



National Animal Health Laboratory Network Enhancement 2021 Cooperative/Interagency Agreements

Fiscal Year 2021 Funding Opportunity Announcement
Publication Date: June 8, 2021
Application Due Date: August 6, 2021

Funding Opportunity: National Animal Health Laboratory Network 2021

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 carry out the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Enhancements as described in Section 12101 of the [Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#) (aka "2018 Farm Bill"). Through this Farm Bill funding, APHIS supports enhancement of the capability and capacity for the NAHLN to respond to an adverse animal health event. Each year, APHIS makes funding available to support projects in priority areas identified via consultation with eligible entities and stakeholders. All content in this announcement can be found at the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#).

SYNOPSIS

Funding Opportunity Title: National Animal Health Laboratory Network Enhancement 2021

Type: Cooperative Agreement/Interagency Agreement

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.025, Plant and Animal Disease, Pest Control, and Animal Care

Proposal Due Date: Proposals must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time on August 6, 2021. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Funding Opportunity Description: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) is announcing the availability \$2.5 million in funds to the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). In this funding opportunity, NAHLN is seeking proposals that will enhance the ability of NAHLN laboratories to respond to an adverse animal health event. **The overall objective is to increase capabilities, capacity, and readiness of the NAHLN to respond to animal diseases affecting the economic interests of the livestock and related industries of the United States.** The funding opportunity is open to NAHLN approved laboratories.

Notice to All Eligible Entities: APHIS is also making funding available in two additional and separate 2021 funding opportunities in the NAHLN and NADPRP programs that eligible entities may consider.

- APHIS will make available \$5 million in funds to be provided to support successful projects that will 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. This competitive funding opportunity is open to NAHLN approved laboratories and NADPRP eligible entities. Applicants can find information about this separate funding opportunity on the [Grants.gov](#) website by searching CFDA number 10.025 or Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10025-VSDB000-22-0001** or by going to the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) or the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#).

- APHIS will also make available up to \$10 million in funds to support NADPRP projects in 2021 that will (1) develop and/or enhance State and Tribal foreign animal disease (FAD) vaccination plans to improve animal disease outbreak response capabilities, (2) support animal movement decisions in an FAD outbreak, or (3) strengthen outreach and education on animal prevention, preparedness, and response to specific audiences. Applicants can find information about this separate funding opportunity on the [Grants.gov](#) website by searching CFDA number 10.025 or Funding Opportunity Number USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSP0000-22-0001 or by going to the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#).

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Awarding Agency Name: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS)

Funding Opportunity Title: National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Enhancement 2021

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.025

Key Dates: Proposals must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time on August 6, 2021. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

The agreement performance period is estimated to begin in January 2022 and end no later than 24 months after the start date.

A.1 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is provided to carry out the NAHLN enhancements as described in Section 12101 of the [Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#) (aka “2018 Farm Bill”). Through the NAHLN program, APHIS provides funds to support high-value projects that will help prevent the introduction and spread of foreign and emerging animal diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture. Each year, APHIS makes funding available to support projects in priority areas of animal disease preparedness and response identified via consultation with eligible entities and stakeholders. Additional details about the program are available on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#).

APHIS will make available \$2.5 million in funds to NAHLN. In this funding opportunity, NAHLN is seeking proposals for projects that will focus on: (1) Increasing capacity for disease testing, (2) Increasing capability to handle surge samples, (3) Enhancing laboratory emergency preparedness.

A.2 2021 FUNDING PRIORITIES

Eligible entities are encouraged to develop project proposals that directly support enhancement of the NAHLN through activities listed in the following priorities. **Each proposal should include a project to support only one priority.** Multiple proposals may be submitted.

1. Increasing capacity for disease testing focused on currently approved protocols, test development and validation* and on rapid sequencing of emerging threats.
2. Increasing capability to handle surge samples through improving sample entry and tracking, Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) enhancement, and electronic messaging of results.
3. Enhancing laboratory emergency preparedness by developing local and regional cooperation for regulatory testing through targeted outreach and exercise.

*All point of care assay projects must be submitted to the Joint NADPRP/NAHLN funding opportunity announcement. Applicants can find information about this separate funding opportunity on the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) website by searching CFDA number 10.025 or Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10025-VSDB000-22-0001** or by going to the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#) or the [USDA APHIS NADPRP website](#).

