

Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID)- Blue Catfish Processing, Flash Freezing, and Infrastructure Grant Program Guidelines

Overview

The Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund Blue Catfish Processing, Flash Freezing, and Infrastructure Grant Program (AFID Blue Catfish Program) provides grants of up to \$250,000 per grant to encourage efforts by political subdivisions to support blue catfish processing, flash freezing, and infrastructure projects.

These grants are awarded competitively and paid out as reimbursements. Applications will be accepted, and awards made, through funding rounds.

Project Types

Projects receiving funding through the AFID Blue Catfish Program must directly support local food production, enhance environmental sustainability, and demonstrate a broad community benefit. Grant funds should be used primarily for capital expenditures.

Priority Project Types

Consideration will be given to the following project types:

- projects that create processing, flash freezing, and infrastructure capacity in proximity to small-scale blue catfish watermen
- processing facilities that are primarily locally owned, including packaging, freezing, and labeling facilities that are used for processing blue catfish
- projects that involve or incorporate existing seafood processors and businesses
- projects located in the localities of the Rural Coastal Virginia Community Enhancement Authority (§ 15.2-7600) or in Planning District 23
- projects providing a local match, if any

Additional consideration will be given to projects benefiting multiple small-scale agricultural producers and to projects located in economically distressed communities.

Eligibility

Applications must be made by a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, typically Counties and Cities, but also Towns, Industrial and Economic Development Authorities, or Planning District Commissions.

Applicants are only eligible for one grant award per grant round. Applicants must be in good standing regarding any other awards from the Fund.

Grant Administration

The Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry shall make funding recommendations to the Governor and will determine how and when grant applications are reviewed and awards made.

Program Funding Round

The application period for this grant will be announced as funding becomes available. More information can be found on the VDACS website.

Project Evaluation and Award Criteria

Awards will be made on a competitive basis based on the strength of a candidate's application. Applicants must follow the AFID Blue Catfish Program Application format. Stronger applications will clearly explain:

- the project purpose,
- the specific issue(s) that the project will address,
- the local or regional benefits of the project,
- the specific goals or objectives of the project,
- the particular deliverables of the project,
- if the project is in one of the localities of the Rural Coastal Virginia Community Enhancement Authority (§ 15.2-7600) or in Planning District 23,
- how grant funds and local match will be used, if applicable.

In addition to the quality and completeness of an application, the following criteria will also be used when making award decisions:

- Expected positive economic impact of the project on affected localities,
- Demonstration of the likelihood of success in achieving the



- promised deliverables,
- Demonstration of support from the watermen and seafood communities,
 - Demonstration of environmentally sustainable practices.

Grant Awards and Reporting Requirements

A Blue Catfish Processing, Flash Freezing, and Infrastructure Grant Program award is a reimbursable grant. Once the funds are awarded, each grantee will receive a Memorandum of Agreement outlining the grant period and reporting requirements. Grant awardees have two years from the award announcement date to complete their deliverables and may request an extension from the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for up to one additional year.

Grantees are required to complete an interim grant report one year into the grant period. Reimbursements may be requested periodically throughout the grant period; up to 75 percent of the grant funds may be allocated prior to the end of the grant period.

Upon completion of the grant period, grantees are required to submit a final grant report, including any grant deliverables, along with a budget close-out form including all receipts, invoices, and backup documentation. The final reimbursement payment will be made upon verification of the final grant documents.

Application Submission:

Email the completed application by the deadline to:
Rachel Meyers
Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development
rachel.meyers@vdacs.virginia.gov
804-786-6911

Or submit by mail to:
Rachel Meyers
Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
102 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219