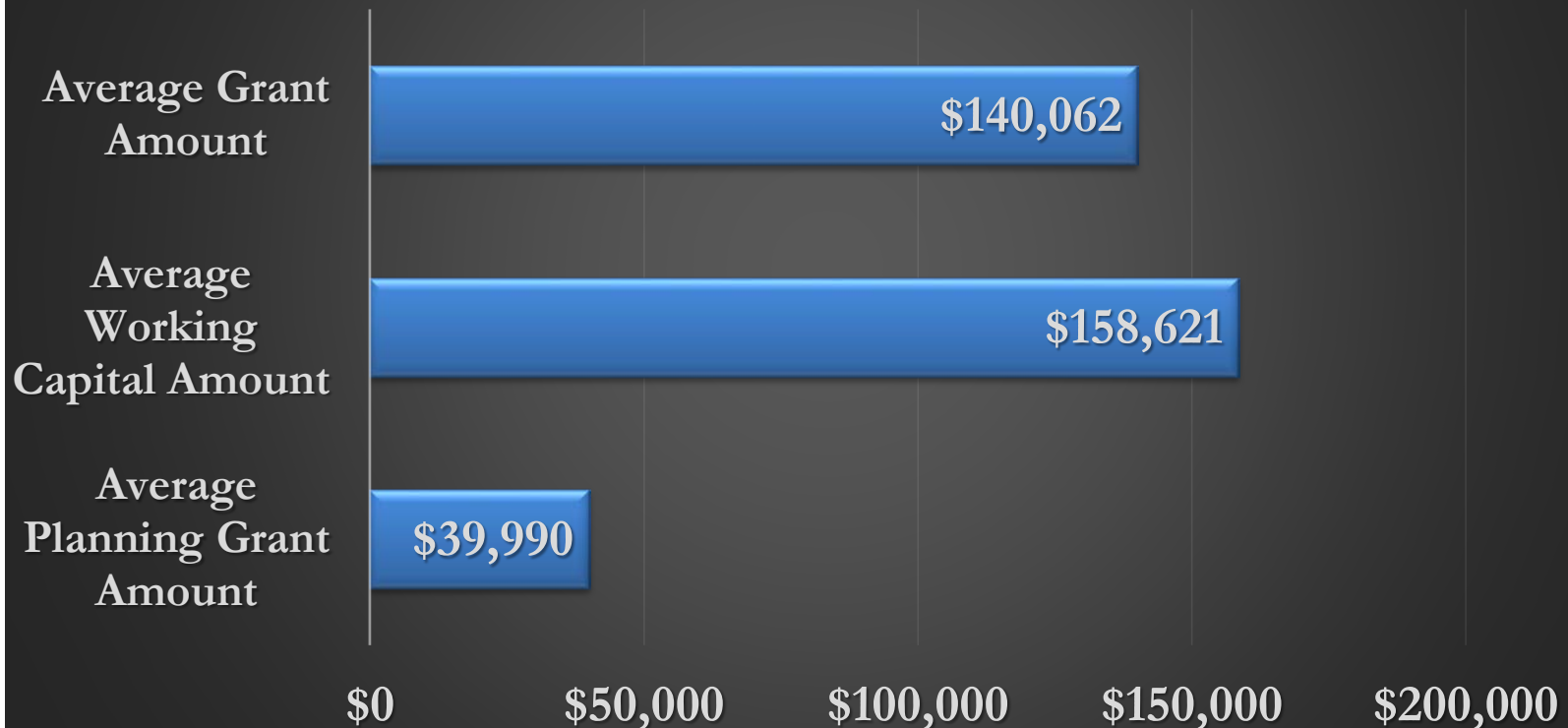
FY2016 - Awards by Applicant Type



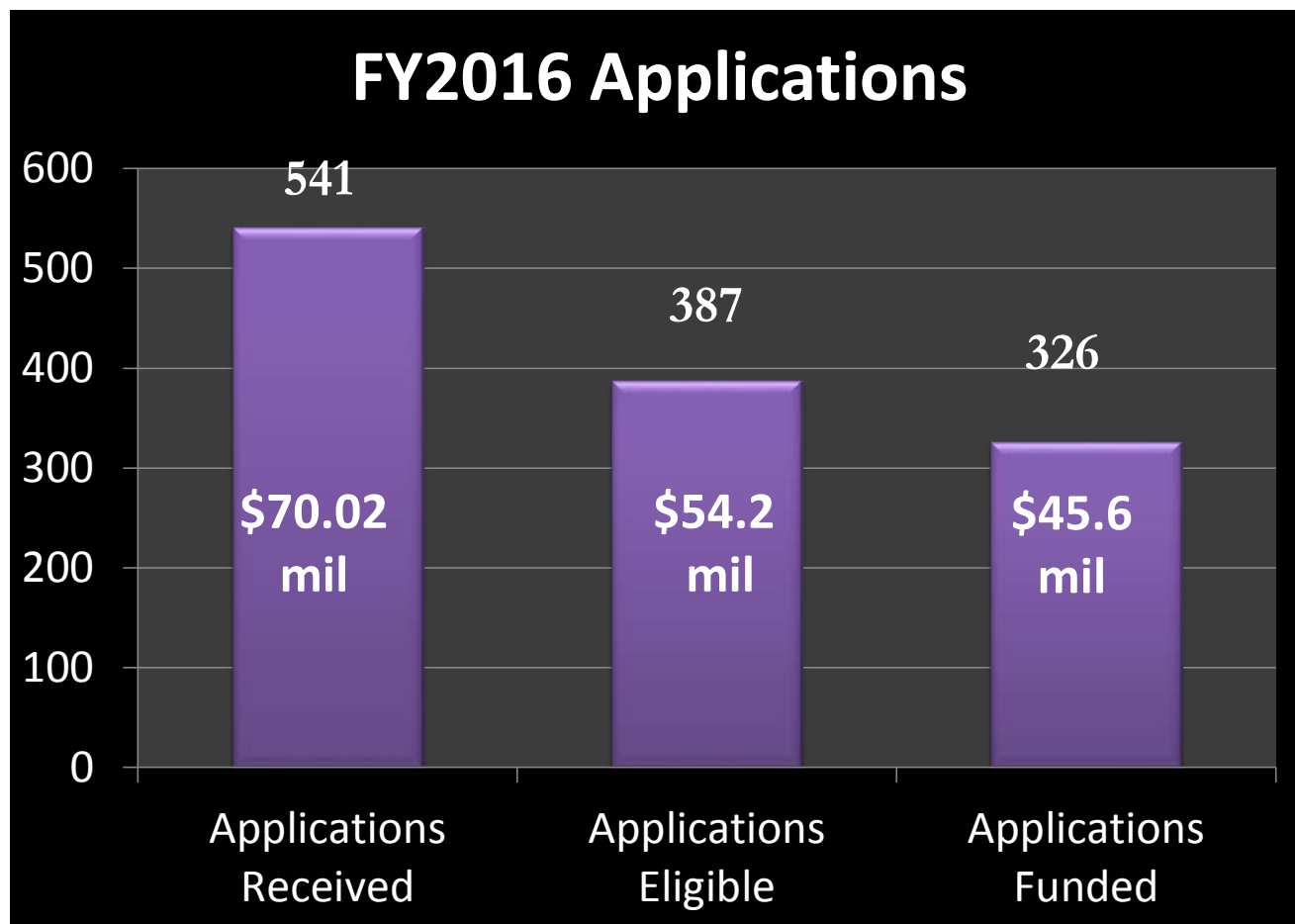


VAPG

FY2016 - Average Award Amounts

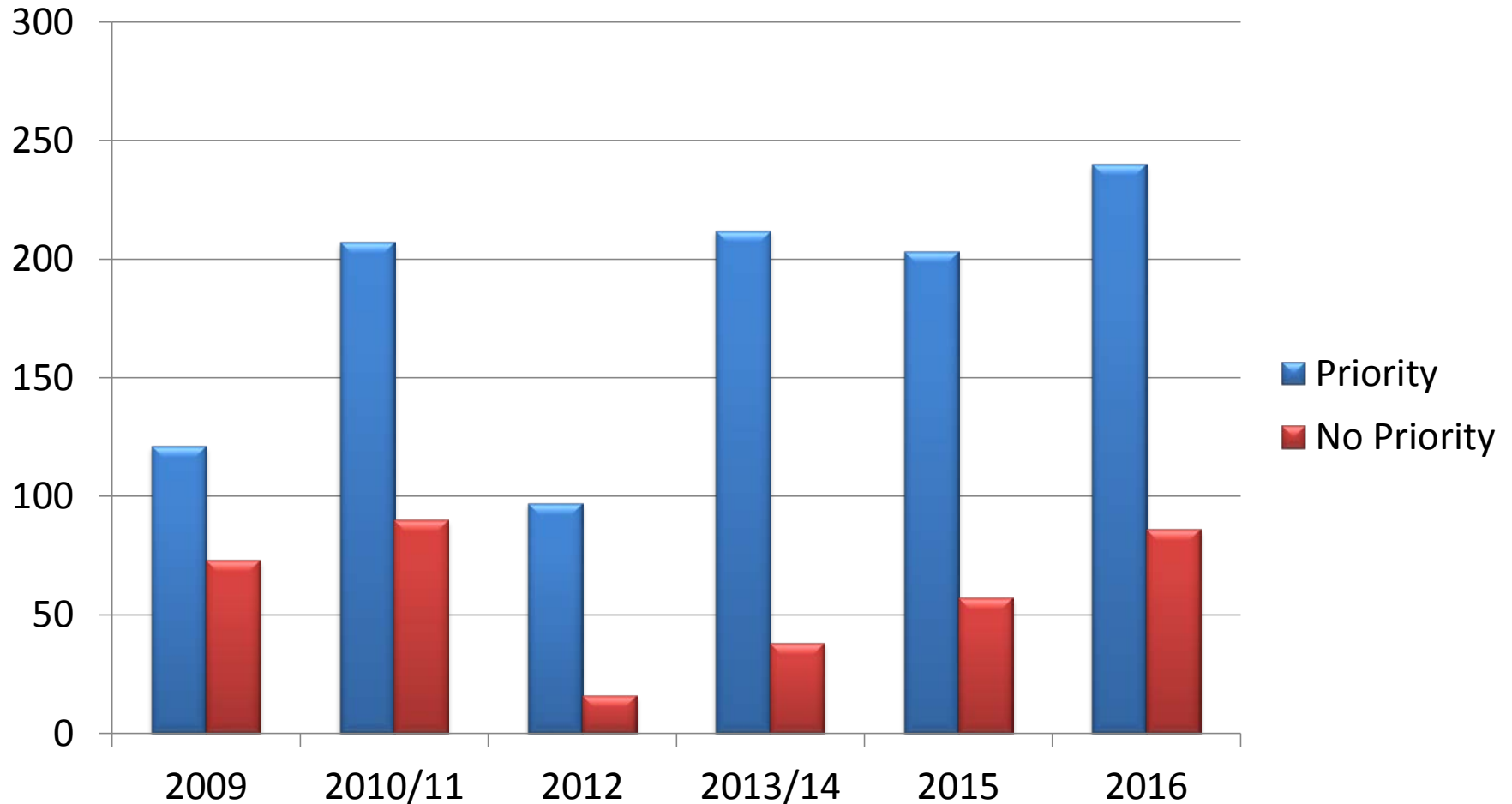


VAPG

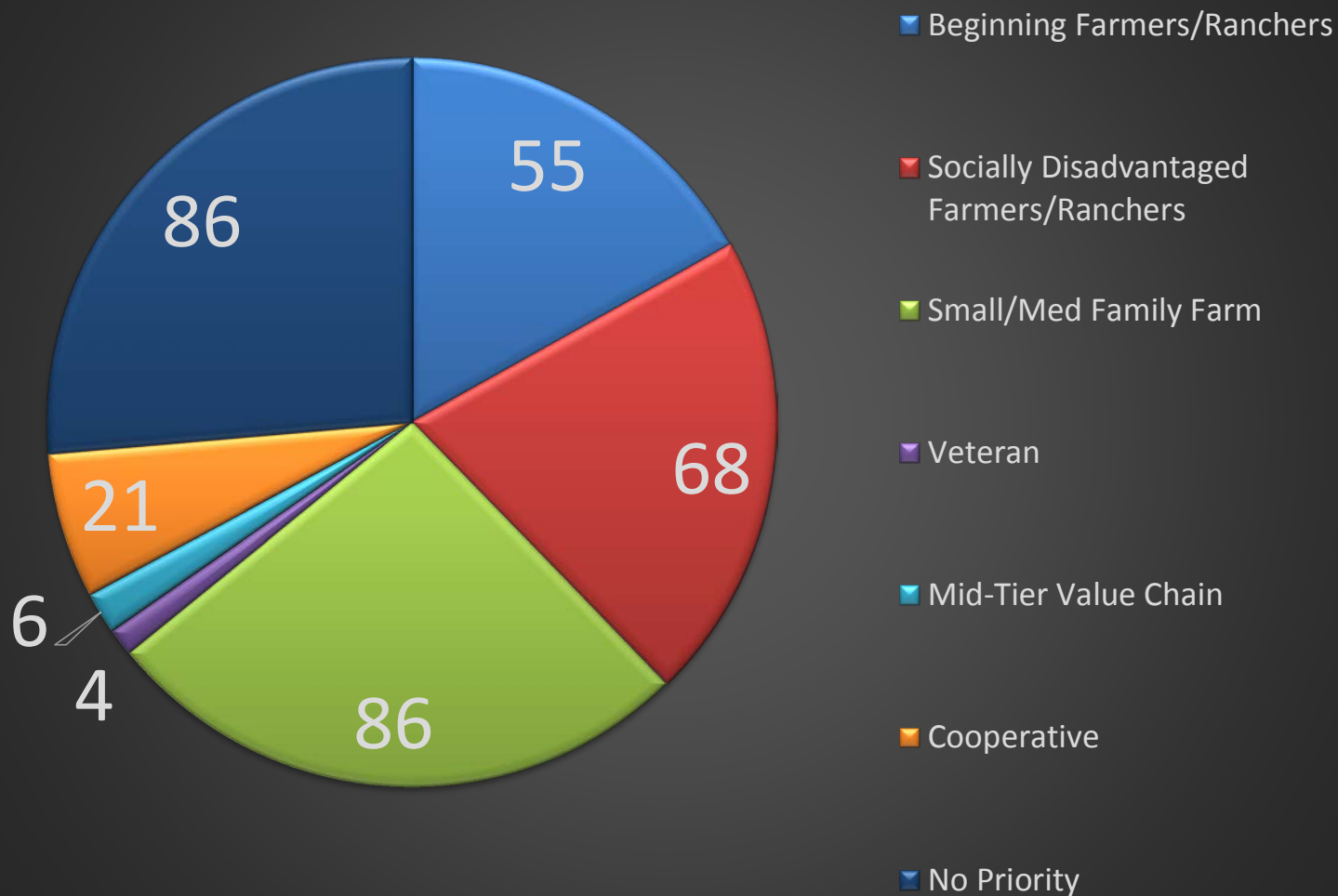




Awards with Priority Points



FY2016 - Awards by Priority Category



Critical Resources

Applicants must become familiar with and utilize these resources in order to submit a successful application:

- **Program regulation 7 CFR 4284 – J**
- **Federal Register Notice of Solicitation (NOSA)**
- **Application toolkit and template available at RD State Offices**
- **Available at VAPG webpage:**
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>
- **USDA RD State Offices @ <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>**

Basic Program Elements

- Eligibility
 - Application
 - Project
 - Purpose
 - Eligible Uses of Funds
- Evaluation Criteria & Scoring
- Application requirements



United States Department of Agriculture

Eligibility



Applicant Eligibility

There is NO rural requirement:

Neither the applicant or the value-added process has to take place in a rural area.

Eligible Applicants Must Be Agricultural Producers:

“An individual or entity that produces an Agricultural Commodity **through participation in the day-to-day labor, management, and field operations...**”