A.3 ALIGNMENT WITH USDA APHIS GOALS

This funding opportunity supports the [USDA APHIS Strategic Goals](#):

USDA APHIS Strategic Goal 1: Deliver efficient, effective, and responsive programs.

Objective 1.1: Improve the customer experience by modernizing information technology infrastructure, facilities, and streamlining the delivery of our services.

Tactic: Increase the number of NAHLN laboratories that message test results and expand the number of diseases that can be messaged.

USDA APHIS Strategic Goal 2: Safeguard American agriculture.

Objective 2.3: Ensure effective emergency preparedness and response systems.

Tactic: Continue to expand capabilities of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

A.4 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative authority is provided under [Section 12101 of the 2018 Farm Bill](#).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Total Amount to be Awarded: APHIS will make available \$2.5 million in funds to NAHLN. NAHLN is seeking proposals that will address the 2021 funding priorities described in [Section A.2](#). There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Type of Assistance Instrument: Most awards will be funded via cooperative agreements; interagency agreements may be used if the recipient is a Federal agency. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by APHIS to assist in the completion of the goals and objectives of the work.

Anticipated Awards: APHIS anticipates that most agreements awarded will range from \$30,000 to \$500,000 each. The average NAHLN award in 2020 was approximately \$170,000 across 30 proposals awarded.

Anticipated Award Start Date: APHIS anticipates that work covered under these agreements will begin in January 2022 or soon after. 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 accepted, applicants must submit a revised proposal package that addresses reviewer concerns and aligns with the proposed award amount. APHIS will provide additional guidance to applicants in these situations.

Period of Performance: Projects must be completed within 1-2 years. Funding will not be allowed - nor activities approved to occur - outside of the designated period of performance.

Competitive Process: This is a new competitive funding opportunity. Proposals will be evaluated by a team of reviewers who will recommend proposals for funding based on the merits of the proposal. Recipients are not pre-determined. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of USDA.

B.1 COST GUIDANCE

All APHIS awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, allowable and unallowable costs, direct and indirect costs, cost share and matching, and other considerations as described and defined in:

- [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements
- [2 CFR Subpart E](#), Cost Principles – General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost

All applicants must adhere to the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements in developing their project proposal financial plan. **If Claiming Indirect Costs please refer to specific calculation requirements for NAHLN submitters in this document.**

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are:

Any person directly associated with a laboratory approved by and part of the [NAHLN](#).

C.2 OTHER CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

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. See [Section D.3](#).

C.3 COST SHARING

Cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not required for NAHLN 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.

C.4 THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Proposal packages must meet these initial screening criteria to be considered for further review. Proposals that do not meet these initial screening criteria will not be considered.

1. Proposals must be submitted by eligible entities.

2. Proposals must address the funding priorities described in [Section A.2](#).
3. All required documents and forms listed in [Section D.2](#) must (a) be included in the application package, and (b) comply with the submission instructions described in [Section D](#) of this announcement. Any application package with missing or incomplete documents or forms will not be considered for review.
4. Proposal packets must be received via email to by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time on August 6, 2021. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.
5. Proposal packets **must be submitted through email** by sending the required information to both of the following email addresses and points of contact.

E-mail: Christina.M.Loiacono@usda.gov

Point of Contact: Christina Loiacono, USDA APHIS VS, Phone: (515) 337-7911

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

Point of contact: Connie Osmundson, USDA APHIS VS, Phone: (515) 337-7571

D. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

We urge applicants to submit their application packages early and to complete the following activities as soon as possible: (1) Obtain a registered DUNS number, (2) Register and maintain an active System for Awards Management (SAMs) account, (3) create a USDA eAuthentication Account, and (4) if the proposal is funded, a submitter must establish an ezFedGrants (eFG) account. Instructions for these steps are available in Appendix 1.

New applicants should refer to [Appendix 1: New Applicant Information](#) for initial steps to take when submitting an application.

Applicants may submit more than one project proposal, however, each proposal may address only ONE(1) priority. Applicants who wish to submit multiple proposals must submit each proposal as a separate proposal package.

New applicants should refer to [Appendix 2: Applicant Checklist and Tips](#) for initial steps to take when developing a proposal.

