

APHIS Veterinary Services
Joint National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and National Animal
Preparedness and Response Programs (NADPRP)
2021 Joint Funding Opportunity Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) is announcing the availability of cooperative/interagency agreement funding to address a joint priority identified by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Programs (NADPRP) as described in Section 12101 of the [Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#) (aka “2018 Farm Bill”). Through this joint funding opportunity, APHIS is providing funds to support high-value projects to develop and/ or evaluate point-of-care diagnostic tests that will enhance the nation’s ability to quickly detect high-consequence foreign animal diseases (FADs) and accelerate our response and containment efforts. Additional details about these programs and this joint funding opportunity, including additional information for applicants, are available below and on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) and on the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#).

FUNDING FAQs

How much funding is available through this opportunity?

APHIS VS will make available \$5 million in funds to address a joint priority identified by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Programs (NADPRP).

Who can apply for funds?

Both NAHLN and NADPRP eligible entities can apply. These are:

NAHLN: Individuals directly associated with a NAHLN approved laboratory are eligible to submit one or more proposals.

NADPRP: NADPRP eligible entities include State departments of agriculture; offices of State chief animal health officials; land-grant universities and other entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program (as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971); colleges of veterinary medicine, including veterinary emergency teams at such colleges; State, regional, or national livestock producer organizations with direct and significant economic interest in livestock production; State emergency agencies; State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organizations or specialty boards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association; Indian Tribes; or Federal agencies.

How much funding does APHIS expect to award to individual applicants?

APHIS anticipates that most agreements awarded will range up to \$1,000,000 each.

Are there limitations on the activities for which Farm Bill Section 12101 funds can be used?

Yes. The list of funding restrictions is available in the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for USDA APHIS VS NADPRP and NAHLN Cooperative and Interagency Agreements.

Is there further clarification on the use of Farm Bill Section 12101 funds for personnel costs?

It is not VS' intent to prescribe an applicant's approach to satisfying personnel needs to complete activities associated described in a project's Work Plan. APHIS recommends applicants use caution when hiring or funding personnel with NAHLN and NADPRP funds because there is no guarantee of future funding beyond the project's performance period. Funds made available to cooperators via the 2021 Joint NAHLN/NADPRP funding opportunity may only be used to support the activities described in the agreement work plan and are only available for the agreement performance period. Work and financial plans should clearly describe the activities to be performed and the time period of the activity for personnel resources.

Examples: It may be appropriate to fund personnel whose salary is generated from extramural agreements or to fund a portion of an employee's salary that is only funded to work 9 out of 12 months of the year. It would NOT be appropriate to hire a new position with an intent to support that position with NAHLN funds beyond the agreement performance period.

APPLICATION FAQs

When are proposal applications due?

APHIS must receive applications by 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time on **August 6, 2021**.

How do applicants apply for funds?

Applicants must submit proposals through email to both:
christina.m.loiacono@usda.gov and connie.j.osmundson@usda.gov.

Applicants can find all application materials on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) and on the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#). Applicants can also find the funding opportunity information on the [Grants.gov](#) website by searching CFDA number **10.025** or Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10025-VSDB000-22-0001**.

Are applicants required to submit a Letter of Intent?

No.

What must be included with the proposal submission?

- Project proposal Work Plan
- Project proposal detailed Financial Plan
- Copy of the current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if claiming indirect costs and an Indirect Cost Rate has been negotiated

Is there a limit on the length of the proposal document?

The total application is limited to 25 pages and the Executive Summary is limited to 250 words.

What is the period of performance?

Up to 24 months. Congress provided Farm Bill funds as no-year money, allowing APHIS to enter into agreements that extend beyond 1 year. Project activities are anticipated to begin the first quarter of calendar year 2022 (January-March).

FUNDING PRIORITY FAQs

What is the funding priority?