...and must meet the definition of **one of four applicant types:**

Eligible Applicant Types

- Independent Producer
- Agricultural Producer Group
- Farmer or Rancher Cooperative
- Majority Controlled Producer-Based Business

Independent Producer

An individual agricultural producer or an entity that is **solely owned and controlled by agricultural producers**, that are directly engaged in the production of the subject agricultural commodity*.

Agricultural Producer Group

- Formal, **nonprofit** membership organization that represents Agriculture Producers (that meet the VAPG program definition requirements for an Independent Producer) and operates with a mission that includes working on behalf of Independent Producers.
- The majority of the applicant's membership meet the definition of Independent Producer.
- The majority of the applicant's board of directors meet the definition of Independent Producer.



Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives

A business owned and controlled by agricultural producers that is incorporated, or otherwise identified by the state in which it operates, as a cooperatively operated business.*

*Note that agricultural harvesters do not meet the definition of a farmer or rancher and therefore are not eligible to apply as Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives.



Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business*

The majority of the financial and voting interest belongs to Independent Producers.

*Only 10 percent of available funds will be awarded to eligible applicants in this category.

All Four Applicant Types *Must* :

- **Currently produce** and own more than 50 percent of the raw commodity that will be used for the Value-Added product.
- Own the product from its raw commodity state through the production of the Value-Added product during the Project (except for MTVC).

Emerging Market

- **Agricultural Producer Groups,**
- **Farmer or Rancher Cooperatives, and**
- **Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Businesses**

must show that they have not supplied the proposed product, geographic or demographic market for more than two years at time of application submission.

Market Expansion

- **Independent Producer applicants**, have the option of submitting Emerging Market proposals (same documentation as other applicants), or Market Expansion proposals in which Applicant must have been marketing the product for at least two years at time of application.

* Project funds may only be used to supply new customers in existing markets.



Project Eligibility

Does the proposed value-added product fit into one of the five product methodologies?

