

USDA APHIS Veterinary Services

Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities

2024 Cooperative Agreement Funding Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) is announcing the 2024 funding opportunity for Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management and Response Activities.

In 2024, USDA APHIS VS will make available around \$6,050,000 in cooperative agreement funding to control and prevent CWD in farmed cervids through the development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids as part of an overall CWD management plan in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#).¹ The following information addresses basic questions regarding the 2024 funding opportunity.

Applicants can find this funding opportunity on [ezFedGrants](#) or [Grants.gov](#) by searching the Funding Opportunity Title **FY24 Farmed Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities**, the Assistance Listing Number **10.025**, or the Funding Opportunity Number USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-24-0007. For additional information, the full funding announcement, and resources for applicants, please visit the [USDA APHIS VS Cervid Health Program CWD website](#).

FUNDING FAQs

How much funding is available through this opportunity?

APHIS VS will make available around \$6,050,000 in cooperative agreement funds to control and prevent CWD in farmed cervids through the development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids as part of an overall CWD management plan in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#). Funds may also be provided to further the research, development, and evaluation of techniques and strategies for controlling and preventing CWD in farmed cervids.

Who can apply for funds?

The following entities are eligible for funding through this opportunity, provided they, or the Native American Tribal governments they are representing in the case of Native American Tribal organizations, have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for **farmed cervids**:

1. State departments of agriculture
2. State animal health agencies
3. State departments of wildlife or natural resources
4. Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and Native American Tribal organizations or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments²

Research institutes³ and universities⁴ are also eligible and may submit applied research proposals without having regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for farmed cervids.

¹ USDA APHIS VS may increase the funding available through this opportunity by adding unused funds allocated for indemnity payments or other cooperative agreement commitments.

² Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments are listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior; [Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#).

NOTE: This list does not preclude award recipients from collaborating with other entities who may have direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in farmed cervids, such as land grant or other universities; State or national livestock, wildlife, sportsmen, or conservation organizations; or a Federal Agency. Any application with a proposed subaward over \$10,000 should complete an individual Financial Plan as a part of the proposal package.

Can colleges, universities and research institutes apply directly for this funding opportunity?

Yes, universities³ and research institutes⁴ are eligible to apply directly for funding.

Further details, as well as cost guidance for awarded funds, can be found in the Funding Opportunity Announcement on [ezFedGrants](#), [Grants.gov](#), or the [USDA APHIS Veterinary Services website](#).

Are eligible applicants allowed to submit multiple CWD management or research proposals?

Eligible applicants may submit more than one CWD management or applied CWD research proposals⁵.

Applied research is defined as research attempting to find practical solutions to solve specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD in farmed cervids.

NOTE: Research proposals without a clearly defined application will be rejected.

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

APHIS VS anticipates awarding around twenty-five cooperative agreements and the amount awarded will range from \$10,000 to \$250,000 each. The average farmed cervid award in 2023 was \$180,070 across seventeen proposals.⁵ There is no commitment by USDA to fund any application or to make a specific number of awards.

Are there limitations on the activities for which awarded funds can be used?

Yes, awarded funds **may NOT be used** for the following:

- Land acquisition
- Compensation for Federal Employees
- Travel of Federal Employees
- Federal subawards
- Construction and/or major rehabilitation of buildings
- Bonuses or commissions
- Fundraising
- Meeting, conference, symposia, or workshop honoraria, which is payment to individuals or guests other than for documented professional services
- Vehicle purchases or leases
- Positions funded by other federal cooperative agreements or grants
- International travel
- Projects or activities associated with APHIS-State-Industry cooperative program activities already funded via USDA APHIS annual cooperative agreements

³ Universities includes the [1994 Tribal colleges and universities](#), the [1890 land-grant institutions](#), [land-grant colleges and universities](#), and other accredited universities.

⁴ Research institute is an establishment founded for conducting research that has published peer reviewed articles in the field and that currently employs one or more investigators who will work on the project with relevant experience in applied research on the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

⁵ Projects funded in prior years which are either complete or substantially complete that recipients wish to continue may be submitted as a proposal to this opportunity. Projects funded in prior years which are not substantially complete that recipients wish to continue should be submitted as a no-cost extension per the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) or by contacting the APHIS VS Program Manager rather than being submitted as a proposal to this opportunity.

- Promotional, outreach, or giveaway items such as calendars, rulers, pens, pencils, squishy balls, cups, refreshments, etc.

Further details, as well as cost guidance for awarded funds, can be found in the Funding Opportunity Announcement on [ezFedGrants](#), [Grants.gov](#), or the [USDA APHIS VS Cervid Health Program CWD website](#).

