

## **2014 Post-Award Management of LFPP Grants**

LFPP recipients are responsible for monitoring the performance of all project activities, ensuring that the work is completed within the required time frame, and contacting LFPP immediately if problems arise that will interfere with or delay the work.

### **1. What is the official project start date?**

The official starting date for all FY 2014 LFPP grants is September 30, 2014. Recipients of Planning Grants have one year to complete their project (September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2015). Recipients of Implementation Grants have two years to complete their project (September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016). There is no penalty for early project completion.

### **2. What is the matching requirement?**

LFPP requires a 25% dollar match of the total project budget (requested amount + matching amount) by the end of the project, not necessarily at all stages of the project. Any matching funds should be noted on the SF-270 (covered below).

### **3. Can pre-award cost be reimbursed?**

If the recipient starts project work within 30 days of the official start date of September 30, 2014 and incurred expenses or used matching resources listed in the approved budget, then they may receive credit for the work with written prior approval from the LFPP staff. This will ensure reimbursement for any pre-award costs incurred, and/or that any matching resources expended during the pre-award period count toward the match requirement. If you have pre-award costs, contact LFPP staff for instructions.

### **4. When is prior approval required?**

In certain circumstances, recipients may need to make changes to the originally-proposed grant project. These cases may require prior approval that is acknowledged and signed off on by LFPP staff before funding can be disbursed. It is recommended that your organization contact LFPP as soon as possible to avoid gaps and downtime in project activity. **To obtain prior approval, email the request to [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov).**

- A. **Changes in Project Contact or Project Leader:** Prior approval is required before changing the recipient's program contact. The update should contain the new individual's name and contact information, the capacity in which this new individual will serve, and a brief outline of qualifications if the project leader changes.
- B. **Certain Budget Changes:** Modifications to the project budget must be approved in writing by LFPP staff if the cumulative amount of such modifications exceeds 20% of the total grant amount. Requests for budget changes should include a description of the change, justification for the change, and a revised budget spreadsheet.

- C. **Revisions of Scope or Objectives:** When it is necessary to modify the scope or objective(s) of the award, contact LFPP staff first to discuss. Then submit a written justification for the change along with a description of the revisions and a revised budget spreadsheet, if applicable.
- D. **No-cost Time Extensions:** Contact LFPP staff to request a no-cost time extension if for any reason the project cannot be completed within the time frame established in the grant agreement. You may be approved for a one time, six months no-cost time extension. Send in a written request that includes the information below. Retain a copy of the request for your project files.
- The number of additional months needed and the new ending date.
  - A justification for the request for more time.
  - A summary of progress to date in terms of the project timeline and objectives. The summary may reference the most recent Progress Report and indicate how circumstances have changed since then.
  - An estimate of the remaining grant and matching funds.
  - A projected timetable to complete the project.

**5. How do I request an advance or reimbursement?**

- A. **REQUIRED: Breakdown on Spreadsheet/Table** showing requested reimbursement amounts for each budget line item. The requested amount should be deducted from the total amount of the line item from the originally-approved budget.

**SAMPLE:**

<i>Date of Request: DD/MM/YYYY</i>		
<i>Requested Item/Service</i>	<i>Requested Dollar Amount</i>	<i>Additional Notes</i>
<i>Personnel payment for Joe Smith (salary+fringe)</i>	<i>\$2500</i>	<i>\$20/hr * 75 hours + \$1000 fringe</i>
<i>Walk-in Cooler</i>	<i>\$5000</i>	<i>ProCooler Model T1763</i>
<i>Indirect Cost</i>	<i>\$2000</i>	<i>Building Security</i>
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>\$9500</i></b>	

- B. **REQUIRED: A completed and signed SF-270 Form–Request for Advance or Reimbursement**, found on the LFPP website ([www.ams.usda.gov/LFPP](http://www.ams.usda.gov/LFPP)). The SF-270 should also indicate the value of any matching funds expended on the project for the period covered by the payment request.