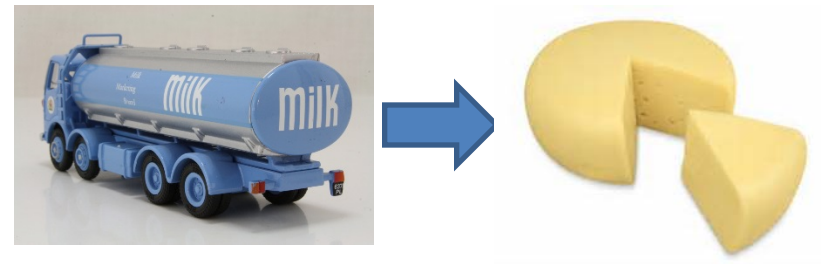
- Change in physical state
- Produced in a manner that increases the value of the commodity
- Physical segregation
- Is the source of farm-based renewable energy
- Is a locally-produced and marketed agricultural food product

Change in Physical State

An irreversible processing activity that alters the raw agricultural commodity and enhances its value and is something other than a post-harvest process that primarily acts to preserve the commodity for later sale.

Examples include, but are not limited to-

- milk into cheese
- wheat into flour
- wool into clothing or rugs
- corn into E-85 ethanol
- livestock into packaged meat



Produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity

- The value-added product results from the use of a recognizably coherent set of agricultural production practices in the growing of the raw agricultural commodity, such that a differentiated market identity is created for the resulting product.
- Nonstandard production method that adds value per unit of production over a standard production method, and demonstrates this by a quantifiable comparison with products produced in the standard manner.

Examples include, but are not limited to-

- organic carrots,
- eggs produced from free-range chickens.



Physical Segregation



Value-added product results from physically separating (i.e. distance or structure) the agricultural commodity from other varieties of the same commodity on the same farm during production and harvesting, with continued separation during the processing and marketing of the value-added product.

Example: GMO corn separated from non-GMO corn on the farm during production and harvesting, with continued separation through marketing.

Farm- or Ranch-Based Renewable Energy

An agricultural commodity that is used to generate renewable energy on a farm or ranch owned or leased by the independent producer applicant that produces the agricultural commodity.

Examples include, but are not limited to-

- dairy manure into methane and electricity generated on the farm
- corn into biodiesel generated on the farm.

Generation of energy from wind, solar, geothermal or hydro sources are not eligible.



Locally-Produced Agricultural Food Product



Any agricultural food product that is marketed and distributed within 400 miles of the product's origin or within the State in which the product is produced.

Examples include, but are not limited to-

- specific local grapes with characteristics attributable to the growing area sold to a winery that will produce a local wine;
- local sweet corn advertised and sold at a premium as a fresher locally-produced alternative to non-local produce.

All applicants must demonstrate that the project will result in:

- Expanded customer base
- Increased revenue derived returned to the producer of the raw commodity.





Purpose Eligibility

Purpose Eligibility

- Project must propose eligible planning or working capital activities related directly to the processing and/or marketing of the value-added product.
- Matching funds must be eligible and properly verified.
- Work plan and budget must demonstrate eligible sources and uses of funds as well as other specified requirements.
- Working capital applications must contain required documentation.

- **Is the project for an eligible purpose?**

Working capital proposals must contain only eligible working capital expenses.

Planning grants must contain only eligible planning expenses.

What about matching funds?



- Equal to at least the grant amount (at least 50 percent of total project costs).
- Spent only on eligible expenses;
- Spent in advance of grant funding (for every dollar of grant funds disbursed, not less than an equal amount of matching funds will have been expended prior to submitting the request for reimbursement);
- From eligible sources without a real or apparent conflict of interest
- Must be verified at application and confirmed at award

Matching Funds



- Applicant cash, loan, or line of credit; and/or
- Applicant or family member in-kind contributions including fairly valued time spent on the project (applicant provided services limited to 25 percent of total project costs); and/or
- Third-party cash or
- Third-party in-kind contributions

Does the work plan and budget that demonstrates all of the required elements, including:

- Narrative work plan
- Qualifications of project personnel
- Detailed project timeline
- Detailed sources and uses of grant and matching funds



Do working capital applications contain required documentation?

Emerging market proposals requesting more than \$50,000 must be accompanied by a project-specific feasibility study and business plan.

Market expansion proposals (Independent Producers only) requesting more than \$50,000, must be accompanied by a business or marketing plan.

Examples of Eligible Uses of Funds

Planning Grants

- Pay for a Qualified Consultant to conduct and develop a Feasibility Study, Business Plan, and/or Marketing Plan associated with the processing and/or marketing of a Value-added Agricultural Product.

Examples of Eligible Uses of Funds Working Capital

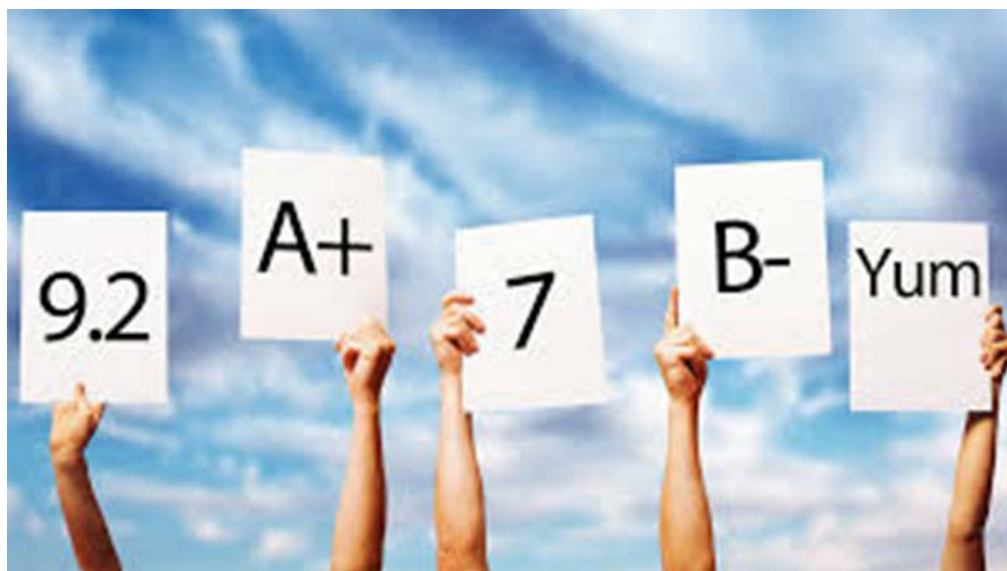
- Pay costs of processing the raw commodity into the value-added product.
- Product packaging & labeling
- Ingredients
- Promotional materials
- Advertising