Is there further clarification on the use of awarded funds for personnel costs?

It is not VS' intent to prescribe an applicant's approach to satisfy personnel needs for proposed activities. VS recommends applicants use caution when hiring or funding personnel with awarded funds because there is no guarantee of future funding beyond the project's performance period. Funds made available to recipients via this opportunity may only be used to support the activities described in the cooperative agreement Work Plan and are only available for the cooperative agreement performance period. Work and Financial Plans should clearly describe the activities to be performed and the activity time period 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 beyond the cooperative agreement performance period with future cooperative agreement funds.

Will some entities automatically receive set amounts of funding?

No, this is a competitive funding opportunity. Proposals will be evaluated by reviewers who will recommend proposals for funding based on the quality of proposals received. High quality proposals are those that strongly support the priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

APPLICATION FAQs

When are proposal applications due?

Proposals must be received through [ezFedGrants](#) by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time on **June 10, 2024**.

How do applicants apply for funds?

All proposals must be completed and received electronically through [ezFedGrants](#). All applicant organizations must have at least two users registered in [ezFedGrants](#), a Grants Administrative Officer and a Signatory Official, in order to successfully submit a proposal package.

What must be included with the proposal submission?

The proposal package must include the following, as outlined in [Section D.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement:

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance" and SF-424A "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs"
- [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (if applicable)
- [SF-LLL](#), "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" (if applicable)
- Waiver or approval response letter from the State's Single Point of Contact (if applicable)
- Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
- Farmed Cervid Proposal Work Plan (Template available in [Appendix 3](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement) and Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Proposal Work Plan (Template available in [Appendix 4](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement)
- Farmed Cervid Proposal Financial Plan (Template available in [Appendix 5](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement)
- Copy of a current APHIS CWD Controlled Materials, Organisms and Vectors permit for the possession and handling of known CWD positive samples or tissues from known CWD positive animals, if these samples are to be used for the proposed work.

- For research proposals involving interactions with live animals, documentation of IACUC approval.

Is there a limit on the length of the proposal Work Plan?

Work Plans using this template may not exceed twenty pages in 12-point font. Work Plans that do not use the template may not exceed ten pages in 12-point font. The use of diagrams, visuals, and reference sheets, as well as any letters of collaboration from contributors, will not count toward these limitations.

What is the period of performance?

The performance period will begin on or before September 30, 2024, and should end no later than twelve months after the *start date*. Funding will not be allowed, nor activities approved to occur, outside of the period of performance. There is an allowance of a one-time extension request of the performance period up to twelve months to complete the project, assuming there is no increase in funding requested. This request must be submitted in accordance with the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) in order to be considered.

FUNDING PRIORITY FAQs

What are the funding priorities?

Eligible applicants are encouraged to develop project proposals that directly support at least one of the five funding priorities described below:

1. **Improve the management of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds.** For the purpose of this priority, management means effectively **controlling** CWD in affected farmed cervid herds or **preventing** the spread of CWD from affected herds or endemic populations to farmed cervid herds by implementing or improving the implementation of the Federal CWD Herd Certification Program (HCP) as described in the USDA APHIS VS [CWD Program Standards](#). These projects may include the use of funds for the indemnification and removal of CWD-affected farmed cervid herds and CWD-exposed cervids purchased as part of an overall CWD management plan in accordance with [9 CFR Part 55.2](#) or the use of predictive genetics and antemortem testing with the indemnification/purchase and removal of CWD positive and poor scoring exposed or potentially exposed white-tailed deer (see Appendix 4 – Farmed Cervid Genetics Work Plan).

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: disease detection, investigation, and response activities; the development and use of novel CWD tests in animals; epidemiology and risk analysis; farmed cervid movement monitoring and control (traceability); Federal HCP implementation or improvement, including enhanced compliance, monitoring, and enforcement activities; identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; sample collection training programs for HCP sample collectors and regulatory personnel; surveillance in herds not subject to mandatory sample submission; or, test result reporting to APHIS.

2. **Improve the management of CWD-affected farmed cervid premises.** For the purpose of this priority, management means effectively controlling or preventing the spread of CWD from a CWD-affected farmed cervid premises and/or surrounding area by implementing or improving upon current guidance and methods, such as the USDA APHIS VS [CWD Program Standards](#), and may include cleaning and disinfection strategies, scavenger management, or other biosecurity measures or applied research to address these areas.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: the development and use of novel CWD tests for environmental testing; environmental decontamination; environmental testing; farmed cervid carcass and waste management; identification and investigation of premises treatment options for CWD; or, investigating the role of scavengers or predators in CWD transmission to or within farmed cervid herds or managing these risks.

