

## **USDA AMS Local and Regional Foods Division Cooperative Agreement Specific Terms and Conditions**

**Updated September 2025**

In addition to the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) the following terms and conditions apply to the Cooperative Agreement awards, due to the specific requirements of these awards. This document provides deviations that apply to the Local and Regional Foods Division cooperative agreements. In the event of an inconsistency between the [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#) and the Cooperative Agreement awards specific terms and conditions, this document will take precedence.

### **1.0 What is a USDA AMS Cooperative Agreement**

A cooperative agreement means a legal instrument of financial assistance between a federal awarding agency and a recipient or a pass-through entity and a subrecipient. (See 2 [CFR § 200.1](#).) A cooperative agreement is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement of the federal awarding agency in carrying out the activity contemplated by the federal award.

### **2.0 Substantial Involvement**

AMS will be substantially involved throughout the period of performance. Substantial involvement means that AMS staff will play an active role throughout the life of the cooperative agreement. This distinguishes cooperative agreements from grants, where the agency has less direct involvement. Under substantial involvement, AMS staff will:

- a. **Collaborate on Proposal Development:** Provide input on project design, scope, objectives and ensure alignment with USDA AMS priorities and program requirements.
- b. **Participate in Project Implementation:** Participate in project activities where appropriate and provide technical expertise and guidance on project's workplan, research methods, data collection, and reporting.
- c. **Evaluate the Project's Progress and Compliance:** Establish and execute a protocol for checking in on project progress, identifying and addressing any challenges, and evaluating planned project activities.
- d. **Evaluate any Major Changes in the Project:** Review and approve/reject any major changes to the project, including, but not limited to, changes in key personnel, project scope, and budget line items.
- e. **Facilitate Access to USDA and its Partners:** Connect cooperators with relevant USDA agencies, program staff, stakeholder networks, data resources, research findings, and analytic tools.
- f. **Collaborate on Reporting and Closeout:** Review all draft reports and deliverables. Provide feedback to improve clarity, rigor, and applicability, ensure final deliverables meet USDA AMS objectives before project closure. This process may require multiple rounds of feedback and revision.

- **Collaborative Review:** AMS staff will review draft deliverables (e.g., reports, datasets, tools, outreach materials) and provide written or verbal feedback. Cooperators are expected to incorporate AMS feedback and submit revised drafts in a timely manner.
- **Iterative Process:** The finalization of deliverables may require several iterations to ensure accuracy, clarity, and alignment with USDA AMS priorities. Both AMS and the cooperator will remain engaged throughout this process, with open communication and agreed-upon timelines.
- **Quality Standards:** Deliverables must be complete, accurate, and professionally presented.
- **Final Approval:** Deliverables are not considered final until AMS has reviewed and provided written approval. Project closeout is contingent upon the submission and approval of all final deliverables. AMS reserves the right to request revisions to ensure that products meet federal requirements and are suitable for public distribution where applicable.

### 3.0 Performance and Financial Reports

As outlined Section 10.0 of the [AMS Terms and Conditions](#), AMS requires the submission of interim and final reports to demonstrate the progress made toward the completion of project goals, objectives, and outcomes, as well as the grant agreement's overall financial status. Performance progress reports must be formatted and submitted using the approved guidance (Appendix A) and AMS reporting systems.

#### Interim Performance and Financial Reports

Cooperators are required to provide performance and financial reports on a quarterly basis. The cooperator should use the template provided by the AMS team for their quarterly Performance Progress report.

Performance progress reports must be formatted and submitted using the approved guidance and AMS reporting systems through ezFedGrants [External Portal](#). This page provides information on cooperators use and access the ezFedGrants [External Portal](#), and how they can access available trainings and instructional resources through ezFedGrants helpdesk. Cooperators can also contact ezFedGrants team through [ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov](mailto:ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov) when they face technical issues or have questions.

#### Final Performance and Financial Reports

The Final Performance Report and [SF-425 Federal Financial Report](#) must be submitted no later than 120 calendar days after the performance period (block 26 of the Notice of Award). A subrecipient must submit to the recipient no later than 90 calendar days after the conclusion of the period of performance. Final The Performance report must also be formatted and submitted using the approved guidance and AMS reporting systems through ezFedGrants [External Portal](#).

### 4.0 Payments

Payment details are outlined in Section 4.0 of the AMS General Terms and Conditions. For LRFD cooperative agreements, recipients are required to submit a [SF-270](#) Request for Advance or Reimbursement with each quarterly performance report to account for their financial expenditures during that reporting period. These requests are made using ezFedGrants.

## **5.0 Allowable Cost and Activities**

### **Indirect Costs**

In accordance with [Sec. 704 of Pub. L. 118-42](#), indirect costs for cooperative agreements covered by these specific terms and conditions are limited to 10 percent of the total direct cost of the agreement. This is a cap (a limitation on the maximum agreement dollars available to recover indirect costs), not an indirect rate. Please refer to [AMS General Terms and Conditions](#), Section 8.1 for allowable indirect cost rates.

**Costs associated with advisory councils and committees are allowable.**

## Appendix A

# Cooperative Agreement Quarterly Performance Progress Report

**Date:**

**1. Project information**

- a. Project Title and Agreement Number/FAIN:
- b. Project Period:
- c. Reporting Period:
- d. Cooperators:

**2. Project overview**

Provide a brief project overview from your proposal.

**3. Project goals and objectives**

List project goals and objectives as described in the project proposal. Include (1-2 sentences to describe each goal/objective).

**4. Project status (current reporting period)**

Please select one:

The project is .....

- ☐ Ahead of Schedule
- ☐ On Schedule
- ☐ Behind Schedule

If you selected **Behind Schedule**, please briefly explain why.

**5. Work conducted during the current reporting period**

Please provide the following information on progress made during current reporting period:

- a. List and briefly describe activities completed (i.e., data collection, development of data collection tools, partnerships developed, events attended, external input solicited etc.)
  - i. Highlight which goal(s) or objective(s) were targeted during this period
  - ii. Highlight major achievements or project milestones;
  - iii. Describe each sub-cooperator's contribution to these activities.

**6. Next reporting period activities and goals**

- a. What project milestones do you plan on reaching during the next reporting period?

**7. Budget and resources (use SF-270 Supplement Worksheet)**

- a. Provide an overview of your budget utilization.