### C. Additional Documentation Required as Applicable:

1. **For reimbursements**, copies of the original receipts must accompany the SF-270. Receipts must match the requested amount. Retain original receipts for your project files (see record retention information below).
2. **For advancements**, copies of the original invoice, written or printed quote, or a printout describing the product(s) or requested service(s) must accompany the SF-270. Once the product(s) has/have been delivered or services completed, the recipient must submit delivery slip marked “paid” or receipts demonstrating services rendered. Receipts and totals must match. Subsequent funding requests may be denied until proper documentation for prior requests is received and approved by LFPP staff. Retain original receipts for your project files (see record retention information below).
3. **For personnel payment requests**, submit a time sheet showing the actual days and hours the employee worked on the project. The time sheet must be signed by the employee and another project person authorizing that the time is correct and the hours worked were directly related to the project. An advance request of funds to cover personnel cost is not allowable. Retain original personnel records for your project files (see record retention information below).
4. **For travel reimbursements**, submit copies of receipts for meals, mileage (calculated at or below the Federal GSA rate of \$.56) or other transportation (e.g. plane tickets) and lodging (lodging must show a \$0 balance). All travel expenses follow Federal Travel Regulations ([41 CFR Chapters 300-304](#)).

#### 6. How should the payment request be submitted?

The SF-270 along with receipts and other supporting documentation should be scanned and emailed to [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov). In the subject line, include the agreement number and payment request number (14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX – Payment Request 1). The information can also be faxed to 202-690-0338. The recipients should retain the original form and receipts for their project file.

#### 7. How much can be requested in advance?

Advances of grant funds are limited to the minimum amount needed to meet current disbursement needs and should be scheduled so the funds are available to the recipient as close as possible to the actual disbursements by the recipient for program cost. Reimbursements should be submitted at reasonable intervals (e.g. once per month) unless a large reimbursement or advancement is needed/requested. Documentation must be provided showing why the advance is being requested.

**8. How often can a reimbursement request be submitted?**

Reimbursements should be submitted at reasonable intervals (e.g. once per month) unless a large reimbursement or advancement is needed/requested. Documentation must be provided showing proof of purchase or services rendered.

**9. How will I know when my payment request has been processed?**

Your organization should receive an email from an LFPP staff member within 72 hours acknowledging receipt of your request and that your payment request is being processed. The USDA/AMS payment system draws recipient bank account information directly from the System for Award Management (SAM), so be sure to keep your financial data up to date in that database.

**10. How long does it take to receive funds?**

Payments should process within 15 business days. Grant funds will be paid electronically to the bank account specified by the recipient. If after 15 business days, you have not received payment, contact the LFPP staff. **Please note, that the payment processing will be delayed if, the SF-270 is filled out incorrectly, not signed by the authorized person and proper receipts and documentation are not submitted.**

**11. What are the requirements for awarding sub-grants?**

A. **Suspension and Debarment Verification:** If information was not provided in the proposal stage, before awarding a sub-grant, verify that the sub-recipient has not been debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, excluded or disqualified under the non-procurement common rule, or otherwise declared ineligible from receiving Federal contracts, certain sub-contracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits. In accordance with 2 CFR Part 180 the suspension and debarment verification may be accomplished by checking the Excluded Parties Listing System at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), collecting a certification from the organization or individual, or adding a clause or condition to the covered transaction with that entity. **Please email LFPP a copy of verifications for the record.**

B. **Sub-awards of \$25,000 or more:** The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires that information on Federal awards be made available to the public via a single, searchable website. The FFATA Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) is the reporting tool that all Federal recipients must use to report compensation of \$25,000 or more to any sub-recipient.

1. Recipients must file a FFATA sub-award report by the end of the month following the month in which the recipient awards the sub-recipient \$25,000 or more. For example, if a sub-award was made on October 15, 2014, the recipient has until November 30, 2014 to report the sub-award information. For details visit [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov). **Let LFPP know as soon as possible if your project involves such sub-grants, and once you have filed a report with FSRS, please email us a copy for the record.**

## **12. How should project program income be handled?**

Prior approval is required with regard to any program income generated by the project that was not approved in the original proposal. Appropriate uses for program income include: 1) expanding the project or program; 2) continuing the project or program after the grant or sub-grant support ends; 3) supporting other projects or programs that further the broad objectives of the grant program; or 4) obtaining equipment or other assets needed for the project or program; or 5) for other activities that further the grant program's objectives.

