

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7656

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to certain agricultural producers and other food-related businesses to carry out activities to support health and safety, or to adapt production, processing, distribution, and sales systems, in response to COVID–19, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 16, 2020

Ms. SCHRIER (for herself and Mr. LARSEN of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to certain agricultural producers and other food-related businesses to carry out activities to support health and safety, or to adapt production, processing, distribution, and sales systems, in response to COVID–19, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Food and Farm Emer-
5 gency Assistance Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FOOD BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIP-**
2 **MENT RESPONSE GRANTS.**

3 (a) GRANTS.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting
4 through the Administrator of the Agriculture Marketing
5 Service, shall make grants to eligible entities, on a com-
6 petitive basis, to carry out activities to support worker and
7 public health and safety, or to adapt production, proc-
8 essing, distribution, and sales systems, in response to
9 COVID–19.

10 (b) ELIGIBLE USES.—Amounts received by an eligi-
11 ble entity under a grant under this section shall be used
12 for activities directly relating to COVID–19 response and
13 recovery, including—

14 (1) costs incurred during the COVID–19 emer-
15 gency period that are associated with protecting em-
16 ployee and consumer health and safety, such as for
17 personal protective equipment;

18 (2) costs incurred during such period that are
19 associated with transitioning to a different busi-
20 nesses model, such as direct-to-consumer, online
21 sales, or delivery;

22 (3) costs incurred during such period to pur-
23 chase or lease equipment for food processing, stor-
24 age, or refrigeration; and

1 (4) other similar costs incurred during such pe-
2 riod that arise from adjusting to the COVID-19
3 pandemic.

4 (c) APPLICATIONS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity seeking a
6 grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
7 retary an application in such manner, at such time,
8 and containing such information as the Secretary
9 may require.

10 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall en-
11 sure that the application required under paragraph
12 (1) is—

13 (A) as simple as is practicable;

14 (B) accessible online; and

15 (C) also available through all local offices
16 of the Department of Agriculture.

17 (3) DECISIONS.—Not later than 7 days after
18 the date on which the Secretary receives an applica-
19 tion under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall notify
20 the eligible entity that submitted the application—

21 (A) whether the application is approved or
22 denied;

23 (B) if the application is approved, the date
24 on which the eligible entity will receive the
25 grant funds; and

1 (C) if denied, the reason for denial and
2 whether the application may be revised and re-
3 submitted.

4 (4) PREFERENCES.—In reviewing applications
5 submitted under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall
6 give preference to applications containing proposals
7 intended to—

8 (A) expand access to food for participants
9 in—

10 (i) the supplemental nutrition assist-
11 ance program established under section 4
12 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7
13 U.S.C. 2013); and

14 (ii) a program authorized under the
15 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch
16 Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) or Child Nu-
17 trition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et
18 seq.), including the national school lunch
19 program, the national school breakfast pro-
20 gram, the summer food service program
21 for children, the special supplemental nu-
22 trition program for women, infants, and
23 children, and the child and adult care food
24 program;

1 (B) enhance food distribution in high-need
2 or underserved areas;

3 (C) address local agricultural product over-
4 supply issues and reduce food waste; or

5 (D) benefit young farmers or ranchers, be-
6 ginning farmers or ranchers (as defined in sec-
7 tion 2501(a) of the Food, Agriculture, Con-
8 servation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C.
9 2279(a))), or socially disadvantaged farmers or
10 ranchers (as defined in such section 2501(a)).

11 (d) LIMITATIONS ON AMOUNTS.—The amount of a
12 grant under this section shall not exceed—

13 (1) in the case of an eligible entity described in
14 subsection (f)(1), \$15,000; and

15 (2) in the case of any other eligible entity,
16 \$35,000.

17 (e) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct out-
18 reach to States and eligible entities with respect to the
19 availability of grants under this section.

20 (f) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section, the
21 term “eligible entity” means—

22 (1) an individual agricultural producer;

23 (2) a group of agricultural producers, includ-
24 ing—

25 (A) a cooperative; and

1 (B) a network or association of individual
2 farms;

3 (3) a small or very small processor of agricul-
4 tural products with less than 150 employees, as de-
5 termined by the Secretary;

6 (4) a local distributor, including a food hub and
7 a farmers market; and

8 (5) any other business that is critical to main-
9 taining a resilient agricultural supply chain in the
10 United States, as determined by the Secretary.

11 (g) FUNDING.—Of the funds of the Commodity Cred-
12 it Corporation, the Secretary shall use \$100,000,000 to
13 carry out this section for fiscal year 2020, to remain avail-
14 able until expended.

15 (h) COVID–19 EMERGENCY PERIOD.—The term
16 “COVID–19 emergency period” has the meaning given
17 the term “emergency period” in section 1135(g)(1)(B) of
18 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–5(g)(1)(B)).

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