



## I. EWAC Advisory Commission – MDA Project Proposal for ARPA Funds

The Montana Department of Agriculture proposes using ARPA Funds to support additional investments in value added agriculture infrastructure designed to address the economic harms resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency; hereby referred to as Agricultural Resiliency. See Section 12, House Bill 632.

### Value Added Agriculture Investment Program

- Funding Request: **\$7,500,000**
- Goal:
  - Strengthen and diversify Montana’s agricultural industry through targeted investments in value added agriculture projects across the state.
- Description:
  - The Department will administer a competitive grant program to increase value-added food and agriculture business capacity in Montana with special emphasis on increased processing and manufacturing of raw ag commodities.

- Value-added products are defined as follows:

*As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.*

#### **Proposed Timeline:**

Nov 1, 2021: Call for concept papers

Dec 9, 2021: Concept paper deadline

Dec 17, 2021: Invite selected applicants to submit full proposals

February 28, 2022: Full application deadline

March 25, 2022: Provide award recommendations to Commission

#### **Type of Funding Available**

- \$3.5M for \$150k proposals and under
  - 1 to 1 match
- \$3.5M for project proposals up to \$450k
  - 2 to 1 match for grants between \$150,000-\$300,000
  - 3 to 1 match for grants between \$300,000 – \$450,000



### **Eligibility Criteria**

Projects should primarily add value to Montana’s agricultural products, have prospects for achieving commercial success given the current personnel, experience and resources of the applicant and have the possibility to create and/or retain jobs in Montana.

### **Match Requirement**

Cash match is required for all proposals. In-kind match will not be allowed.

### **What Funds Can be Used For**

Examples of project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Business Expansion or Relocation
- Equipment purchases
- Consultant services contributing to project completion, such as engineering costs

### **Who Can Apply:**

Proposals for funding are accepted from:

- Individuals
- Businesses and Industry Organizations
- Public and Private Agencies and Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments

### **Scoring & Review Criteria:**

The Dept. panel will review applications and presentations and rank on a scale from low (1) to high (6) funding priority.

All applications will be evaluated based on the overall assessment of the below listed considerations (defined in the General Application Review Criteria for funding listed in Attachment A).

- Basic Business Considerations
- Agriculture Impact
- Economic Impact
- Potential for Success
- Innovation/Originality
- Geographic Considerations

The Commission reserves the right to make a final selection, award partial funding or reject all ARPA funded proposals.



**Award Process:**

If the funding award is accepted by the applicant, a contract will be developed to define all project terms, conditions and responsibilities of the applicant. The contract will clarify all legal patents and proprietary rights that will result from the proposed activity and will incorporate the successful application among its provisions. Once the contract is reviewed and signed by all parties, the recipient will be able to request reimbursement for eligible costs incurred as outlined by the terms of the funding award. Selected projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required before the grant or loan check is issued. Applications not chosen for funding will be notified by the Department in writing within 30 days of the decision.

**Reporting Requirements:**

Reporting is a condition of receiving program funding. Reporting is completed online and the Department reserves the right to determine the extent of reporting requirements, subject to modification over the course of the project. Interim reporting requirements will be based on the cost, duration and nature of the project. Typically, award recipients are required to submit completed semi-annual report forms that address both the project activities and expenditures for the preceding six (6) months. Also, recipients are required to submit a completed final report form that summarizes the impacts of the project. The Montana Department of Agriculture staff will be responsible for monitoring each funded project.