APHIS will only consider proposals for projects that will develop and/ or evaluate point-of-care diagnostic tests (assays that can be performed at the location of the animals including farms, collection facility, abattoir,

etc.) that will enhance the nation's ability to quickly detect high-consequence FADs and accelerate our response and containment efforts. Priority will be given to high-value projects that best address these topics:

- a. Projects to evaluate and, if needed, propose and/or modify point-of-care FAD diagnostic tests available in other countries, that may be used to respond to a disease outbreak in the United States. Projects should include data collected from use of assays in endemic countries to facilitate evaluation and validation for use in the U.S. in the case of an outbreak. Projects should evaluate those tests that are most likely to help with early detection in U.S. livestock and support rapid decision-making under field conditions, such as quarantining herds or premises that are presumed positive for the FAD agent. Projects should focus on diagnostics for FAD response purposes such as rapid on-farm disease detection, animal movement decisions, distinguishing infected from vaccinated animals, or virus detection in the environment.
- b. Projects focused on developing and / or adapting tests for use in point-of-care settings that can provide actionable results that will help develop policy for use in support of risk-based surveillance, surge capacity testing, and animal movement decisions in an FAD outbreak.

Will partial funding of a proposal be considered?

Yes. Based on reviewer recommendations, APHIS may award less than the requested amount of funds to a project. In these cases, applicants may accept or decline the award that is offered. If applicants accept a reduced funding level, applicants will submit a revised application that addresses reviewer concerns and aligns with the award amount. APHIS will provide additional guidance to applicants in these situations.

What are other funding considerations?

Applicants will be checked against the System for Award Management (SAM) to ensure they have not been disbarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency.

Within the context of addressing the priority described above, applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that:

- Address known gaps or problems.
- Build on existing tools and techniques and enhance scientifically based innovation.
- Describe in the work plan and financial plan the anticipated involvement by APHIS personnel needed to complete the proposed activity (excluding VS personnel to administer or oversee the agreement). VS intends to collaborate with recipients to successfully complete activities that are funded via this opportunity. However, due to limited availability of personnel, VS encourages proposals, where possible, that are not contingent on VS participation. APHIS personnel may not be compensated for their participation by Farm Bill funds.

AGREEMENT FAQs

What is competitive funding and how does it work in a cooperative agreement?

Proposals submitted to the 2021 Joint NAHLN/NADPRP funding opportunity will be reviewed and selected for funding through a competitive process, in which a team of subject matter experts will evaluate the merits of each proposal using pre-determined criteria. The selection criteria are described in the Joint NAHLN/NADPRP Funding Opportunity Announcement. Funding is based on the merits of the application, and recipients are not pre-determined. Final decisions are made by USDA.

Projects will be funded using cooperative or interagency agreements. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity funded by the Federal award. Interagency agreements define the cooperative work between Federal agencies.

When cooperative agreements are awarded through a competitive process, applicants must submit a complete proposal by the deadline. There is no opportunity for proposal modifications during the review process.

Is cost sharing required?

No. Cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required for these Joint NAHLN/NADPRP projects. If an applicant includes contributions as part of a cost share in their budget proposal and it is accepted by APHIS VS, the commitment of funds becomes legally binding, must be reported on the SF-425, and is subject to audit. Additional information about cost sharing is available in the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements.

What is the limit on indirect cost (administrative costs)?

NAHLN Approved Laboratory Applicants: If you represent a NAHLN approved laboratory submitting a proposal for NAHLN Farm Bill funding or Joint NAHLN/NADPRP Farm Bill funding, please calculate your indirect costs based on the following information:

- **Institutes of Higher Education (Non-Profits):** Follow the instructions below for NADPRP submitters.
- **State entity:** Eligible cooperator's assessment of indirect costs are NOT limited but should be assessed based on the proper application of their indirect cost rate agreement. The applicant must submit a copy of its fully executed current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, negotiated by its recognized Federal Agency ([2 CFR Part 200.19](#)), when indirect costs are assessed in the budget.

NADPRP Eligible Applicants: If you are a NADPRP eligible applicant submitting a proposal for NADPRP Farm Bill funding or the Joint NAHLN/NADPRP Farm Bill funding, please calculate your indirect costs based on the following information.