Examples of **Ineligible** Uses of Funds

Most common issues

- Expenses related to agricultural production
- Planning, building, or repairing facilities
- Use of grant funds to pay self or associated parties for subject raw commodity.
- Ineligible equipment expenses

Evaluation Criteria & Scoring





Performance Evaluation Criteria

- Applicant suggests one or more relevant criterion to be used to evaluate whether or not the primary goals and objectives of the project are being met.
- All applicants estimate how many jobs are expected to be created or saved as a result of the project?
- **NEW! Job creation methodology provide in the application template.**
- Working capital applicants record data on expansion of customer base and increase in revenue from the Applicant eligibility section.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Criteria 1-4 Scoring Elements

- ✓ Nature of the proposed project
- ✓ Qualifications of project personnel
- ✓ Commitments & support
- ✓ Work plan & budget

Criterion 5 Priority Points

Criterion 1: Nature of the Proposed Project

- technological feasibility
- operational efficiencies
- expected profitability
- economic sustainability

*** New in 2017: you must discuss projected job creation resulting from project.**

Criterion 2: Qualifications of project personnel

- Name of staff/consultant (if known) responsible for each task in the work plan or budget
- Qualifications or experience (if staff or consultants have not been selected at the time of application, provide specific descriptions of the qualifications required for the positions to be filled).
- Project role and responsibilities
- Describe availability/commitment to the project

Criterion 3: Commitments & support

- **Producer commitments to the project**
 - Number of producers involved
 - Nature of their participation
 - Quality of contributions, including matching contributions
- **End-user commitments**
 - Potential or identified markets
 - Potential output to be purchased
 - Letters of support, interest or intent from buyers
- **Third party commitments**
 - Nature of the contribution to the project (tech assistance, storage, processing, marketing, or distribution arrangements necessary to the project)
 - Level and quality of contributions

Criterion 3: Commitments & support

Important!

- Applications with multiple producers (named) involved in the production will receive more points than a single producer.
- Cash matching contributions will receive more points than in-kind contributions.



Criterion 4: Work Plan & Budget

A detailed work plan and budget has already been included as part of eligibility requirements and can simply be referenced.

No additional information is necessary to address this criterion.

Criterion 5: Priority Points

- Beginning Farmers & Ranchers
- Veterans
- Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers
- Applications proposing Mid-Tier Value Chains
- Operators of Small/Medium Family Farms
- Cooperatives
- Group applicants whose project result in new or enhanced marketing opportunities for the first 3 categories above.



Criterion 5: Priority Points

Applicants applying in one of the priority categories will discuss requirements in Appendix E of the application template:

APPENDIX E Priority Point Eligibility and Documentation

Eligible applicants may apply for priority points if their applications: propose projects that create or increase opportunities for Beginning Farmers or Ranchers, Socially-Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers, Veteran Farmers or Ranchers, or Operators of Small- or Medium-sized Farms or Ranches that are structured as a Family Farm; or propose Mid-Tier Value Chain projects; or are a Farmer or Rancher Cooperative.

Applicants may qualify for 5 priority points in one of the categories listed below:

Choose only one category and provide the supporting documentation indicated in the appropriate Appendix for that single category to demonstrate eligibility.

- ☐ Beginning Farmer or Rancher **(Appendix E.1)**
- ☐ Veteran Farmer or Rancher **(Appendix E.2)**
- ☐ Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher **(Appendix E.3)**
- ☐ Mid-Tier Value Chain Project **(Appendix E.4)**
- ☐ Operator of a Small- or Medium-sized Farm or Ranch Structured as a Family Farm or Ranch **(Appendix E.5)**
- ☐ Farmer or Rancher Cooperative **(Appendix E.6)**

Application Requirements

- Application forms listed in the NOFA
- DUNS and SAM registrations
- Application Content
 - Eligibility Discussion, including required documentation
 - Evaluation Criteria
 - Scoring Criteria
 - Performance Evaluation Criteria as described in the application package
 - Certification & Verification of Matching Funds
 - Documentation for Working Capital proposals, as applicable: feasibility studies, business or marketing plans

Application Requirements

Applications must be complete at the time of application deadline.

Revisions or additional information submitted after the deadline cannot be considered.

Application Submission

Paper applications must be postmarked, mailed, or shipped no later than **January 31**. Or you may hand deliver to a USDA RD field office by COB **January 31**.

Electronic applications must be submitted via <https://grants.gov> (only) before midnight, Eastern on **January 24**.

Expected Award Announcement:
May 31, 2018

VAPG

Tools for Applicants



Tools for applicants

Comprehensive Toolkits for Planning and Working Capital





Links to required forms
and necessary resources,
including:

- SF 424s
- AD 3030
- Program regulation
- NOSA
- And more!

USDA Value-Added Producer Grant
FY2013 Application Toolkit for Working Capital

REQUIRED STANDARD FORMS

Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"

<http://www.grants.gov>

http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_3-02_1.pdf

Form SF-424A, "Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs"

<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V2.0.pdf>

Form SF-424B, "Assurances - Non-Construction Programs"

<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf>

Form RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement"

<http://forms.is.gpo.usda.gov/dcommon/cfi/documents/forms/RD400-4.PDF>

Form AD-3030, "Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquency Status for Corporate Applicants"

<http://www.ecib.usda.gov/document/AD3030>

OPTIONAL FORM

[INSERT INSTRUCTIONS]

Form AD-2126, "Form to Assist in Assessment of USDA Compliance with Civil Rights Laws"

