



AFDO-Managed Retail Program
Standards

Grant Program

www.afdo.org/grants/retailstandards

Additional Funding Opportunity for CY 2021

GRANT GUIDANCE

CALENDAR YEAR 2021 AWARDS

APPLICATION PERIOD: MAY 17 – JUNE 4, 2021

*Additional Funding Opportunity for CY 2021 - Advancing conformance with the FDA's
Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards.*

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Additional Funding Opportunity for CY 2021

In addition to the annual subawards offered for CY 2021 through the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program (subawards were made in December 2020), an additional funding opportunity is available for advancing conformance with the FDA's Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards). This opportunity is separate from the regular CY 2021 annual funding program.

Jurisdictions who were awarded CY 2021 AFDO Subawards are eligible to apply for this additional CY 2021 funding opportunity.

Grant Program Overview

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), with funding provided by the Food and Drug Administration, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Office of Partnerships (FDA, ORA, OP), is pleased to announce the availability of additional funds for completion of projects and training to enhance conformance with the Retail Program Standards. Knowing resources are limited for all food protection partners, AFDO and FDA have worked diligently to design application, funding, and reporting systems that are streamlined and simple. Applicants to this program can expect a simple application process with streamlined reporting requirements.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information or technical support, please contact the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grants Management Team at (717) 814-9873 or retailstandards@afdo.org.

AFDO-MANAGED RETAIL PROGRAM STANDARDS GRANTS GOALS

The following are the goals for the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards funding:

1. Supporting innovative strategies to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors,
2. Promoting uniformity and a national Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS), and
3. Sharing successful strategies among jurisdictions at all levels.

ELIGIBILITY

Funding is available Retail food safety organizations or agencies currently enrolled in the Retail Program Standards. For more information, or to enroll in the Retail Program Standards, please visit <http://afdo.org/retailstandards/enroll>. Enrollment can generally be accomplished within one to three days.

Please note that enrollment in the Retail Program Standards is different and separate from enrolling for an account or applying for the *AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program*. The information hereafter applies to the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GRANT APPLICATIONS PER ELIGIBLE JURISDICTION

Jurisdictions having received grant funding in CY 2021 of the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program are eligible to apply to all available grant categories.

Category 1 – Small Projects

For this funding opportunity, jurisdictions can apply for up to three (3) Category 1 subaward projects. Jurisdictions must complete a separate application for each of the following Category 1 - Small Projects grant(s) for which they are applying:

1. Complete a Self-assessment of all 9 Standards,
2. Complete a Verification Audit of 1 or more Standards, and
3. Complete a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan

Category 2 - Moderate Projects (Equipment Needs)

For this second funding announcement in the Calendar Year 2021 grant cycle, jurisdictions can apply for funding for one (1) project from this category.

Category 3 (Training)

For this second funding announcement in the Calendar Year 2021 grant cycle, jurisdictions can apply for funding for one (1) project from this category

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

All applications must be made through the online portal, <https://retailstandards.fluxx.io>, which will open the morning of Monday, May 17, 2021. All applications must be completed and successfully submitted through the portal by Friday, June 4, 2021 at 7:59 PM Eastern Time.

AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

More than \$1.6 Million in funding is expected to be awarded for this second funding opportunity in CY 2021 AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program.

Funding Categories & Approximate Number of Grants per Category

Applicants to the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program are expected to show progress in implementing program standards, ultimately leading to self-assessments and verification audits showing program standards have been met.

FDA encourages all applicants to the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program to use this funding program to assist with achieving the milestones associated with completing all nine of the Retail Program Standards:

CATEGORY 1 – SMALL PROJECTS (up to \$3,000 per award)

The goal for this category is to provide funding for jurisdictions to meet the Retail Program Standards by completing: A Self-Assessment of all nine standards, conducting Standards Verification Audit(s) confirming the results of the jurisdiction's Self-Assessment (indicating that it meets one or more of the Standards), or developing a written comprehensive strategic improvement plan to increase a jurisdiction's conformance with the Standards. A comprehensive strategic improvement plan is based on the results of a jurisdiction's completed self-assessment and documents measurable continuous improvement with the VNRFPS. Essentially, the written comprehensive strategic improvement plan is a project plan that guides the work of the regulatory retail food program toward meeting the requirements of the Standard not met. The plan may also include tasks related to maintenance of Standards in full conformance. **Jurisdictions can apply for up to three (3) Category 1 subaward projects. A complete and separate application for each of the following Category 1 Small Projects grant(s) must be submitted.**

1. Complete/Update a Self-Assessment of all Nine Standards once every five years;
2. Complete Verification Audits for one or more standards; or
3. Complete and implement a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan

CATEGORY 2 – MODERATE PROJECTS (Equipment Needs)

The goal for this category is to help jurisdictions build capacity and help further conformance with the Retail Program Standards. Applicants for this category must have conducted a Self-Assessment within the last five years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later).