Eligible cooperator's assessment of indirect costs is limited to not more than 10 percent of total direct costs or the application of their indirect cost rate agreement, whichever is less. The applicant must submit a copy of its fully executed current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, negotiated by its recognized Federal Agency ([2 CFR Part 200.19](#)), when indirect costs are assessed in the budget.

Indirect cost rates exceeding 10 percent are not allowed. Eligible entities must notify sub-applicants of the limit on indirect costs, in its request for proposals/applications, so that indirect costs requested by sub-applicants plus indirect administration costs requested by the eligible entity do not exceed 10 percent of the total request for Federal funds.

Additional information is available in the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements.

PROPOSAL FAQs

Can I submit more than one proposal?

Yes. Each proposal must have a separate work plan and financial plan. Applicants should realistically consider their ability to successfully complete multiple projects in the same time frame.

Can several different proposal ideas for projects that support the 2021 funding priority be combined into one big proposal?

No. Applicants must submit separate proposals – and separate proposal work plans – for each project. This helps reviewers score each project on its individual merits, and it increases the likelihood that a strong proposal will be funded.

Can an applicant collaborate with others on a project?

Yes. Any applicant can collaborate with other entities on a proposal.

If multiple applicants are collaborating, how should the proposal be submitted?

If there is one project with each collaborator doing a similar task, submit one proposal from the main applicant and subcontract the other collaborators. If the project has multiple parts, and each collaborator is taking a different task, then each collaborator may submit their own proposal if this is preferred.

Can NAHLN labs partner with non-NAHLN entities?

Yes. The NAHLN lab may sub-contract with a non-NAHLN entity. The funding agreement will be with the NAHLN lab and that lab will be responsible for any compensation to the non-NAHLN partner.

May a foreign entity submit a proposal?

No. However, a foreign entity may contribute to a domestic entity’s proposal. The proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage foreign collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities.

Can someone from the private sector apply?

No. However, a private sector entity may contribute to a proposal submitted by an eligible applicant. The proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage private sector collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities.

How are proposals reviewed and who reviews them? Who makes the final decision?

Eligible proposals will undergo evaluation by a team of subject matter experts nominated by APHIS VS, the NAHLN Coordinating Council and the NADPRP Consultation Board. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, reviewers may have no association with projects they are reviewing. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a reviewer shall recuse themselves as appropriate. Proposals are scored based on the merits of the application relative to the evaluation criteria, which are listed in the funding opportunity announcement. The review team may seek counsel from additional subject-matter experts as appropriate. USDA will consider the review team’s recommendations in making final funding determinations.

What is the timeline for review of submitted proposals? When will applicants be notified of award status, and when will funds be awarded?

APHIS anticipates announcing the list of awarded projects by the last quarter of calendar year 2021. APHIS will publish the 2021 Spending Plan and List of Projects and notify applicants of their award status promptly after the spending plan is approved by USDA. Applicants will be notified by email and through the publication of the Joint NAHLN/NADPRP spending plan on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) and on the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#). APHIS intends to award funds to selected projects by the end of 2021.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FAQs

Where are the websites located with this information?

- The [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) and on the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#) includes all information and links related to this funding opportunity.

Who can applicants contact regarding questions about the 2021 Joint NAHLN/NADPRP funding opportunity?

For questions about the NAHLN, please contact:

Christina Loiacono, NAHLN Coordinator

Phone: 515-337-7911

Email: Christina.M.Loiacono@usda.gov

For questions about the NADPRP, please contact:

VS.NADPRP@usda.gov

Julie Wallin, NADPRP Program Coordinator

Phone: 970-494-7258

Email: julie.e.wallin@usda.gov

For Cooperative Agreement proposal and administrative questions, please contact:

Connie Osmundson, Supervisory Financial Analyst

Phone: (515) 337-7571

E-Mail: Connie.J.Osmundson@usda.gov