D.1 OBTAINING PROPOSAL TEMPLATES & FORMS

Applicants can find all application materials on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#).

Applicants unable to access the NAHLN website should send a message to the NAHLN mailbox, NAHLN@usda.gov, for assistance no later than 72 hours prior to the expiration date of the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

D.2 CONTENT AND FORM OF THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE

The proposal package must include the following:

- Project proposal WORK PLAN. *See below.*
- Project proposal FINANCIAL PLAN. *See below.*
- If claiming indirect costs and an Indirect Cost Rate has been negotiated, a copy of the current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be included. *See below.*

Failure to submit any of the required documents will result in a rejected application. In addition, applications may be rejected due to inaccurate calculation of indirect costs. Please refer to the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements.

These forms, as well as additional information for applicants, are provided on the on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#).

Applicants should refer to the [Appendix 2: Applicant Checklist and Tips](#) when preparing a proposal package for submission. Failure to submit any of the required documents will result in a rejected proposal.

Project Proposal Work Plan

Applicants must submit a separate project proposal Work Plan for each proposal and include all information outlined in the NAHLN Project Proposal Work Plan Template. The template is available on the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#). Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use the NAHLN Project Proposal Work Plan Template.

Project Proposal Financial Plan

Applicants must submit a project proposal Financial Plan. The Financial Plan must include the information shown in the [NAHLN Project Financial Plan Template](#) that is available on the the [USDA APHIS NAHLN website](#). Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use the NAHLN Project Proposal Financial Plan Template.

When preparing a Financial Plan, applicants must comply with the cost guidance and funding restrictions described in the [Cost Guidance](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements.

If Claiming Indirect Costs please refer to specific calculation requirements for NAHLN submitters in the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements.

D.3 UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants (except Federal agencies) are required to register in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application and continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current

information throughout the award period of performance (2 CFR §200.205). To register, go to the [SAM website](#). Please allow two weeks to complete the SAM registration. Frequently Asked Questions, User Guides, Demonstration Videos, etc., can be found on the SAM website, under the “[Help](#)” tab. Registration is free. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications. During the SAM registration process, it is mandatory to complete the Financial Assistance Certification Report in order to receive federal financial assistance.

When creating a SAM account, it may take up to two weeks before the account appears in Federal systems. Applicants who are not already registered in SAM are encouraged to complete this task as soon as possible. Additional instructions for SAM registration are available in [Appendix 1](#).

COVID-19 Flexibility for Current SAM Registrants. Under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum [M-21-20](#), applicants with a current active SAM registration scheduled to expire before September 30, 2021 will automatically be afforded a one-time extension of 180 days. ([2 CFR § 25.110-Exceptions to this Part](#)). Applicants must have an active SAM registration before USDA can award funds.

Data Universal Number System (DUNS)

All applicants (except Federal agencies) are required to have a valid [Data Universal Number System \(DUNS\)](#) number in order to register in SAM. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). To see if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact D&B at 1-866-705-5711 or visit the [Dun & Bradstreet \(D&B\) website](#). Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete. Registration is free. Additional instructions for DUNS registration are available in [Appendix 1](#).

D.4 SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

All proposals must be completed and provided to both of the the following email addresses no later than **August 6, 2021, 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time**.

E-mail: Christina.M.Loiacono@usda.gov

Point of Contact: Christina Loiacono, USDA APHIS VS, Phone: (515) 337-7911

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

Point of contact: Connie Osmundson, USDA APHIS VS, Phone: (515) 337-7571

The electronic date and time stamp from submitted emails will be used to determine whether proposals were received before the deadline.

D.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

The Intergovernmental Review Process ([CFDA/Assistance Listing](#) 10.025) is subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”. Awards will not be made until this process has been completed in applicable States. Names and addresses of States’ Single Point of Contact (SPOC) are listed in the [OMB State SPOC List](#).

D.6 FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Funding restrictions, including unallowable costs, indirect cost cap, and cost restrictions, are provided in the Cost Guidance for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements. Applicants must adhere to guidance in this document when developing their proposal materials.

D.7 OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Letters of support are not required but may be included in the proposal package. Applicants should not request letters of support from APHIS Veterinary Services employees; however, informal discussions are encouraged.