- 3. Conduct additional research on amplification assays and other new test methods in farmed cervids.** Amplification assays are test methods that identify CWD by amplifying small amounts of prion protein to levels that are detectable [e.g., Protein Misfolding Cyclic Amplification (PMCA), real-time quaking induced conversion (RT-QuIC)]. Specifically, this funding opportunity is interested in proposals which will develop new test methods or further the use of amplification assays as diagnostic or environmental tests, and/or efforts to make these tests commercially available for use.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: the development of new amplification assays or the expanded use of amplification assays for novel sample types and applications.

- 4. Conduct additional research on the application of whole genome predictive genetics in farmed cervids.** Current and ongoing research supports the use of whole genome predictive genetics to determine the susceptibility of farmed cervids to CWD, remove deer that are highly susceptible to CWD, and breed away from highly susceptible deer which provides the foundation for a genomics-based CWD eradication program in the future.

Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: encouraging farmed white-tailed deer owners to obtain predictive genetic scores for their deer, remove deer that are highly susceptible to CWD, and encourage the breeding of less susceptible deer; conducting field trials to evaluate the use of a whole genome predictive genetics strategy in farmed white-tailed deer herds to prevent CWD; or, validating a whole genome predictive genetics strategy in mule deer.

- 5. Develop and/or deliver educational outreach materials or programs to farmed cervid stakeholders.** For purposes of this priority, educational outreach means the methods, processes, or actions that provide education and facilitate learning of critical knowledge necessary to control and/or prevent CWD and its spread in farmed cervids, including the study of human dimensions on CWD prevention and control, and educational opportunities for accredited veterinarians and state staff. Behavioral messaging research may also be included as part of an outreach program.

Will a proposal that does not address one of these priorities be considered for funding?

Any other proposed projects or activities that would further develop and implement farmed cervid CWD control, prevention, surveillance, testing, management, and response fall within the scope of activities for this funding opportunity. While proposals within this scope that do not fall under the funding priorities above would receive a lower review score than proposals of equal quality that do, they will be reviewed and may score sufficiently for funding.

If an applicant would like to address multiple priorities, should they all be included in one proposal, or should multiple proposals be submitted?

Applicants are encouraged to submit separate proposals for each funding priority provided the objectives or activities are not dependent on all proposals being selected for funding. Submitting separate projects in a single proposal may result in an activity that would have scored high enough to be funded individually not scoring well due to another activity in the proposal scoring poorly or being unacceptable. If multiple funding priorities are addressed within a single Work Plan, applicants should specify which funding priority is addressed for each objective.

Will partial funding of a priority or an activity on a proposal be considered?

A project may be selected for partial funding of specific objectives or activities within a proposed Work Plan, based on reviewer recommendations.

What are other funding considerations?

Within the context of addressing the overall goal of controlling or preventing CWD in farmed cervids and the priorities described above, applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that:

- Meet the evaluation criteria described in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement;
- Describe how the project will leverage existing resources through partnerships with local, State, and/or Federal government agencies, industry organizations, professional associations, producer groups, and/or non-profit organizations with direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in farmed cervids; and,
- Describe the anticipated involvement by APHIS personnel needed to complete the proposed activities in the Work Plan and Financial Plan (excluding personnel to administer or oversee the cooperative agreement). APHIS intends to collaborate with recipients to successfully complete activities funded via this opportunity; however, due to the limited availability of personnel, APHIS encourages proposals that are not contingent on APHIS participation where possible, unless that participation was agreed upon during the development of the proposal.

NOTE: While all proposals meeting the administrative eligibility criteria listed in [Section C.4](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement will be considered for funding, APHIS VS may give priority to proposals submitted by an eligible applicant: (1) in a State that has either experienced recent incidents of CWD in farmed cervids or that has farmed cervid herds bordering a CWD endemic area; and, (2) either has a CWD Federal HCP or a State CWD control program that includes, but is not limited to, monitoring and surveillance, or proposes to create a Federal or State CWD control program. **Eligible applicants not meeting these criteria are encouraged to apply and their proposals will be considered for funding.**

AGREEMENT FAQs

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

USDA APHIS VS funds projects using cooperative agreements and specific rules and regulations apply to the application, use, and reporting of these funds. When cooperative agreements are awarded through a competitive process, applicants must submit a complete application by the deadline in the announcement. There is no opportunity for proposal modifications during the review process.

The Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Funding Opportunity calls for proposals to be awarded through a competitive process, in which an expert or team of experts evaluates the merits of each proposal using predetermined criteria. Proposals will be evaluated by a team of reviewers who will recommend proposals for funding based on the merits of the proposal as outlined in [Section E.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Recipients are not pre-determined. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS VS.

Is cost sharing required?

Although cost sharing is not required, APHIS VS may take into consideration an eligible applicant's ability to contribute non-Federal funds to carry out a cooperative agreement. Additional information on cost sharing is outlined in [Section C.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

PROPOSAL FAQs

Can I submit more than one proposal?

An eligible applicant may submit multiple proposals for this funding opportunity, requesting up to \$250,000 per proposal for activities to control or prevent CWD in farmed cervids. Applicants who wish to submit multiple proposals must submit each proposal as a separate proposal package. Multiple proposals from a single eligible applicant may be selected for funding with the applicant receiving a total award greater than \$250,000, provided the additional awarded proposal(s) is significantly superior in reviewer scoring when ranked against other proposal packages.

If my project was funded in prior years, can I resubmit those activities for this opportunity?

Recipients wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years that are either complete or will be complete by the proposed period of performance may submit proposals to this opportunity. Recipients

wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years which are not complete, and have not been extended previously, should submit a no-cost extension per the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) or by contacting the APHIS VS Program Manager rather than submitting a proposal to this opportunity.

Can several different proposal ideas for projects that support the 2024 funding priorities be combined into a single proposal?

Submitting separate projects in a single proposal may result in an activity that would have scored high enough to be funded individually not scoring well due to another activity in the proposal scoring poorly or being unacceptable.

Can an eligible entity collaborate with other eligible entities on a proposal?

Yes, an eligible entity may collaborate with any other eligible entity.

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

If there is one project with each eligible entity doing a similar activity or task, submit one proposal from the main applicant and subcontract with the other applicant(s). If the project has multiple parts and each entity is responsible for an individual activity or task, then each entity may submit their own proposal if this is preferred. Any application with a proposed subaward over \$10,000 should complete an individual Financial Plan as a part of the proposal package.

Can an eligible entity partner with non-eligible entities?

Yes, an eligible entity may collaborate with a non-eligible entity who may have direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in farmed cervids, such as land grant or other universities; State or national livestock, wildlife, sportsmen, or conservation organizations; or a Federal Agency. The proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage non-eligible entities as collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities. Any application with a proposed subaward over \$10,000 should complete an individual Financial Plan as a part of the proposal package.

May a foreign entity submit a proposal?

No, a foreign entity is not eligible for this opportunity. However, a foreign entity may contribute to a proposal submitted by an eligible entity. In this case, the proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage foreign collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities.

How are proposals reviewed and who reviews them?

Proposals meeting the administrative eligibility criteria described in [Section C.4](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement will be evaluated by reviewers based on the merits of the proposal as outlined in [Section E.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. APHIS VS is responsible for reviewing proposals against the evaluation criteria found in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement and the review panel will consist of internal and external subject-matter experts from various departments and agencies, and from academia as appropriate. High quality proposals are those that strongly support the priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

Who makes the final decision for funding?

Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS VS.

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

There is a single application deadline followed by the simultaneous review of all applications. APHIS VS will review proposals within 60 days of the application deadline and applicants will be notified by email of award status.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FAQs

Where are the websites located with this information?

Applicants can find this Funding Opportunity Announcement on [ezFedGrants](#) or [Grants.gov](#) by searching the Funding Opportunity Title **FY24 Farmed Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities**, the Assistance

Listing Number **10.025**, or the Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSPRS00-24-0007**. The following information can also be found on the [USDA APHIS VS Cervid Health Program CWD website](#):

- Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Funding Opportunity Announcement (PDF)
- Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Proposal Work Plan Template (Word) and Farmed Cervid Predictive Genetics Proposal Work Plan
 - Applicants must submit a Work Plan that includes all information outlined in the template relevant to the proposal type. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use these templates.
- Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Proposal Financial Plan Template (Excel)
 - Applicants must submit a Financial Plan that includes all information outlined in this template. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use this template.

Who can applicants contact regarding questions about the Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Funding Opportunity Announcement?

For questions about the funding opportunity, required documents, or the [ezFedGrants](#) application process, please contact VS.FiOps.ASC.Agreements@usda.gov. For other questions, please contact the following APHIS VS Program staff: Rebecca Ita, Rebecca.g.ita@usda.gov, 775-364-4078 or Tracy Nichols, tracy.a.nichols@usda.gov, 970-494-7380.