<http://forms.is.gpo.usda.gov/dcommon/cfi/documents/forms/AD2126.PDF>

IMPORTANT APPLICATION RESOURCES

VAPG Program Regulation 7 CFR 4284 subpart J

or

<http://www.nrdusda.gov/SupportDocuments/4284.pdf>

VAPG Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

Administrative Notice on Tribal Applicant Eligibility

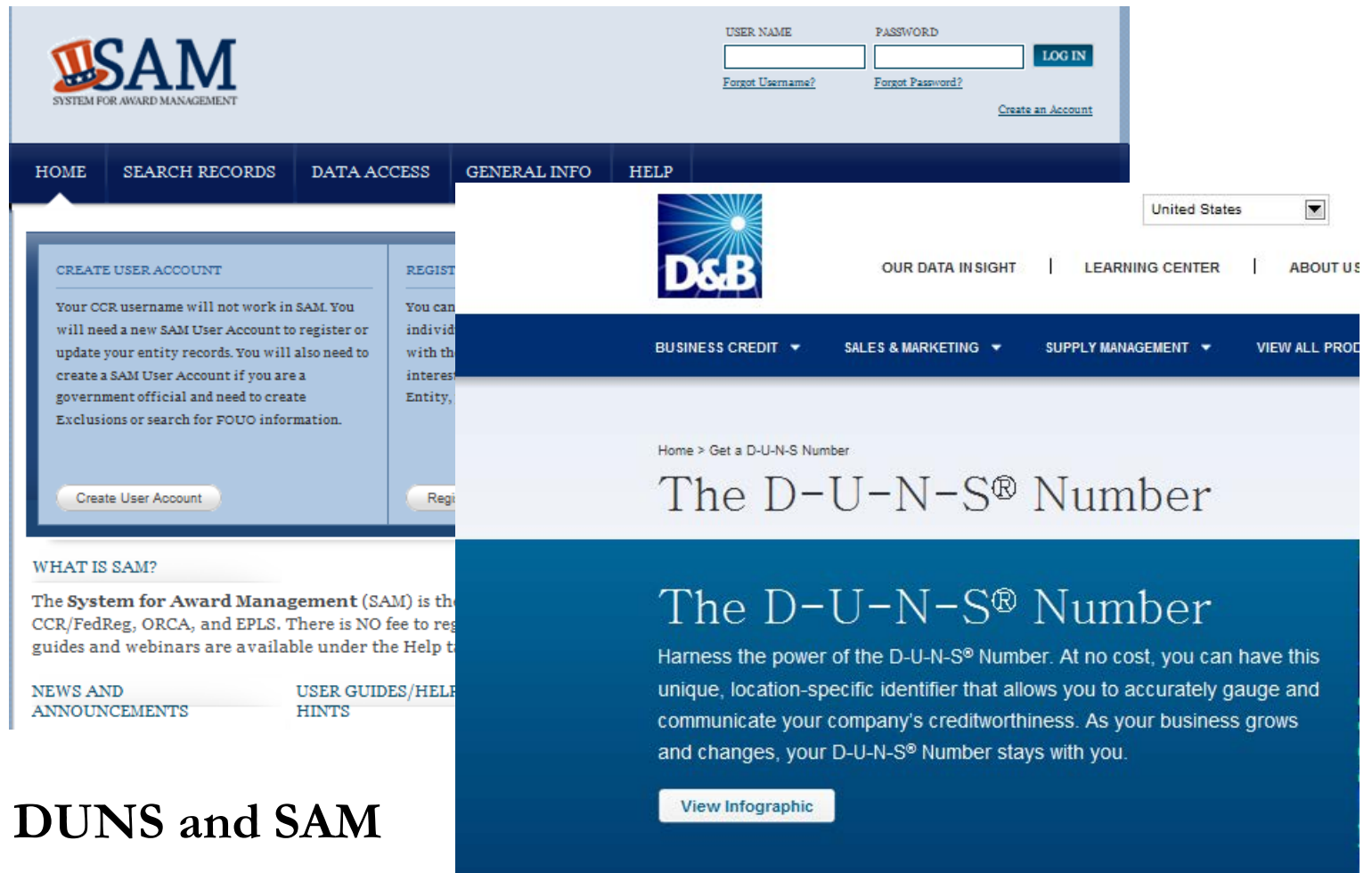
DUNS #

Obtain a free DUNS number by calling 1-800-254-3567 or go to:
www.dunandbradstreet.com/us/duns_updates/index.html

SAM Registration Code

Registration no charge at: <http://www.sam.gov/beta1/public/SAM/>

Toolkits also contain...



The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of government-related websites. The left screenshot is the SAM (System for Award Management) website, featuring a login section with fields for 'USER NAME' and 'PASSWORD', a 'LOG IN' button, and links for 'Forgot Username?', 'Forgot Password?', and 'Create an Account'. Below the login section is a navigation bar with links: HOME, SEARCH RECORDS, DATA ACCESS, GENERAL INFO, and HELP. The main content area includes a 'CREATE USER ACCOUNT' section with instructions and a 'Create User Account' button. The right screenshot is the D&B (Dun & Bradstreet) website, featuring a 'D&B' logo, a 'United States' dropdown menu, and a navigation bar with links: OUR DATA IN SIGHT, LEARNING CENTER, and ABOUT US. The main content area includes a 'Home > Get a D-U-N-S Number' link, a large heading 'The D-U-N-S® Number', and a paragraph explaining the benefits of the D-U-N-S Number. A 'View Infographic' button is located at the bottom of the right screenshot.

Links to DUNS and SAM



Individual OPTIONAL templates for Planning and Working Capital applications.

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Section 1: Summary Information

Legal Name of Applicant Entity: _____

DUNS # _____ Employer identification Number (EIN) _____

SAM/CCR Registration Cage Code: _____ Expiration Date: _____

If have not yet received your code and expiration date, you must provide evidence from SAM of having begun the registration process (please include documentation in Appendix B).

Applicant Type – Please Check One:

- ☐ Independent Producer
- ☐ Agricultural Producer Group
- ☐ Farmer or Rancher Cooperative
- ☐ Majority-Controlled Producer Based Business

Raw Agricultural Commodity: _____

Value-Added Product: _____

Purpose ☐ Working Capital Grant

Requested Grant Amount (\$250,000 or less): \$ _____

Proposed Grant Period Start Date: _____ Proposed Grant Period End Date: _____

Proposed dates should correspond with grant period date included in SF424 and Section 5.4(2) (a) of the template.

Check if you are eligible for Reserved Funds in one of the following categories, per 7 CFR 4284.923.