Jurisdictions must provide justification on how the equipment will support the retail program and advance conformance with the Retail Program Standards. Jurisdictions must provide information regarding the equipment needs, including:

- 1) Describe the equipment, its purpose, and how it will be used by the program.
- 2) Explain how the purchase of this equipment will help advance the program's conformance with the Retail Program Standards.
- 3) Describe which program standard(s) will be met and how the program standards will be advanced by this equipment.

- 4) Describe how this equipment will be used by the retail program and to what percent it will be used for retail. If dedicated 100% to the retail program, provide a statement to that effect. If not dedicated 100% to the retail program, indicate what percentage will be used to support the retail program.

CATEGORY 3 – TRAINING PROJECTS

Training (up to \$3,000 per award*) – The goal of this category is to provide funding for jurisdictions to meet and maintain compliance with Retail Program Standard 2 and to send staff to training or seminars to help them meet the requirements of Standard 2 (*Step 1 & 3 Curriculum or CEU maintenance*).

* \$3,000 does not apply to AK, HI, and Territories if justification for additional costs is provided.

Project Ideas

The AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program has funded numerous projects. Specific examples by Project Category are identified below:

CATEGORY 1 SMALL PROJECTS – EXAMPLES

- Completion of a Self-Assessment of all nine Standards. Jurisdictions may use these funds to hire a third-party to assist in completing the Self-Assessment of the nine standards.
- Completion of a Verification Audit or Audits confirming the results of the jurisdiction's Self-Assessment (which indicates that the jurisdiction meets one or more of the Standards). Virtual verification audits are an allowable option.
- Complete and implement a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan

CATEGORY 2 MODERATE PROJECTS – EXAMPLES

Include, but are not limited to:

- Development and implementation of a computer software system that supports elements of the retail food inspection program.
- Purchasing of distance learning equipment, computers and computer software systems, and training room enhancements.
- Purchasing of inspection related equipment to assist the jurisdiction in developing an inspection and surveillance system that support elements of the retail food inspection program and in meeting one or more of the Retail Program Standards elements.

CATEGORY 3 TRAINING PROJECTS – EXAMPLES

Travel awards for training projects should be directly related to meeting Standard 2, maintenance/conformance of Standard 2, or another Standard (with a clear explanation provided). The application must clearly explain this relationship.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Registration cost only to attend the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) annual conference (up to a maximum of three (3) attendees). Funding to CFP is only to cover the costs of registration, not attendance to workshops;
- Travel to training courses, workshops, and/or seminars that advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards;
- Training courses required in the Standard 2 curriculum (Step 1 & 3 Curriculum or CEU maintenance);

SUGGESTED TRAINING FOR CY 2021, WITH THE EXPECTATION OF CONTINUED COVID-19 TRAVEL LIMITATIONS:

Given that a significant number of face-to-face courses and seminars for CY 2021 have already been cancelled, please consider the following suggestions for eligible CY 2021 Category 3 Training requests:

- Any courses or seminars meeting the Category 3 Training criteria listed above, and that have published dates for CY 2021, will be considered eligible – please include the status of the course or seminar in your application.
- FDA is open to considering alternative web-based training for CY 2021 (**reimbursement of materials and registration fees only**), provided it is retail-focused and includes a strong justification that supports compliance with the Retail Program Standards.
- Requests for in-state training and/or staff training meetings, university-based online courses, and other types of training will be considered, when adequate justification is provided describing how the alternate training(s) will support conformance with the Retail Program Standards.
- **Important Note on Retail training courses provided by the FDA Office of Training Education and Development (OTED):** According to the latest information available, FDA does not plan to offer face-to-face Retail courses this year. Unless updated information is released before the close of the application portal on June 4, 2021 confirming CY 2021 face-to-face deliveries, please do not include any of the FDA Retail courses in your application (FD 112, FD 204, FD 207, FD 215, FD 218, and FD 312).

Note: Category 3 funds cannot be used to pay staff salaries and fringe benefits, nor can they be used to pay for staff time (via overtime or otherwise) to attend online or live training.

