



National Animal Health Laboratory Network Enhancement 2020 Cooperative/Interagency Agreements

Fiscal Year 2020 Funding Opportunity Announcement
Publication Date: July 15, 2020
Application Due Date: September 14, 2020

Funding Opportunity: National Animal Health Laboratory Network 2020

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 2020

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 September 14, 2020. 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 of up to \$15 million in funds to be divided between the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP), with targets of \$5 million in funds to NAHLN and \$10 million in funds to NADPRP. 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.

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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 2020

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 September 14, 2020. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

The agreement performance period is estimated to begin in January 2021 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 up to \$15 million in funds to be divided between the NAHLN and NADPRP, with targets of \$5 million in funds to NAHLN.. In this funding opportunity, NAHLN is seeking proposals for projects that will focus on: (1) Test method development and validation, (2) Enhancing emergency preparedness, (3) Enhancing electronic data management, and (4) Developing laboratory centered exercises and drills.

A.2 2020 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 proposal may be submitted.

- Test Method Development and Validation
 - NAHLN scope and emerging diseases – Evaluate additional reagents and equipment for use with current NAHLN standard operating procedures. The following NAHLN scope diseases: chronic wasting disease, African swine fever, classical swine fever, and foot and mouth disease will be prioritized. Evaluate point-of-care testing options for potential use in the NAHLN.
- Enhancing Emergency Preparedness
 - Equipment – Explain, specifically how requested equipment will enhance preparedness.
 - Training – Explain, specifically how requested training will enhance preparedness.

- Electronic Data Management
 - Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) – Coordinate efforts to provide all laboratories access to a version of their current LIMS that includes required data collection fields for reporting test results to NAHLN.
 - Electronic messaging support – Coordinate efforts to provide all laboratories with mechanisms to improve laboratory messaging capability. Develop tools to assist with data extraction and mapping data to current HL7 schema or to have real-time access to status of message receipt. Work with LIMS vendors to develop user friendly interfaces. Develop solutions for data collection and submission hurdles, sending results using multiple Program object identifiers (OIDs) based on disease.
- Exercises and Drills
 - Develop and conduct laboratory centered exercises or drills designed to enhance disease outbreak surge testing preparedness for NAHLN.

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 up to \$15 million in funds to be divided between the NAHLN and NADPRP programs, with a target of \$5 million in funds to NAHLN. NAHLN is seeking proposals that will address the 2020 funding priorities described in [Section A](#). 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 \$1,000,000 each. The average NAHLN award in 2019 was \$192,000, across 26 proposals awarded.

Anticipated Award Start Date: APHIS anticipates that work covered under these agreements will begin in January 2021 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 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:

- [Cost Guidance](#) 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 [Cost Guidance](#) for APHIS Veterinary Services Farm Bill Cooperative Agreements in developing their project proposal financial plan. Note that indirect costs are capped at 10% of the total project costs.

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.

Cost sharing and matching is defined in [2 CFR Part 200.29](#) as a “portion of the project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute).” If applicable, cooperators should describe cost-share or in-kind funding for the project.

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](#).
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 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

Applicants may submit more than one project proposal. Applicants who wish to submit multiple proposals must submit each proposal as a separate proposal package. Indirect costs are capped at 10% of the total project costs.

New applicants should refer to [Appendix 1: Proposal Checklist and Tips](#) for initial steps to take when developing a proposal.

D.1 OBTAINING PROPOSAL TEMPLATES & FORMS

Applicants can find all proposal 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.

Applicants should refer to the [Appendix 1: Proposal 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 project proposal Work Plan 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 [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.

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

Under [Presidential Memorandum M-20-17](#) in response to COVID-19, awarding agencies can relax the requirement for an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration at time of proposal in order to expeditiously issue funding. At the time of award, the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.205, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants, continue to apply.

System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants (except Federal agencies) are required to register in the SAM prior to submitting a proposal and to maintain current information throughout the award period of performance (2 CFR §200.205). To register, go to the [SAM website](#). Please allow a minimum of 5 days 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.

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.

D.4 SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

All proposals must be completed and provided to both of the the following email addresses no later than **September 14, 2020, 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.

E. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria

1. **Addresses the priorities and requirements in the announcement.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal strongly supports and clearly addresses the priority areas described in [Section A](#).
 - a. **Strong and direct support for the funding priority.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposed activities strongly and directly address the concern identified in the funding priority, as well as the extent to which the expected outcomes and deliverables will strongly support the funding priority area of concern.
 - b. **Sound knowledge of existing activity associated with the funding priority topic.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal demonstrates awareness of current concerns, known gaps, activities conducted by other entities, and, if applicable, the regulatory landscape related to the funding priority topic. Proposals supported with Farm Bill SEC 12101 funds should complement and build on existing activities, address known gaps, and avoid redundancy with similar work already conducted by other entities, including but not limited to work conducted by USDA. Proposed activities also must align with current Federal and State regulations.
2. **Feasibility of success.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal is likely to successfully produce the expected outcomes and deliverables based on key factors such as a well-organized and high quality approach; a reasonable schedule and budget; effective partnerships and collaborations; and the investigator's skills, knowledge, and experiences.
 - a. **Well organized and high-quality approach.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the work plan and financial plan lay out a plan of action that is logical, well-organized, complete, and likely to successfully produce the expected outcomes and deliverables. It considers whether the approach is explained in sufficient detail for the reader to understand what activities will be performed, how they will be conducted, and what will be produced.
 - b. **Adequate budget.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the budget is realistic, adequate, and sufficient to successfully produce the outcomes and deliverables described in the proposal.
 - c. **Reasonable schedule.** This criterion assesses whether the project schedule allows an appropriate amount of time for completing all activities in a 1-2 year performance period, including but not limited to considering a reasonable amount of time to complete each activity, the competing time commitments of stakeholders who are critical to project completion, and other risks that may cause schedule delays.
 - d. **Partnerships.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal identifies and describes the partnerships and collaborations necessary to successfully produce the expected outcomes and deliverables. It also considers the likelihood that the project will

develop and strengthen relationships that are likely to foster progress in the funding priority area or related areas.

