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**New Mexico Department of Agriculture to hold USDA
infrastructure grant workshops in November**
Workshops aim to prepare prospective program applicants

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LAS CRUCES, N.M. – In collaboration with the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s Office (Governor’s Office), the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) will hold a series of virtual workshops in November to help prepare prospective applicants to the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program. Approximately \$3.6 million in grant funding has been made available through the program. These virtual workshops will mark the beginning of the request for proposals for the RFSI Program.

Workshops focused on program eligibility and requirements will be held as follows:

Tuesday, Nov. 14 at 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 16 at 12 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 17 at 1 p.m.

Before registering for a workshop, applicants should watch a recorded informational [video](#) about the RFSI Program. Information about workshop registration is provided within the video.

If you are unable to attend any of the workshops, you may schedule a one-on-one meeting by emailing RFSI@nmda.nmsu.edu by Monday, Nov. 13. Emails must include the preferred meeting date and time.

The purpose of USDA’s Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant program is to:

- build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain;
- provide more and better markets to small farms and food businesses, and;

- support the development of value-added products for consumers, fair prices, fair wages and new and safe job opportunities.

This funding opportunity aligns directly or indirectly with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Food Initiative by:

- investing in local producers' ability to support New Mexico's Food System;
- building capacity of New Mexico's supply chain;
- increasing opportunities for more value-added products to diversify offerings and extend availability;
- implementing sustainable agricultural practices and climate smart technologies to keep agriculture in business in New Mexico and bring food closer to where it is ultimately consumed, and;
- providing hunger-relief efforts for New Mexicans experiencing food insecurity.

Those involved in the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy and dairy products, grains for consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry, are eligible to apply for funding.

The goal of the grant program is to keep profits circulating in rural communities and increase diversity in processing options in terms of business model approaches, geography and availability to underserved communities. Projects funded by the program should focus on maintaining and improving food and agricultural supply chain resiliency.

"The New Mexico agriculture community is fortunate to have this funding available, and our team at NMDA is here to help you through the application process. We will be working with the New Mexico Economic Development Department to provide the necessary supply chain coordination and technical assistance," said New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte.

Before applying, applicants should consider their eligibility for federal funds, types of expenses needed, infrastructure, timeframe, potential beneficiaries, possible partners, reimbursement of expenditures and other factors. Considering all of these factors beforehand can help determine the potential need for federal aid.

NMDA and EDD encourage eligible entities to take advantage of these free workshops.

Applications for funding through USDA's RFSI grant program must be submitted to NMDA for review no later than Dec. 31, 2023.

USDA's RFSI grant cycle will fund projects between the fall of 2024 and spring of 2027.

To learn more about the program, including a list of eligible project activities, please visit the [USDA Agricultural Marketing Service website](#). To apply to the RFSI Program, follow the instructions on NMDA's [webpage](#). For New Mexico-specific questions, please email RFSI@nmda.nmsu.edu or call 575-646-4929.

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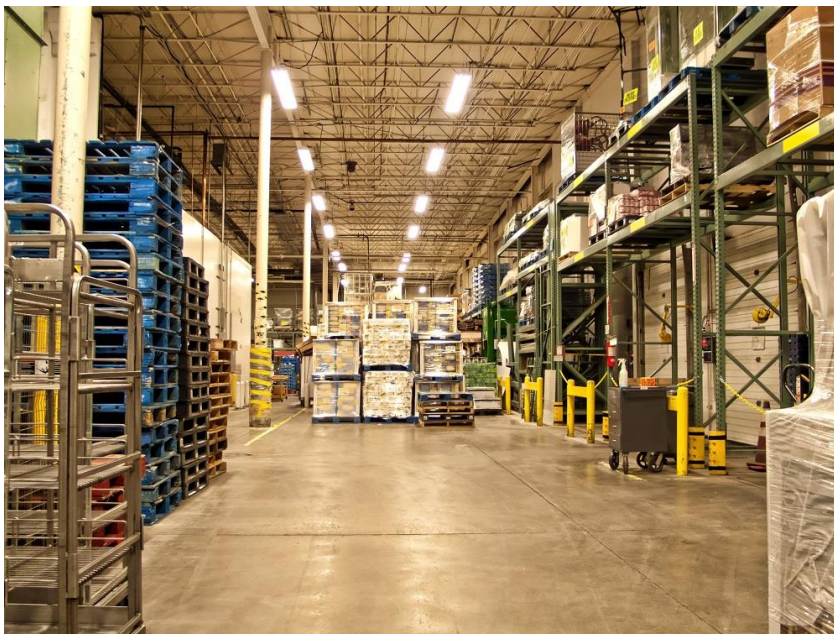
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Cutline: The New Mexico Department of Agriculture is holding three virtual workshops in November to prepare potential USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant program applicants in the state. Approximately \$3.6 million in funding will be available. These virtual workshops will mark the beginning of the request for proposals for the RFSI Program. (Envato Elements photo)



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