PROJECT IDEAS ONLINE

For additional project ideas, visit our Project Ideas page at <http://afdo.org/retailstandards/ideas> to view project titles that have been previously awarded using AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program funds.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN Guidance

A comprehensive strategic improvement plan is based on the results of a jurisdiction's completed self-assessment and documents measurable continuous improvement with the VNRFRPS.

Essentially, the written comprehensive strategic improvement plan is a project plan that guides the work of the regulatory retail food program toward meeting the requirements of the Standard not met. The plan may also include tasks related to maintenance of Standards in full conformance. A written comprehensive strategic improvement plan addresses all elements not met in the self-assessment and includes:

- The individual element or documentation of the requirement of the Standard that was not met.
- Improvements needed (action steps / tasks) to address the Standard element or documentation not met.
- Personnel responsible for completion of the action step / task.
- Time frames – Start and Completion dates for each task.

Program Rules, Terms, and Conditions

PROJECT PERIOD

The Project Period for this special funding opportunity for all projects **EXCEPT** for the Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan, will be 9 months starting July 5, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022. Final Reports are due by May 15, 2022.

The Project Period for the Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan, will be 3 months starting July 5, 2021 and ending October 5, 2021. Final Reports are due by November 19, 2021.

Project extensions will **not** be permitted. All projects must be completed by the project end date stated in the grant application.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

- Allowable costs include training costs, travel costs, registration fees, speaker fees (except for FDA courses), contractual fees, audiovisual materials, purchase/ rental/ maintenance / shipping of supplies and equipment, and purchase and/or development of information technology equipment/software/support.
- **For courses leading to a professional certification**; materials, registration fees, and online course fees may be paid with grant funds (but please note that there are some exclusions for costs associated with this type of course, listed in the *Non-Allowable Costs* section below).
- **For Category 1 Small Projects, Custom Projects subcategory**; the portion of employee salaries and fringe benefits dedicated to a project can be paid with grant funds.
- **Indirect costs**; are permissible for all grant categories with a signed and current federal cost rate agreement, or at the de Minimis rate of 10%. (The Office of Management and Budget provides additional guidance on the de Minimis rate at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=5a32387e087a2cd0368f361f5afb9ec6&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1414&rgn=div8.)
- Indirect costs must be submitted within the budget section of the grant application, except for Category 1 fixed-reimbursement grants where no additional amount may be claimed above the amount authorized for each subcategory.
- Funds may be used to fund registration only for the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) for this funding announcement (Spring 2021), however these funds **cannot** be used for attendance costs to CFP workshops.

NON-ALLOWABLE COSTS

Certain expenses and costs are not allowable under the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program. Please note the following restrictions:

- **Vehicles:** Costs associated with procurement of vehicles, vehicle parts/service are not allowed.
- **Construction:** Costs for construction and/or remodeling of physical structures are not allowed.

- **Food:** Expenses for food, snacks, meals, and catering (other than per diem for travelers) are not permitted for any grant.
- **Personnel:** Personnel costs associated with training are not permitted. For all Category 3 projects, personnel costs are not permitted (for example; personnel time and wages for travel time and to attend a course and/or for staff time spent on course delivery will not be reimbursed).
- **For courses leading to a professional certification;** exam, test, credentialing and/or certification fees may not be paid with grant funds. For example, the fees to become a Certified Professional Food Safety (CP-FS) are not allowed. However, as stated in the Allowable Costs section above, materials, registration fees, and online course fees for this type of course may be paid with grant funds.
- **Membership fees;** for local, regional, or national organizations, even if such membership fees reduce the cost of training and/or conference fees, may not be paid with grant funds.
- **Other Agreements, Grants, & Funding Sources:** Any expenses reimbursed under other cooperative agreements, grants, contracts, and/or other funding mechanisms must remain distinct and separate from any award of the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program.
- **Promotional items and costs** are generally prohibited unless they provide a direct food safety benefit. Examples of prohibited items: gift bags, logo items (pens, notepads, shirts, hats), gift cards, etc.
- **Purchasing of equipment and supplies for industry** is generally prohibited.
- **Liability insurance, maintenance/service agreements, etc.**
- **Insufficient Justification:** Other costs may not be funded upon reviewer evaluation. All costs should clearly support Project Outcomes, with sufficient justification provided.

PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

The following rules and requirements apply to the program:

1. Funding is available for State, local, tribal, and territorial retail food regulatory programs, and can be used for activities that allow the programs to complete a Self-Assessment of all nine Standards (the first step required after enrollment in the Retail Program Standards or to achieve progress toward Retail Program Standards milestones and/or Standards
2. Jurisdictions must be enrolled in the Retail Program Standards to apply. To enroll in the Retail Program Standards, visit <http://afdo.org/grants/retailstandards/enroll>. Enrollment can generally be accomplished within one to three days but must be completed and verified by the FDA by April 30, 2021 to qualify for this special portal opening.
3. Jurisdictions that applied for funding and/or were awarded funding during previous grant cycles, including CY2021, are eligible to apply in this special portal opening.
4. Jurisdictions may apply for funding for up to five (5) grants (three Category 1 grants, one project in Category 2 and one project in Category 3) as part of this

funding cycle (Application Period of May 17 – June 4, 2021). If more than five (5) applications are submitted by a single jurisdiction, or if more than one (1) application is submitted in Category 2 or Category 3, only the first application in each of the project categories will be evaluated.

5. Applications from a single jurisdiction may be made by a single Point of Contact (POC), or multiple POCs.
6. Category Specific Program Rules:
 - a. Applications for Category 1 Self-Assessment projects (“Completion of a Self- Assessment of All Nine Standards” or “Completion of an Updated Self-Assessment of All Nine Standards”):
 - i. Are only eligible if the jurisdiction has not conducted a Self-Assessment of all nine Standards within the previous four years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later).
 - ii. Jurisdictions may only receive funding for the “Completion of a Self-Assessment of All Nine Standards” and/or “Completion of an Updated Self-Assessment of All Nine Standards” once every five years.
 - b. All other Category 1 Small Project grants (Verifications Audits, Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan) must have completed a Self-Assessment of all nine Standards within the previous five years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later).
 - c. Applicants for Category 2 Moderate Projects (Equipment Needs) grants must have conducted a Self- Assessment of all nine Program Standards within the previous five years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later).
 - d. Applicants for Category 3 funding may not include additional individual training as part of a Category 1 or Category 2 application.
7. For travel requested in grant Category 3, travel costs should adhere to the following general guidelines (contact the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grants Management Team with specific travel-related questions not covered below):
 - a. Receipts are required for all travel expenses except meals, which will be reimbursed on a federal per diem basis (unless your agency has a different and required per diem policy). The General Services Agency (GSA) Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) breakdown may be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101518>.
 - b. The prevailing federal per diem rate for the destination will be allowed for meals and incidentals. On travel days (first and last days), in most cases 75% of the federal per diem rate will be reimbursed. AFDO reserves the right to disallow per diem for meals which are provided at no cost to the participant as part of the program.
 - c. Hotels will be reimbursed at actual room cost plus any applicable tax during dates of travel and should be booked at the most economical rate practical. Incidental lodging expenses (Internet, etc.) beyond room, parking, and tax will not be reimbursed.
 - d. Air travel is to be taken by the most economical domestic fare available.

Advance purchase is required. First or business class, “economy plus”-type, or any other upgraded air travel is not authorized. Baggage fees may be reimbursed with a receipt.

8. Reimbursement for use of a private automobile shall be at the prevailing federal rate, reimbursed for mapped mileage to and from the venue, and shall not exceed the cost of advance purchase air travel to the destination.
9. For equipment purchases of single items that cost more than \$5,000 and with a useful life of more than one year, acquisitions must be made in accordance with 2 CFR 200, which has requirements for purchasing (2 CFR 200.317-320) and for record-keeping, management, and disposition (2 CFR 200.313).
10. Expectations for training requested in grant Category 3:
 - a. Funded training participants should plan to complete all course prerequisites and pre-course materials as required for each funded course.
 - b. Travel plans (including flights) should be scheduled to allow participants to arrive on-time for each day of the course, and to stay through the stated course end-time on the last day. Extended days of travel outside approved course dates may not be reimbursed. Justification must be provided when travel is outside of expected course arrival and departure dates (for example, when travel is extended for personal reasons).
 - c. Participants are expected to fully participate in each course and achieve successful completion of all funded courses.
 - d. When Travel Goes Bad - When a participant does not attend or successfully complete a funded course, reimbursement for travel expenses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. States may be responsible for travel costs when a participant:
 - i. Does not meet course prerequisites or complete pre-course assignments;
 - ii. Arrives late for a course without prior permission and/or acceptable justification;
 - iii. Does not fulfill all course requirements or fails to achieve satisfactory completion of a course; or
 - iv. Leaves early without permission granted in advance by the course lead.
 - e. Travel reimbursement will likely be made for circumstances beyond a participant’s control, including:
 - i. Weather
 - ii. Canceled or delayed flights
 - iii. Illness
 - iv. Emergencies (when approved by the course lead)
 - f. Late arrivals for FDA courses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the course lead. When necessary, efforts to reschedule will be made for situations outside a participants control.
 - g. Who to Contact: If you anticipate any problems that will impact attendance at (or completion of) a funded course, please contact the AFDO grants management team at retailstandards@afdo.org as early as is practical. We will

work with FDA to resolve any issues in a timely manner.

