OMB No. 0581‐0240



ACER ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

2024 PROJECT NARRATIVE FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS

Thoroughly review the applicable Acer Request for Applications (RFA) before completing this form. Upon completion, save this form as a PDF and attach it to the application package within Grants.gov using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" on the application package.

1. **Applicant Organization -** Must match box 8 of the SF-424.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Mailing Address:

1. **Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) -** This person will be the main contact for any correspondence and is responsible for signing any documentation should the grant be awarded. Must match box 21 of the SF-424.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Mailing Address:  Check if same as above

1. **Applicant Entity Type -** Select each applicable entity type as defined in Section 3.1 of the RFA.

State Agency

Tribal Government

Research Institution

1. **Project Title** (Provide a descriptive title. Must match box 15 of the SF-424.)
2. **Grant Application Project Type** (Described in Section 1.3 of the RFA)

Market Development and Promotion

Producer and Landowner Education

1. Requested ACER Funds

Insert the total amount ($) of Federal funds requested. This must match the total amount requested on Line 18a. Estimated Federal Funding of the SF-424.

**$**

# PROJECT ABSTRACT

Submit a summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. This summary should provide a concise outline of the project’s outcome(s) and description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal. This summary will be made available to the public. This is a separate form in grants.gov.

# ALIGNMENT AND INTENT

Clearly state the purpose of the project and Project Type identified in section **1.3 Project Types** of the RFA. Describe the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address in relation to the statutory language of the program ([7 U.S.C. § 1632c](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:7%20section:1632c%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title7-section1632c)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true)).

Include data and/or estimates that describe the extent of the issue, problem, or need.

## List objectives for this project.

The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) mentioned above and related to the project’s approach and work plan. Add objectives as necessary.

* Objective 1:
* Objective 2:
* Objective 3:

Provide a description of the benefits that are intended to be achieved as a result of engaging in the activities associated with this project, including the number of affected producers or processors.

# TECHNICAL MERIT

## Work Plan

Provide a Work Plan that describes the activities and timeline associated with each project objective. Include the following information for each objective mentioned in the Alignment and Intent section above: a timeline for each activity and major output including the anticipated date of completion; how and where the activities will take place; required resources; milestone(s) for assessing progress and success; the person(s) responsible for completing the activity, including collaborative arrangements or subcontractors; if conducting training and technical assistance, how participants will be recruited; and how you will help guide program development and delivery.

| Objective  *Include the objective this activity will be tied to* | List and describe each planned activity  *Include the scope of work and how it relates to the project objectives* | Anticipated completion date | Required resources  *For completion of each activity* | Milestones  *For assessing progress and success of each activity* | Who will do the work?  *Include collaborative arrangements or subcontractors* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Objective 1 Example* | *Sample Activity 1* | *October 20XX* | *Hire contractor*  *Training Space* | *Milestone 1: Complete XX assessment*  *Milestone 2: Conduct XX* | *ABC Best Contracting Service*  *XYZ Company’s Executive Director* |
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## Have you received a past Acer grant award?

Yes  No

## Have you submitted this project to another Federal grant program, including [AMS grant programs](https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants)?

Yes  No

If yes to either of the above questions, provide the information below. Provide AMS agreement number for grants received in the past 5 years. Describe how the project is/was different from previous grants or how it supplements the proposed activities; and the results of the current project (if applicable). Include lessons learned, what can be improved, and how these lessons and improvements will be incorporated into this application to meet program goals effectively and successfully.

| Year | Grant Award  Program Name, Type of Grant  *(if applicable) and/or AMS Grant*  *Agreement (if applicable)* | Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
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# ACHIEVABILITY

This section includes the outcome indicator evaluation plan.

## Outcome Indicators

Complete all applicable project Outcomes and Indicators with baseline and/or estimated realistic target numbers. If an outcome indicator does not apply, check N/A (Not Applicable) and briefly explain below the table why it is not applicable.

### Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Maple Syrup and Maple- Sap Products

| Indicator | Description | Estimated Number | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 | Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about  maple syrup and maple‐sap products: |  |  |
| 1.1a | Of those, the number of adults |  |  |
| 1.1b | Of those, the number of children |  |  |
| 1.2 | Total number of consumers who purchased more maple syrup and maple‐sap products |  |  |
| 1.2a | Of those, the number of adults |  |  |
| 1.2b | Of those, the number of children |  |  |
| 1.3 | Number of additional maple product customers counted |  |  |
| 1.4 | Number of additional business transactions executed |  |  |
| 1.5 | Increased sales measured in |  |  |
| 1.5a | Dollars |  |  |
| 1.5b | Percent change |  |  |
| 1.5c | combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities |  |  |