## **13. How do I acknowledge LFPP in publications, presentations and surveys?**

Any informational leaflets, reports, manuals, publications and professional journal articles that result from a LFPP project should acknowledge AMS as a cooperator in the project and bear a statement such as the following that credits the grant program: *"Federal funds for this project were awarded under the Local Food Promotion Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture."* Webpages devoted to the project should also include this information in a prominent location. A similar acknowledgment is required on other media products of the grant such as audio-visuals unless the recipient receives a waiver from LFPP. If press releases relating to the project are issued, LFPP should be cited as a source of grant funds.

## **14. When should progress reports be submitted?**

Midterm progress reports are due at 6 month intervals or the midway point of a project, whichever comes first, especially in cases where the project lasts less than one year. Reports must be submitted within 30 days of the agreed-upon midway point or 6-month mark. If the grant period is one year or less, then only one Progress Report (at the mid-way point of the project) and a Final Report are required. As an example, for projects beginning September 30, 2014, the first progress report is due April 30, 2015. In the case of reports being prepared by third parties, it is the Recipient Project Coordinator's responsibility to review and approve before forwarding to LFPP Staff.

LFPP staff will provide the template for the midterm progress report. However, during the course of the project, recipients should be prepared to provide:

- A brief summary of activities performed and milestones achieved for each objective or sub-element of the narrative.
- Notes regarding unexpected delays or impediments as well as favorable or unusual developments.
- Outlines of the work to be performed during the succeeding period.
- Comments on the level of grant funds and matching contributions expended to date on the project.
- Metrics on project impact and outcomes for intended beneficiaries.

### **15. When should the final report be submitted?**

A final report is due no later than 90 days after the grant ending date. Final reports are required to fulfill the terms of the grant agreement, and they also represent an important vehicle for sharing research findings with Federal and State agencies and the public. Information from the final report will be posted on the LFPP website and recipients agree to be contacted by the Federal Agency 12 months after filing the final report to update the program on project outcomes and impacts.

A final report must include:

- An outline of the issue or problem. Provide enough background information for the reader to understand the importance of the project. This section may draw from the background and justification contained in the approved project proposal.
- A description of how the issue or problem was approached via the project.
- Reference the project objectives and work plan.
- A description of the contribution of public or private agency cooperators and partners.
- A summary of results, conclusions, and lessons learned. Lessons learned should cover both positive and negative aspects. Include a discussion of how the project was evaluated and whether or not project objectives were met. To the extent possible, include measurable results.
- A discussion of current or future benefits to be derived from the project.
- Recommendations for future research and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals.
- A description of the project beneficiaries including the number, type and scale of producers, processors, and other businesses.
- Additional information generated by the grant project such as publications, presentations, and websites.
- A contact person for the project with telephone number and email address.

### **16. When should the Financial Statement (SF-425) be submitted?**

A final SF 425 *Federal Financial Report* is required not later than 90 days after the grant termination date. The final SF 425 should reflect the cumulative financial activity, including both grant and matching funds, over the entire grant period. SF 425s are not required with SF 270s or progress reports. The SF 425 should be scanned and emailed to LFPP Staff. The original form should be retained in the recipient's project file.

### **17. How long should my project file be retained?**

In accordance with Federal regulations, recipients and sub-recipients should retain all records relating to the grant for a period of 3 years from the date the final SF 425 is submitted to LFPP.

As part of an internal assessment, sometime after the 2014 projects are completed, LFPP will contact a subset of recipients to request copies of all financial documentation, including sub-recipient financial documentation. LFPP will assess whether grant funds

and matching funds were used only for activities covered by the approved work plan, and that proper accounting procedures were followed.

**The 2014 LFPP General Terms and Conditions sent with your original grant agreement contain detailed guidance relating to all aspects of the grant. If you have questions, contact the LFPP staff at 202-720-2731.**