11. For reasons of security and functionality, jurisdictions are required to complete all grant applications online using a modern, up-to-date browser. Users may access links to download these browsers from <https://afdo.org/grants/browsers/>
12. When completing the online application, any character count restrictions include spaces.
13. All applications must be made through the online portal, <https://retailstandards.fluxx.io>, by June 4, 2021 at 7:59 PM Eastern Time. All required fields in each application (including POC, organization, and proposal information) must be clear and complete.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By applying, your agency has made an assurance that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations in effect during the grant period, including applicable parts of 45 CFR Parts 74 and 92. Awards will be based upon the submitted and approved project applications, and are subject to the following conditions:

- **The grantee must complete the full scope of work and all tasks outlined in the approved grant application by the Project End Date entered on the grant application. Project extensions will not be permitted. All projects must be completed by the project end date stated in the grant application.**
- **All changes to the scope, tasks, deliverables, or expenses of this project must be approved in advance and in writing by the AFDO Programmatic Point of Contact prior to work being modified or completed.**
- **To Request a Change to your Subaward(s), complete your responses to the questions below and send an email to retailstandards@afdo.org**
 - 1) Explain Project Outcome changes as listed in your approved subaward application. If outcomes do not change (which makes for the strongest ask and easiest approval), make that clear.
 - 2) Explain why changes are needed, and how the changes will support the original intent of the subaward.
 - 3) Explain changes (if any) in the Amount Requested (can be lowered, but not raised). If there is no change, state that fact.
 - 4) Submit a Revised Budget.

PROJECT PERIOD AND EXTENSION REQUESTS

- **The Project Period for this special funding opportunity will be 9 months starting July 5, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022. Final Reports are due by May 15, 2022. No extensions to the project period will be allowed. Grants will be canceled if not completed by the project end date.**
- A Final Project Report must be submitted through the online grant management portal no more than 45 days after the Project End Date. As part of the Final Report, the grantee must provide a full accounting of all expenditures made with funds from this grant award (except for fixed-reimbursement projects), accompanied by the documentation specified in the *Reporting Requirements* section of this document.

Proposal Scoring

1. Applicants will receive an automated email notification upon each successful submittal of an application. If you do not receive an automated email upon submission, please check your Spam email folders. If you cannot find the automated email, please contact the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grants Management Team at (717) 814-9873 or retailstandards@afdo.org before the application deadline.
 - a. Applications received by the deadline will undergo an administrative review.
 - b. Applications that pass the administrative review will move to the proposal- scoring phase.
 - c. Applications which are not in compliance with the Program Rules and Requirements will not move forward.
 - d. For applications requiring minor administrative clarification, applicants will be notified and given the opportunity to provide clarifying information within five (5) business days after the notification.

2. **Category 1 Fixed-Reimbursement Applications** (Self-Assessments, Verification Audits and Strategic Acton Plans) will be reviewed for eligibility, and all eligible applications will be funded, as funding permits.
 - a. This Category includes five (5) project sub-types:
 - i. Completion of a Self-Assessment of All Nine Standards,
 - ii. Completion of an Updated Self-Assessment of all Nine Standards,
 - iii. Completion of a Verification Audit for One Standard,
 - iv. Completion of a Verification Audit for Two or More Standards, and
 - v. Completion of a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan
 - b. Applications for Category 1 Self-Assessment projects (“Completion of a Self-Assessment of All Nine Standards” or “Completion of an Updated Self- Assessment of All Nine Standards”) are only eligible if the jurisdiction has not conducted a Self-Assessment of all nine Standards within the previous four years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later). Additionally, jurisdictions are only eligible to receive funding for Category 1 Self-Assessment projects through this grant program once every five years.
 - c. Applicants for Category 1 Verification Audit projects (“Completion of Verification Audit for One Standard” or “Completion of Verification Audit for Two or More Standards”) must have conducted a Self-Assessment of all nine Program Standards within the previous five years (i.e. January 1, 2016 or later).