### Outcome 2: Develop New Market Opportunities for Maple Producers and Processors

| Indicator | Description | Estimated  Number | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.1 | Total number of existing market access points that established and/or expanded maple syrup or maple‐sap offerings:  Of those, the number that were: |  |  |
| 2.1a | Farmers markets |  |  |
| 2.1b | Roadside stands |  |  |
| 2.1c | Agritourism |  |  |
| 2.1d | Grocery stores |  |  |
| 2.1e | Wholesale markets/buyers |  |  |
| 2.1f | Restaurants |  |  |
| 2.1g | Agricultural cooperatives |  |  |
| 2.1h | Retailers |  |  |
| 2.1i | Distributors |  |  |
| 2.1j | Food hubs |  |  |
| 2.1k | Share‐use kitchens |  |  |
| 2.1l | School food programs |  |  |
| 2.1m | Community‐supported agriculture (CSAs) |  |  |
| 2.1n | Other |  |  |
| 2.2 | Total number of new market access points that established maple syrup or maple‐sap offerings:  Of those, the number that were: |  |  |
| 2.2a | Farmers markets |  |  |
| 2.2b | Roadside stands |  |  |
| 2.2c | Agritourism |  |  |
| 2.2d | Grocery stores |  |  |
| 2.2e | Wholesale markets/buyers |  |  |
| 2.2f | Restaurants |  |  |
| 2.2g | Agricultural cooperatives |  |  |
| 2.2h | Retailers |  |  |
| 2.2i | Distributors |  |  |
| 2.2j | Food hubs |  |  |
| 2.2k | Share‐use kitchens |  |  |
| 2.2l | School food programs |  |  |
| 2.2m | Community‐supported agriculture (CSAs) |  |  |
| 2.2n | Other |  |  |
| 2.3 | Total number of partnerships and/or collaborations established between maple producers/processors and market access points |  |  |
| 2.3a | Of those established, the number formalized with written  agreements (i.e. MOU’s, signed contracts, etc.) |  |  |
| 2.3b | Of those established, the number or partnerships with underserved organizations |  |  |
| 2.4 | Of the total number of partnerships and collaborations  identified in 2.3, the number that reported |  |  |
| 2.4a | expanded/improved maple infrastructure |  |  |
| 2.4b | higher profits |  |  |
| 2.4c | more efficient transportation |  |  |
| 2.4d | improved marketing channels |  |  |
| 2.4e | and/or other mid‐tier value chain enhancements |  |  |
| 2.5 | Number of new or existing producers/processors who increased production to meet increased demand in new/additional market access points |  |  |
| 2.6 | Number of maple producers/processors that increased  revenue by pursuing new/increased market opportunities |  |  |

### Outcome 3: Increase the Number of New Maple Producers and Expand Capacity of Existing Maple Producers

| Indicator | Description | Estimated Number | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 | Number of producers, processors, private landowners, or other stakeholders that gained knowledge about maple  production or maple business improvement methods |  |  |
| 3.2 | Number of producers or processors that adopted new maple production or maple business improvement methods |  |  |
| 3.3 | Number of producers/processors that learned about new or improved quality management procedures.  Of those, the number that: |  |  |
| 3.3a | Implemented these procedures |  |  |
| 3.4 | Number of: |  |  |
| 3.4a | Landowners |  |  |
| 3.4b | Lessors |  |  |
| 3.4c | Free‐access individuals |  |  |
| 3.4d | Students reported with an intent to enter the maple market |  |  |
| 3.5 | Number of |  |  |
| 3.5a | Private landowners |  |  |
| 3.5b | Lessors |  |  |
| 3.5c | Free‐access individuals |  |  |
| 3.5d | Students |  |  |
| 3.5e | Other producers that initiated maple sugaring activities |  |  |
| 3.6 | Number of |  |  |
| 3.6a | Private landowners |  |  |
| 3.6b | Lessors |  |  |
| 3.6c | Free‐access individuals |  |  |
| 3.6d | Students |  |  |
| 3.6e | Other producers that established long‐term partnerships  to maintain maple sugaring activities |  |  |
| 3.7 | Number of producers/processors that expanded their maple  product line |  |  |
| 3.8 | Number of producers that increased production |  |  |
| 3.9 | Number of maple producers that reported increased |  |  |
| 3.9a | Maple syrup production (gallons) |  |  |
| 3.9b | Sales |  |  |
| 3.9c | Price/gallon, and/or |  |  |
| 3.9d | Cost‐savings |  |  |
| 3.10 | Number of maple‐related jobs |  |  |
| 3.10a | Created |  |  |
| 3.10b | Maintained |  |  |