Applicants must describe support needed from APHIS Veterinary Services personnel to accomplish their project. Projects requiring support from APHIS reference laboratories must explicitly state those anticipated needs in their proposals. APHIS VS welcomes the opportunity to work with cooperators on these projects, but workload required from VS partners will be considered in selecting proposals.

E. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

The USDA is responsible for approving projects funded through this opportunity. This is a competitive funding opportunity. Applications that meet the threshold eligibility criteria in [Section C](#) will compete for available funds with all other eligible applications submitted in response to this funding opportunity announcement.

E.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below. Applicants should explicitly and fully address these criteria in their project Work Plan.

1. Strong and direct alignment with the priority topic described in [Section A.2](#) of this announcement.
2. Feasibility of success demonstrated by a well-organized approach, reasonable timeline, consideration of key partnerships needed for project success, and skills and experience of the applicants.
3. Extent to which the project addresses one or more critical current needs directly related to a funding priority topic.
4. Extent to which the project outcomes and deliverables are likely to have significant impact and value with respect to the funding priority topic.
5. Costs effectiveness, including whether the project costs are reasonable and necessary to produce expected outcomes and whether the project makes good use of existing resources.

E.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible proposals will undergo evaluation by a team of subject matter experts nominated by APHIS VS and the NAHLN Coordinating Council. 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. 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.

During the application review process, APHIS will conduct a risk assessment for applicants. Applicants will be verified in 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. APHIS may not issue Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements, APHIS may determine that the applicant is not eligible to receive a Federal award.

When anticipated total Federal share exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold, APHIS is required to review and consider information about the applicant included in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. An applicant, if desired, may review and comment on any information about their organization previously entered and currently in the system. When completing the risk assessment, APHIS will consider applicant comments in addition to other information in the designated integrity and performance system to assess applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

APHIS will administer the agreements and collaborate with project recipients to provide advice, receive and review project documents, offer comments and suggestions, track project performance, and communicate with recipients as necessary to ensure progress in accomplishing the project, identifying obstacles, and resolving concerns.

Recipients will track performance and expenditures, provide progress reports and project deliverables in accordance with the project work plan, and communicate with VS staff to assess and evaluate progress.

F.1 FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

All applicants will be notified by email after the spending plan is approved by the Secretary and announced by USDA. Applicants selected for funding will receive instruction on next steps in the process, which will be completed in ezFedGrants. USDA will create an application 'opportunity' in the ezFedGrants system. All applicants with proposals selected for funding will be sent a link via email connecting them to the ezFedGrants management site for continuation and finalization of the proposal process. Subsequently, the signature of the authorized agent and APHIS' authorized official on all required paperwork will finalize the cooperative agreement.

Awards will be executed as quickly as possible after the spending plan is announced. Pre-awards may be requested in circumstances where there is urgency to begin work before the award can be executed.

The Notice of Award will provide pertinent instructions and information including but not limited to the information described in [2 CFR § 200.210](#) and a reference to the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#).

F.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants must comply with the requirements contained in the [2 CFR Part 200](#) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Successful applicants also must comply with the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#), the approved project work plan, and the approved project financial plan.

F.3 REPORTING

The Recipient's Project Coordinator shall provide quarterly program reports to the APHIS Project Manager through the ezFedGrants system and in compliance with the [APHIS General Terms and Conditions](#). Two quarterly reports are due each quarter, including (1) a progress report on program activities outlined in approved work plan, and (2) a Federal Financial Report, SF-425. The reports will be used to verify compliance with provisions of this Agreement.

F.4 PROJECT EVALUATION

The Recipient's performance will be evaluated through the review of quarterly progress and financial reports, as well as periodic discussions of project progress with the Program Manager. Performance is evaluated based on the following criteria to determine if the Recipient met the project standards and if the results and benefits were achieved:

1. Adherence to project schedule.
2. Adherence to project budget.
3. Delivery of results that meet the agreement performance standards and achieve the stated outcomes.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about the NAHLN, please contact:

Christina Loiacono, NAHLN Coordinator

Phone: 515-337-7911

Email: Christina.M.Loiacono@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

H. OTHER INFORMATION

The USDA is not obligated to make any award as a result of this announcement nor to make any changes to future announcements. Only the APHIS Authorized Departmental Officer can bind the Government to an expenditure of funds and this obligation of funds shall only occur in writing by authorized officials and under the approved USDA, APHIS Cooperative Agreement format.

