

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT Tribal Applicants

General

This is intended to provide guidance to [7 CFR Part § 4284.920](#) “Eligible Applicants” to clarify the eligibility of tribal entities under the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. Tribal entities are encouraged to consult with the USDA Rural Development office in their State for further assistance. Contact information can be found [here](#).

VAPG Applicants must meet all definition requirements for one of four Applicant types: **Agricultural Producer, Agricultural Producer Group, Farmer or Rancher Cooperative; or Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business Venture**. Each Applicant type is made up, through ownership, or membership of a majority, of Agricultural Producers, which is an individual or an entity that is solely owned and controlled by Agricultural Producers. In accordance with [7 CFR Part § 4284.903](#), an Agricultural Producer is “a for-profit agricultural business, or entity that is 100 percent owned and controlled by an individual, entity or Family Farm that produces an Agricultural Commodity through participation in the day-to-day labor, management, and field operations; or that has the legal right to harvest an Agricultural Commodity that is the subject of the VAPG Project.” However, due to unique tribal structures and circumstances the Agency shall determine the Agricultural Producer status of Federally recognized Tribes and Tribal entities without regard to day-to-day labor, management, and field operation and right to harvest status.

Key Questions

The questions below will help you determine whether your Tribe or Tribal entity is an eligible Applicant for the VAPG program. Please discuss them with your USDA Rural Development State Office and pay close attention to all the necessary documentation requirements. Additionally, if there are other questions or clarifications Rural Development can make to improve the eligibility review process for tribal Applicants, please share your recommendations with your USDA Rural Development contact.

1. Are you a Federally Recognized Tribe, a tribal enterprise, a subdivision of a Federally Recognized Tribe, a tribally chartered corporation or a Section 17 corporation?
2. If your organization is not the Tribe, how is it related to the Tribe and the Tribe’s producers?
3. How exactly are you chartered, incorporated, authorized, or organized to conduct business?
4. Is the production or collection of the commodity under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Tribe?
5. Do the benefits from the production of the agricultural commodity benefit the Tribe as a whole? Or, does the tribal entity represent an exclusive subset of agricultural producers who receive the benefit?
6. Does the tribal entity partner with non-tribal entities? In what way?
7. Does the Applicant meet all of the eligibility requirements for one of the four Applicant types according to [7 CFR 4284.920](#)?
8. Does the proposed Project meet all other program eligibility requirements found at [7 CFR 4284 Subpart J](#)?

Documentation Requirements for Good Standing

If awarded a grant, Tribal Applicants may provide the following documents as part of an acceptance of an award to fulfill requirements related to Certification for Good Standing in the State or primary location of the Applicant’s business operations for the VAPG Project. If a Certificate of Good Standing from the State is not available due to the Applicant’s organizational legal status, then an alternative document must be provided: (1) if the

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This document is for informational purposes only. Applicants must follow the instructions contained in the program regulation and annual Notice of Funding Opportunity.

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Tribe/Applicant is/has a Section 17 Corporation, approval documents from the Department of Interior for that Corporation must be provided as evidence of good standing; (2) if the Applicant is an entity that is incorporated under Tribal law, the Tribe itself may provide evidence of “good standing” in the form of a letter or Certificate from the Tribe, as available. These substitute documents for “good standing” do not relieve the Applicant from providing all other required application elements specified in the program regulation, NOFO, and the Grant Application Portal.

Resources: Applications must meet ALL program requirements

- VAPG website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>
- Application Toolkits
- [Program Regulation 7 CFR 4284-J published September 16, 2024](#)
- Program Information Sheets
- Rural Development State Offices: 1-800-670-6553, then press “1” or <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.
- Agricultural Marketing Resource Center website: <http://www.agmrc.org>