3. For all other Grant Categories (Category 2 or Category 3 Projects), eligible applications will be scored by up to three (3) reviewers, and the top-scoring eligible proposals will be funded.

a. Proposals for Category 2 and 3 projects will be scored using eight (8) review questions, with each question receiving a maximum of five (5) points. Projects will receive a maximum of forty (40) points, based on the following scale:

- Five (5) representing answers that show the project (or training) will clearly advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards, are well organized, and contain all the requested information.
- Four (4) representing answers that show the project (or training) will clearly advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards, but some information is unclear or missing.
- Three (3) representing answers that show the project (or training) will clearly advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards, but a significant amount of information is unclear and/or missing.
- Two (2) representing answers that show the project (or training) partially advances the goals of the Retail Program Standards, but some aspects of the project are not in alignment with the goals of the program.
- One (1) representing answers that show the project (or training) is not in alignment with the goals of the Retail Program Standards.

b. Category 2 and 3 Projects:

i. CATEGORY 2: EQUIPMENT PROJECTS will be scored using the following review questions

1. Is the project's plan, objectives, and Standards and Elements selected aligned with the goals of the Retail Program Standards, and are they realistically achievable within the funding period?
2. Does the project plan include a timeline that clearly identifies the specific activities to be completed as part of the overall project, expected completion dates for each activity, responsible personnel, and resources needed?
3. Does the application describe the equipment, its purpose, and how it will be used by the program and explain how the purchase of this equipment will help advance the program's conformance with the Retail Program Standards?
4. Does the application describe which program standard(s) will be met and how the program standards will be advanced by this equipment?
5. Does the application describe how this equipment will be used by the retail program and to what percent it will be used for retail?
6. Are the project outcomes measurable, achievable and clearly identified and likely to achieve greater conformance with the Retail Program Standards?
7. Is the requested equipment realistic and necessary for successful completion of the project, and are costs reasonable and appropriate?
8. Looking at all fields from the application, how likely is this project to

succeed and advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards?

ii. CATEGORY 3: TRAINING PROJECTS will be scored using the following review questions

1. Based on the information presented in the Project Information section of this application, do you think this training will enhance the jurisdiction's conformance with the Retail Program Standards?
 2. Are the details provided for the proposed training clear and complete?
 3. Are the training objectives aligned with the goals of the Retail Program Standards, and are they realistically achievable within the funding period?
 4. Are the listed personnel appropriate choices to attend the training?
 5. As a result of this training, how likely are the identified personnel to advance conformance of the Retail Program Standards?
 6. Is enough detail provided in the Budget Narrative and the Budget Worksheet to provide a clear picture of how funds will be spent?
 7. Are the identified resources realistic and necessary for successful completion of the project, and are costs reasonable and appropriate?
 8. Looking at all fields from the application, how likely is this training project to succeed and advance the goals of the Retail Program Standards?
4. The FDA Joint Advisory Group has discretion when making award decisions and can approve changes to number of reviewers or reviews, funding amount, priority, project period, and other aspects of subawards to ensure this funding program meets the FDA's intended goals. Final Award decisions are made by the FDA Project Officer for the FDA Cooperative Agreement that funds this program.
5. Applications not awarded will be notified via email.

Reporting Requirements

As with applications, an online process is used for project reporting to keep the reporting burden low. Grantees must submit their reports through the online grants management portal at <https://retailstandards.fluxx.io>. Funds are generally awarded on a reimbursement basis after a Final Report is submitted and approved, but exceptions may be made based on the needs of the jurisdiction (determined on a case-by-case basis). Please visit <http://afdo.org/grants/retailstandards/guidance/> for complete Reporting and Reimbursement Instructions.

Primary Point of Contact and Authorizing Official: Update all contact changes via the online grants management portal system or submit changes to retailstandards@afdo.org.

FINAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

A Final Report is required for all grant categories and should document completion of all project deliverables. The Final Report is due no later than 45 days after the end of the project period listed in your application, **by May 15, 2022** for all projects except for the Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan. Final Reports for Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan projects are due **November 19, 2021**.

If the final budget is not as originally projected, list all variances from the original budget and provide a brief explanation for each variance. All changes to the project budget must be submitted in advance of the actual expense via email to retailstandards@afdo.org. Note that changes to the original budget submitted with your application are not approved until you receive confirmation via email from the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Program POC.

FIXED-REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS - REPORTING

Fixed-reimbursement grants are associated with all Category 1 Small Projects. If awarded, upon completion of the project and approval of the Final Report, a specific dollar amount (identified below) will be reimbursed to the grantee's agency or organization. For these specific grant types only, applicants do not need to submit a budget or budget justification, as individual expenses are not reported, however a final project report must be submitted, along with the required supporting documentation.

