

CHOOSE IOWA VALUE-ADDED GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Choose Iowa Value-Added Grant Program exists to identify, evaluate, and financially support programs and services that add value to agricultural products, enable new technologies, and support alternative marketing strategies. Value-added agriculture increases the value of raw commodity products through production, processing or manufacturing.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must:

- Be an individual, business, agricultural cooperative, non-profit organization, or local government.
- Be in good standing with the State of Iowa
- Currently reside or conduct business in Iowa

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects must:

- Increase sales of Iowa agricultural products by increasing production capacity or expanding market access for value-added projects
- Not be in progress until a grant is awarded
- Be completed in 12 months or less
- Be conducted in Iowa

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Purchase and installation of equipment used in the production of value-added agricultural products
- Creamery or milk product processing and packaging equipment
- Food hub development or expansion
- Direct to consumer technology
- Cooler walls and refrigeration units
- Grading, packing, labeling, packaging, or sorting equipment
- Refrigerated trucks to access new markets
- Food processing short courses and workshops

Ineligible expenses:

- Equipment and infrastructure for meat processing (funding available through IEDA)
- Infrastructure for renewable fuels (funding available through IDALS-RFIP)
- Dairy processing and dairy labor-reducing technology (funding available through IDALS-Dairy Innovation Fund)
- Expenses incurred prior to grant award
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment, and costs
- Employee wages and benefits
- Paying off existing debt, related collection costs, or legal costs
- Paying off existing fines, penalties, or settlements from failure to comply with laws or regulations
- Start-up costs such as inventory, license fees, working capital, etc.

GRANT AMOUNT AND TERMS

Maximum grant awards shall not exceed \$25,000.

- Applicants must provide a minimum one-to-one financial match from private sources such as cash, financing or other grant funds for total project costs. In-kind contributions are not accepted.
 - Example: An individual applying for a grant of \$5,000 must provide at least \$5,000 from other sources.
- Additional points will be awarded to applicants that provide more than the required match amount.

The Choose Iowa Value-Added Grant Program is a competitive grant program. Grant applications will be scored and grant amounts awarded based on the following criteria:

- Impact on Iowa agriculture
- Addresses the goals of the Choose Iowa Grant Program
- A detailed work plan and timeline
- Business readiness, financial sustainability, and experience
- Budget and match
- Measureable objectives

All grants will be paid out on a reimbursement basis. Preference will be given to small and medium sized businesses.*

Consult your legal or financial advisor regarding financial or tax considerations for any funds received.

*The Iowa Economic Development Authority defines small sized businesses as having less than 50 full-time employees, medium with 51-250, and large businesses as more than 250 employees.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Applicants must apply for the Choose Iowa Value-Added Grant through the online application portal found at [Chooelowa.com/grants](https://chooselowa.com/grants). Applicants are encouraged to submit supporting documents including estimates, quotes, or letters of support with their applications. **Applications are due no later than 12 p.m. on December 15, 2023.**

SCORING CRITERIA

Projects will be scored on a 100-point scale with a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE
Addresses Goals of the Choose Iowa Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases sales of Iowa agricultural productsIncreases market access, diversifies markets, and/or increases processing capacity	20 points
Impact on Iowa Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan to increase sales of Iowa agricultural products is achievableAmount of Iowa agricultural products to be increased is realisticIncrease is appropriate for the size of the grant requestProject has the potential to impact many farmersProject has both short-term and long-term impact, including jobs and investments in Iowa	20 points
Business Readiness, Financial Sustainability, and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">Applicant demonstrates sound business management, financial aptitude, and stabilityApplicant describes the financial benefit of doing the grant projectApplicant demonstrates a need for grant funding	15 points
Budget and Match <ul style="list-style-type: none">Budget clearly details all project costsBudget clearly explains source and amount of applicant's funds for private matchBudget is cost effective and planned purchases are backed by quotes or other sources	20 points
Work Plan and Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work plan is thorough and realisticA detailed description of each step of the project is provided with estimated dates	15 points
Measureable Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">Describes how the project will achieve objectives of the grant program to benefit the business and agriculture communityObjectives of project are measurable and clearly stated	10 points
TOTAL	100 POINTS

GRANT AWARD TIMELINE

Grant application period opens announcement	October 17, 2023
Grant application deadline	December 15, 2023 at noon
Committee scores applications	January 2024
Awardees notified, agreements issued	February 2024
Awardees announced	March 2024
Funds dispersed to awardees	By reimbursement after projects are completed.

QUESTIONS?

Questions or comments can be directed to ChooelowaGrant@IowaAgriculture.gov.