(Information from Appendices E.1, E.3, or E.4 will be used to rank applications awarded from Reserved Funds).

- ☐ Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Mid-Tier Value Chain Project

Check one if you are competing for Priority Points (See 4284.902 and Appendix F for Definitions) in one of the priority categories below:

- ☐ Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Veteran Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Operator of a Small- or Medium-Sized Family Farm
- ☐ Farmer or Rancher Cooperative
- ☐ Mid-Tier Value Chain Project

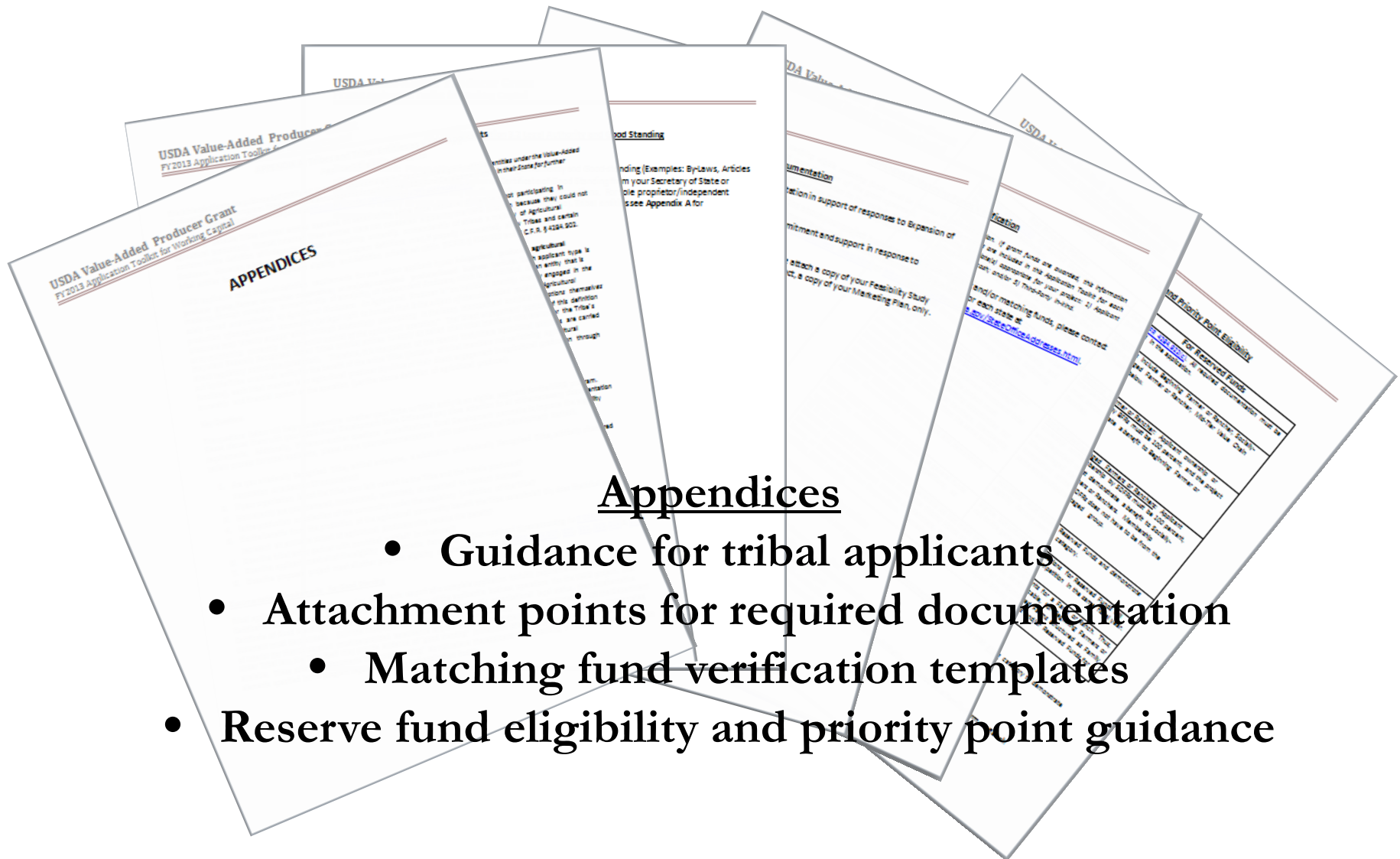


OPTIONAL templates will walk
you through each step

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Appendices

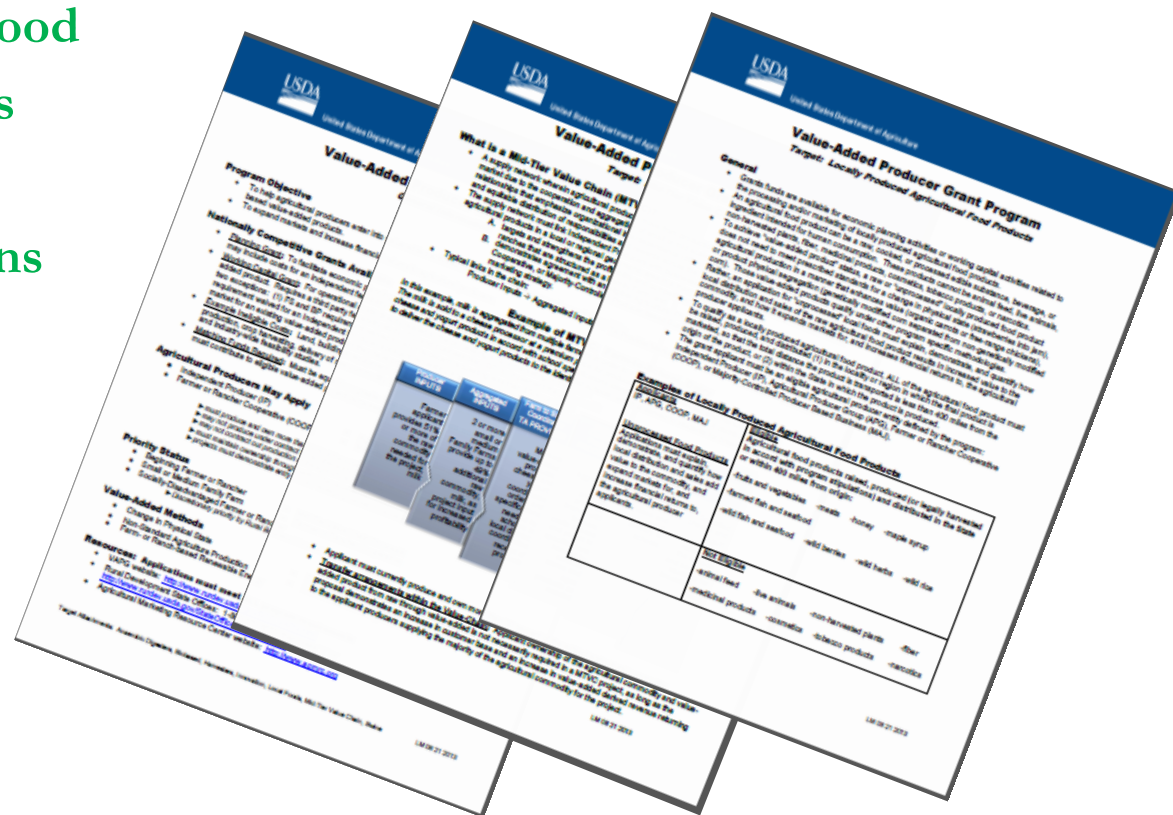
- Guidance for tribal applicants
- Attachment points for required documentation
 - Matching fund verification templates
- Reserve fund eligibility and priority point guidance