Required supporting documentation

- Completed, dated, and signed [FDA form 3958](#).
- Verifying documentation this FDA form 3958 has been submitted to the FDA Retail Food Specialist (for example, the email sent to the retail specialist). [Directory of FDA Retail Food Specialists](#).
- Completed Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan

Reimbursement will be made on a fixed-reimbursement basis upon submission of a completed final report, as follows:

- Completion of a Self-Assessment of all Nine Standards (Fixed Payment of \$2,500)
- Completion of an Updated Self-Assessment of all Nine Standards (Fixed Payment of \$2,500)
- Completion of a Verification Audit for One Standard (Fixed Payment of \$2,000)
- Completion of Verification Audits for Two or More Standards (Fixed Payment of \$3,000)
- Completion of a Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan to identify gaps and increase a jurisdiction's conformance with the Standards (Fixed Payment of \$2,500).

PROJECT PERIOD

The Project Period for this special funding opportunity will be 9 months starting July 5, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022. Final Reports are due by May 15, 2022. No extensions to the project period will be allowed. Grants will be canceled if not completed by the project end date.

No extensions to the project period will be allowed. Grants will be canceled if not completed by the project end date.

How to Apply for Funding

1. Carefully review the details of this Grant Guidance document.
2. Verify that you are enrolled in the Voluntary National Retail Program Standards by checking the following list:
<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/ProgramStandards/UCM434742.xlsx>. Your jurisdiction should be listed, including the date of your most recent Self-Assessment, if applying for a Category 1 grant (other than applications for Completion of a Self-Assessment of all Nine Standards) or a Category 2 grant (your Self-Assessment must have been completed on January 1, 2016, or later). If the FDA-posted list has any errors or omissions, please contact the FDA Regional Food Specialist assigned to your geographic area at:
<https://www.fda.gov/food/voluntary-national-retail-food-regulatory-program-standards/directory-fda-retail-food-specialists>.
3. Gather the required information necessary to answer the questions listed in the *Step-by-Step Application Guidance* (below).
4. Confirm that your computer meets the minimum browser requirements to ensure security and functionality with the system. We recommend Google Chrome or any of the other current browsers listed at <https://afdo.org/grants/browsers/>.
5. Complete an online application using the grants management portal at <https://retailstandards.fluxx.io>. For each project for which your jurisdiction chooses to apply, up to a maximum of five (5) applications may be submitted, with not more than three (3) applications in Category 1, one (1) application in Category 2, one (1) application in Category 3.
6. All applications must be submitted by the June 4, 2021 7:59 PM Eastern Time deadline and wait for funding determination (approximately 4 weeks after the grant program deadline).

Step-by-Step Application Guidance

BEST PRACTICES

The following are a few best practices:

- Use your existing username and password, and proceed directly to *STEP 4 – APPLY FOR A GRANT* below if you have applied for or have been awarded a grant in previous cycles (since February 2014), Your contact information, including email address, must have remained the same to proceed to Step 4. Please contact the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Team at (717) 814-9873 if your phone number or email address has changed, or if you cannot find your username. Your password can be reset from the login page of the grant portal.
- Many applicants find it helpful to gather the required information into a word processing document, and then cut and paste that information into the grant portal. This may be especially helpful if you have Internet connection issues or have limited time to access the portal.
- Once you begin to type (or copy and paste) information into the portal, be sure to periodically click the “**Save**” button at the bottom of the screen. After clicking the “**Save**” button, you may log out of the system if necessary, without losing your information. Saved applications may be viewed by clicking “**Draft Applications**” under the “Applications” heading in the menu on the left panel of your dashboard.
- Your application cannot be submitted until you complete all required fields. Once you have completed all required fields, you should click the “**Submit**” button at the bottom of the screen. Do not click the “**Submit**” button until your application is complete.

STEP 1 – ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

From <http://retailstandards.fluxx.io>, select the button “**New User Registration**” and take the Eligibility Quiz (as described in *Best Practices* above, users with an existing username can skip to *STEP 4 – APPLY FOR A GRANT* below).

STEP 2 – LETTER OF INTENT/ACCOUNT REGISTRATION

Register as a Point of Contact (POC) for your jurisdiction through the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards grant portal. This step only appears if all answers to the Eligibility Quiz in Step 1 are answered as “Yes.”

STEP 3 – RECEIVE YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD

Within two (2) business days of registration (but normally sooner, often within 30 minutes) you will receive an email with your username and a password. This email will come to the POC email address you entered during registration. Once you receive these credentials, you may log into the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards grants management portal and begin working on your application(s).