H.1 DEFINITIONS

Emerging Disease	Disease or pathogen newly identified in the United States.
NAHLN eligible laboratory	As described in Section 12101 of Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (aka “2018 Farm Bill”), a diagnostic laboratory that meets specific criteria developed by the Secretary, in consultation with State animal health officials, State veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and veterinary diagnostic laboratories at institutions of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)). Also referred to as a NAHLN approved laboratory.
NAHLH scope disease	Disease or agent that is included on the list of NAHLN approved testing.

APPENDIX 1. NEW APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain the following registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take 6 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as soon as possible. Failure to complete registrations in advance of a due date is not a valid reason for a late submission. Applicants should address these now to avoid any last-minute surprises or obstacles in the application process.

1. **Obtain a DUNS Number:** All entities applying for funding must have a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). A DUNS number can be obtained from the [Dun & Bradstreet website](#) or by calling 1-866-705-5711. For more detailed instructions, refer to [Obtain a DUNS Number](#). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance" form when submitting a proposal for funding consideration. Be prepared and get your DUNS number now.
2. **Register with System for Award Management (SAM):** In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying for NAHLN funding are required to register with SAM. For more detailed instructions, refer to [Register With SAM](#). After registering, please allow at least 10 business days for your registration to become active in SAM and an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems. Registering early will help applicants meet the application deadline without delays associated with mandatory SAM registration.
3. **Create an eAuthentication Account:** All applicants must have a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication Account to submit proposals for NAHLN funding opportunities. USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts for accessing USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. Please note that USDA will only accept eAuthentication Accounts from individuals. Visit <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/home> to create an account and refer to the [job aid](#) when creating an eAuthentication account for additional help. For help with **existing** eAuthentication accounts or passwords, contact the eAuthentication help desk at eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov.
4. **If a proposal is chosen for funding, an ezFedGrants (eFG) Account will be required:** Applicants are required to have an active account in the USDA [ezFedGrants](#) system if their proposal is chosen to be funded. New applicants are encouraged to review the [job aid](#) for applying to opportunities in ezFedGrants for assistance. The ezFedGrants system requires each applicant to have a minimum of at least one Grants Administrative Officer (GAO) and one Signatory Official (SO). For help with the USDA ezFedGrants system, applicants may contact the ezFedGrants help desk at ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.

APPENDIX 2. APPLICANT CHECKLIST AND TIPS

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST:

The proposal must include the following:

- NAHLN Proposal Work Plan
 - Verify that the proposal directly and clearly supports one or more of the funding priority topics listed in this Funding Opportunity Announcement.
 - Ensure that the document is in final format with no tracked changes and no passwords.
 - Ensure that point of contact information is correct.

- NAHLN Detailed Financial Plan
 - Verify that any indirect cost claimed meets requirements based on applicants institution and requirements listed in the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) for APHIS Cooperative Agreements.

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if indirect costs are claimed

TIPS FOR APPLICANTS:

- Submit proposals early; **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE PROPOSAL DEADLINE.**
- **DO** remember that the review panel's job is to ensure the government's funds are being well spent, with those proposals selected for funding providing the highest likelihood of tangible end products benefitting the NAHLN being delivered.
- **DO** take some time to think out your proposal. A proposal that is well written and easy to follow will be well received by the review panel.
 - **DO** clearly and concisely define the need or problem that this proposal is addressing. Be **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound.**
 - **DO** tell us how this proposal aligns with NAHLN's mission.
 - **DO** align your proposal with the priorities in the current year's opportunity announcement.
 - **DO** provide sufficient detail for a reviewer to be convinced that you have thought out the process well, and understand the resources needed to complete the proposed tasks.
 - **DO** be sure to include all APHIS resources your proposal will need to successfully complete the work.
- **DO** provide both a single-page synopsis of ALL funding requested for ALL years in your attached budget, and an itemized budget and justifications for each sub-contracting lab, for each year.
- **DON'T** request budget items already listed in your annual NAHLN infrastructure agreement, unless you have a strong justification for the additional items.
- **DO** ask questions. We want to help you put forth the best proposal possible.