Tools

Outreach Fact sheets

- General program Info
- Locally-produced food
- Anaerobic digesters
- Harvesters
- Mid-tier value chains

Available on the VAPG website





Program Information & Materials

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

The screenshot shows the USDA Rural Development website. The header includes the USDA logo, the text "United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development", and navigation links: "About USDA", "Ask The Expert", "Help", and "En Español". A search bar is located on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: "Home", "About RD", "Programs & Services", "Browse by State", "Newsroom", "Publications", and "Contact Us". Social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are also present. The main content area is titled "Value Added Producer Grants" and includes a "Program 101" tab and a "Forms & Resources" tab. The "Program 101" tab is active, showing the "Program Status: Open", "Application Deadline: Paper Application Postmark: July 7, 2015 | Electronic via Grants.gov: July 2, 2015", and "Notice of Solicitation of Application (pdf) | Posted: May 8, 2015". A "Printable Version" link is also available. The "What does this program do?" section describes the VAPG program's goals. A "Program Contact" section states that the program is administered by the State Office. A "Related Programs" section lists the "Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant".

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

About USDA Ask The Expert Help En Español

Home About RD Programs & Services Browse by State Newsroom Publications Contact Us

Home / Programs & Services / Value Added Producer Grants

Value Added Producer Grants

Program 101 Forms & Resources

Program Status: Open
Application Deadline: Paper Application Postmark: July 7, 2015 | Electronic via Grants.gov: July 2, 2015
Notice of Solicitation of Application (pdf) | Posted: May 8, 2015
[Printable Version](#)

What does this program do?

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in

Program Contact

This program is administered by the State Office, please use the drop-down menu above to select your state.

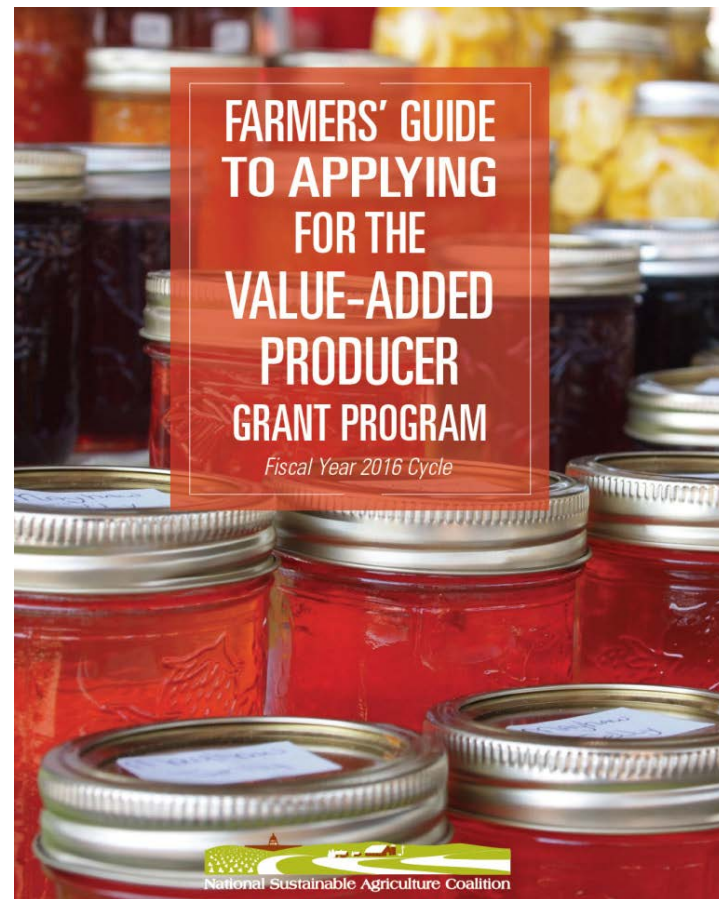
Related Programs

Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant

VAPG Independent Reviewers

- Must have at least a bachelor's degree in:
 - agri-business, agricultural economics, agriculture, animal science, business, marketing, economics or finance;
 - and a minimum of 8 years of experience in an agriculture related field.
- Cannot be writing or involved in a potential VAPG project
- Attend an orientation, qualify for security clearance
- Submit resume to CPgrants@wdc.usda.gov

- ❑ Guide to applying for funding
- ❑ For Farmers
- ❑ Deadlines & details
- ❑ Eligible Project Examples
- ❑ Application Checklist
- ❑ Resources & more



<http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/>



Questions & Assistance

USDA RD State Offices

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>

USDA RD email

RA.dcwashing3.cpgrants.usda.gov

cpgrants@wdc.usda.gov

VAPG Web page

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>