Be sure to save your username and password, as these credentials will be used after you submit to check the status of your application(s). IN RARE CASES, SOME EMAILS ARE FILTERED OUT OR SENT TO JUNK FOLDERS. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE AN EMAIL WITH YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD WITHIN TWO (2) DAYS OF REGISTRATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE AFDO-MANAGED RETAIL PROGRAM STANDARDS GRANTS MANAGEMENT TEAM.

STEP 4 – APPLY FOR A GRANT

Complete your grant application(s) by using your username and password to log into the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grant Portal at <https://retailstandards.fluxx.io>. A single POC from a jurisdiction may apply for up to five (5) grants. Multiple POCs from a single jurisdiction may register and apply for grants through this program but they should coordinate to ensure they do not apply for more than one (1) grant in each Category 1 subcategory, one grant in Category 2, and one grant in Category 3. If more than five (5) applications are made by a single jurisdiction, only the first application in each of the project categories will be evaluated.

Once you log into your user dashboard, click “Apply Now” from the menu on the left side of the screen. Then select one of the following four categories to begin the application:

- **Apply Category 1- Small Projects**
- **Apply Category 2- Moderate Projects (Equipment Needs)**
- **Apply Category 3- Training Projects**

After selecting a grant category, you may begin entering all required information. For certain sections, the required information varies depending on the selected category.

STEP 5 – SAVE AND SUBMIT

Once you have entered all the required information in Steps 3 and 4, carefully review the information you have entered. Click the blue “**Save**” button at the bottom right corner of your screen (we recommend that you save often during the application process to ensure your work is captured). Note: Saved applications may be viewed by clicking “**Draft Applications**” under the “Applications” heading in the menu on the left panel of your dashboard.

Your application cannot be submitted until you complete all required fields. To make changes to a saved application, click the “**Edit**” button at the top right corner of your screen. Before the grant program deadline, once you have reviewed your application and are confident the information entered into all fields is correct, clear, and complete, click the green “**Submit**” button in the bottom right corner of your screen to submit your application. A “Note for Submit” box will appear, but it is not required to enter any notes. Click “**OK**”.

Before leaving the Application Portal, allow your screen to refresh (you may have to click on one or more “Update Available” pop-ups), and assure your application moves from the “Draft Applications” section of the Portal to the “Submitted for Review” section. You should also receive a system generated email confirming the submittal of each application, shortly after it is submitted (if you do not receive a confirming email, please check your email SPAM folder).

If you do not receive confirmation of your submission, please contact the AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grants Management Team at (717) 814-9873 or retailstandards@afdo.org, before the end date of the open application period.

Appendix A - Important Web Links

AFDO-MANAGED RETAIL STANDARDS GRANTS HOMEPAGE –

<https://www.afdo.org/grants/retailstandards/>

All the information for this grant program, including the latest information and program updates, and access to the grant portal, can be found at this site.

FDA RETAIL PROGRAM STANDARDS INFORMATION –

<https://www.fda.gov/food/voluntary-national-retail-food-regulatory-program-standards/voluntary-national-retail-food-regulatory-program-standards-november-2019>

This is a link to the official FDA site, with comprehensive information regarding the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards [the Retail Program Standards].

ENROLLING IN THE RETAIL PROGRAM STANDARDS –

<https://www.afdo.org/grants/retailstandards/enroll/>

If your jurisdiction is not already registered, visit this site to register your jurisdiction in the FDA Retail Program Standards. Registration is required to be eligible for this grant program.

FDA RETAIL FOOD SPECIALISTS – <https://www.fda.gov/food/voluntary-national-retail-food-regulatory-program-standards/directory-fda-retail-food-specialists>

Find the name and contact information for the FDA Retail Food Specialist assigned to your geographic area. This person can assist your jurisdiction with registration and guidance as you pursue conformance with the Retail Program Standards.

AFDO-MANAGED RETAIL STANDARDS GRANT PORTAL

https://retailstandards.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new

This link leads directly to the grant portal where you can register and apply for grants for this FDA-funded opportunity. The portal will be open for new applications from May 17, 2021 until 7:59 PM ET on June 4, 2021. This portal can also be reached through the FDA & AFDO-Managed Retail Program Standards Grants homepage.

DOWNLOAD A MODERN BROWSER – <https://www.afdo.org/grants/browsers/>The grants

management portal has minimum requirements for security and functionality reasons. Utilize this link to access and download a modern browser that is compatible with the system. Contact your jurisdiction's information technology office for assistance.

PROJECT IDEAS – <https://www.afdo.org/grants/retailstandards/ideas/>

This page provides additional project ideas based on funded projects from previous years.