### Outcome 4: Expand Maple Research and Development

| Indicator | Description | Estimated Number | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.1 | Number of research goals accomplished |  |  |
| 4.2 | For research conclusions, the number that: |  |  |
| 4.2a | yielded findings that supported continued research |  |  |
| 4.2b | yielded findings that led to completion of study |  |  |
| 4.2c | yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process, or technology |  |  |
| 4.3 | Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders  that engaged with research results |  |  |
| 4.4 | Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals. For each published research output, the: |  |  |
| 4.4a | number of views/reads of published research/ data |  |  |
| 4.4b | number of citations counted |  |  |

### Outcome 5: Promote Natural Resource Sustainability in the Maple Syrup Industry

| Indicator | Description | Estimated Number | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5.1 | Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about natural  resource sustainability, best practices, tools, or technologies |  |  |
| 5.2 | Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt sustainability‐related best practices, tools, or technologies |  |  |
| 5.3 | Number of producers that adopted new tools, technologies,  or best practices focused on reducing energy use, plastics, waste, chemical use, or other sustainable outcomes |  |  |
| 5.4 | Number of additional taps managed using sustainable best  practices, tools, or technologies |  |  |
| 5.5 | Of the producers identified in 5.3, the number of producers  reporting: |  |  |
| 5.5a | increased dollar returns per tap |  |  |
| 5.5b | reduced input costs per tap |  |  |

## Outcome Indicator Measurement

For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

| Outcome and indicator  *i.e., 3.i, 6.a, 6.b* | How did you derive the estimated numbers?  *i.e., documented background or baseline information, recent research and data, etc.* | How and when do you intend to evaluate?  *i.e., surveys, 3rd party assessment* | Anticipated key factors predicted to contribute to and restrict outcome  *Including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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## Dissemination of Project Results

*Describe how you will disseminate project’s results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may* be interested in the project’s results or implementing a similar project.

# EXPERTISE AND PARTNERS

## Key Staff (Applicant Personnel and External Partner/Collaborators)

List key staff, including applicant personnel and external project partners and collaborators (see section 3.2 in the RFA for definitions) that comprise the Project Team, their role, their relevant experience, and past successes in developing and operating projects similar to those to be conducted under this project. Applicant must include Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations to support the information (see section 4.2.5 in the RFA).

| Key Staff  Name and Title | Role | Relevant Experience and Past Successes |
| --- | --- | --- |
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## Project Management Plan

Describe your management plan for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel and external partners and collaborators.

## Project Sustainability

Describe how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project’s period of performance (without grant funds) if the project need is expected to extend beyond the grant period.

# PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

**Required:** Provide a one- to two-page resume or summary of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigator(s) and for each of the other major project participants. Longer resumes will be disregarded.

# FISCAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

**Required:** The Fiscal Plan and Resources requirement includes a Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative. The Budget Spreadsheet must show the relevant expenditure categories in the far-left column. Relevant cost categories include:

* Personnel
* Fringe Benefits
* Travel
* Special Purpose Equipment
* Supplies
* Contracts/Consultants
* Other
* Indirect Costs
* Program Income

The Budget Spreadsheet must have columns showing the dollar amount of Federal funds requested. Provide separate Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and cumulative budgets.

The Budget Narrative must break down and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section 8 of the [**AMS General Terms and Conditions**](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf)for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs. BUDGET AND NARRATIVE

The budget must show the total cost for the project and describe how category costs listed in the budget are derived. The budget justification must provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. The budget must show a relationship between work planned and performed to the costs incurred.

Refer to RFA **Section 4.3 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities** for more information on allowable and unallowable expenses.

## Budget Summary

| Expense Category | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Total Federal Funds |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Personnel (add rows to list each) |  |  |  |  |
| Fringe Benefits (add rows to list each |  |  |  |  |
| Travel |  |  |  |  |
| Special Purpose Equipment |  |  |  |  |
| Supplies |  |  |  |  |
| Contracts/Consultants |  |  |  |  |
| Other (Specify) |  |  |  |  |
| Program income |  |  |  |  |
| Direct Costs Subtotal |  |  |  |  |
| Indirect Costs |  |  |  |  |
| Total Budget (direct + indirect) |  |  |  |  |

## Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative must break down and explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. See section 8 of the [**AMS General Terms and Conditions**](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/FY2021_GD_TermsandConditions.pdf)for a full listing of allowable and unallowable costs.

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581‐0240. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reading and utilizing this document to prepare an application, reviewing which items are allowable, and understanding the terms and conditions of the grant award.

**Upon completion, save this form as a PDF and attach it to the application package within Grants.gov using the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" on the application package.**