- e. **Skills, knowledge, and experience.** This criterion considers the extent to which the key persons who will carry out the project have the qualifications, skills, ability, and experience to successfully conduct the proposed activities and produce successful outcomes and deliverables.
3. **Critical need.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal addresses one or more current and urgent needs directly related to the funding priority as well as the extent to which the proposal identifies an important gap in knowledge or capabilities related to the funding priority area and how the proposal's outcomes and deliverables will address and close that gap.
4. **Impact and value of outcomes.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the expected outcomes and deliverables are likely to have measurable and significant impact and value in the funding priority area.
 - a. **Value of outcomes.** This criterion assesses the likelihood that the project will produce outcomes and deliverables that are high-value with respect to positively impacting the funding priority area. It considers the extent to which the project will produce outcomes and deliverables that are critically needed, do not already exist, and are unlikely to be produced with existing or alternative funding sources.
 - b. **Scope of impact.** This criterion assesses the scope of impact on U.S. animal agriculture in several dimensions, including whether the project will create impact at State, regional, national, or other geographic levels and also whether the project will have impact in one livestock sector or many.
 - c. **Knowledge transfer.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the outcomes and deliverables are likely to be used by other groups and stakeholders, either by replicating the activity in other regions or livestock sectors or by using the information to support policies and decisions. Proposals should indicate how the applicant will share the project outcomes and deliverables so other entities can make use of them.
5. **Cost effectiveness.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal identifies a cost-effective approach to produce the desired outcomes and deliverables as compared to alternatives.
 - a. **All costs are reasonable and necessary.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the financial plan is clear, logical, and includes only reasonable and necessary costs to produce the expected outcomes and deliverables. It also assesses the extent to which the financial plan provides sufficient detail for reviewers to fully understand how each budget item specifically supports the activities outlined in the work plan, without including budget items that are not allowed or appear superfluous or tangential to producing the outcomes and deliverables.
 - b. **Good use of existing resources.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal includes cost-saving measures by leveraging existing resources where possible. For example, the proposal describes practical use of existing personnel, vehicles, computers, venues, supplies, and other items to complete the project.
6. **Best practices and innovation.** This criterion assesses the extent to which the proposal identifies and includes best practices and innovative approaches.

- a. **Best practices.** The proposal demonstrates understanding and application of current and/or best practices that will enhance efficiency in conducting the project and/or assure high quality results or products. The approach references industry standards and/or best practices where applicable.
- b. **Creativity or innovation.** The proposal demonstrates creative thinking and/or an innovative approach to address the priority described in [Section A](#).

E.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The USDA is responsible for approving NAHLN funded projects.

Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria in [Section C](#) will be evaluated by a team of reviewers based on the merits of the proposal. USDA will consider the review team's recommendations in making final funding determinations. Reviewers are subject matter experts nominated by APHIS VS and by the NAHLN Program Office. Reviewers may have no association with projects they are reviewing, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest. 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.

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.

For any award under this solicitation where APHIS anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance (see 2 CFR §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold— the threshold is \$150,000 but it is periodically adjusted), applicants are notified:

1. That APHIS prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);
2. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and;
3. That APHIS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

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. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND TIPS

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST:

The proposal must include the following:

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if indirect costs are claimed
- NAHLN Proposal Work Plan
- NAHLN Detailed Financial Plan

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.

APPENDIX 2. NEW APPLICANT INFORMATION

If a proposal is selected for funding, the submitter will be required to complete the application process by following the instructions below. This can be completed prior to a proposal being identified for funding but this is not required to submit a proposal.

Register in SAM

- Applicants with successful proposals will be required to be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

Obtain a DUNS Number

- New applicants are required to have a [DUNS number](#).
- 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](#).

Apply for an eAuth Account

- If a proposal is selected for funding, applicants will be required to have a USDA [eAuthentication Account](#). Use the [eAuthentication Account Creation](#) job aid to get started.
- An individual in the applicant organization may apply for a USDA eAuthentication Account by visiting the Create an Account – Getting Started page. For help with eAuthentication accounts or passwords, contact the eAuthentication help desk at eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov.

Getting Started in ezFedGrants

- If a proposal is selected for funding, applicants will be required to establish an account in the USDA [ezFedGrants](#) system.
- In order to complete an application for a successful proposal from the [ezFedGrants](#) Client Services Landing Page, applicants must have a USDA level 2 eAuthentication account. USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. Please note that USDA will only accept eAuthentication Accounts from individuals.
- Applicants new to [ezFedGrants](#) should review the Job Aids by either clicking on the Training icon on the [ezFedGrants Client Services Landing Page](#) or by clicking on this link on [Applying to Opportunities in ezFedGrants](#).
- The USDA eFG [External User Onboarding Quick Reference](#) Job Aid in the Training Section under Frequently Asked Questions, Onboarding and Accessing [ezFedGrants](#) summarizes the process for users to gain access to the [ezFedGrants](#) external portal.
- The [ezFedGrants](#) system requires each applicant with a successful proposal to have a minimum of at least one Grants Administrative Officer (GAO) and one Signatory Official (SO).
- To complete an application for a proposal selected for funding, the applicant must access the “Search Opportunities” screen and search for the correct opportunity number which will be provided to those with successful proposals.
- For help with the USDA [ezFedGrants](#) system, applicants may contact the [ezFedGrants](#) help desk at ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.