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# Frequently Asked Questions: HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge Funding Opportunity

Last Modified:

Find answers to common questions about the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge funding opportunity.

For full details and application instructions, visit [Funding Opportunity: HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge](#).

## Funding Opportunity

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**How much funding is available through this opportunity?**

APHIS is making available up to \$100 million in fiscal year (FY) 2025 funds to support projects related to vaccines, therapeutics, research, and other strategies to combat HPAI in poultry.

## What are the funding priorities?

APHIS will only consider project proposals that clearly, directly, and strongly support one of the HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge topics described below. Detailed information about each topic is provided in the full [notice of funding opportunity](#) (395.8 KB). We strongly encourage all applicants to read the details about each topic before submitting their application package.

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### Topic 1: Develop novel vaccines to protect poultry from HPAI

Priority will be given to projects that focus on vaccines that:

- Are well-matched to the current circulating clades in the United States with the ability to quickly update.
- Are safe, potent, and efficacious across multiple avian species regardless of age.
- Can be administered to adult birds, at one day of age, or *in ovo* by low cost, mass application, or automated methods.
- Stimulate both cell-mediated and humoral immunity.
- Produce effective immunity in the presence of maternal antibodies.
- Maximize duration of immunity ideally up to sterilizing immunity.
- Are compatible with the ability to differentiate vaccinated from infected animals (DIVA).
- Are compatible with serologic testing schema.
- If successful, could be licensed by [USDA's Center for Veterinary Biologics](#) for use in the United States.

### Topic 2: Develop novel therapeutics to address HPAI in poultry

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Support the development of interventions to prevent, control, or eliminate HPAI virus in poultry.
- Include novel non-vaccine therapeutic strategies to decrease the impact of HPAI on infected poultry flocks.
- May include research to characterize genomic targets for disease resistance to decrease the susceptibility of poultry to HPAI.
- Reduce viral load in infected poultry.
- Include oral anti-inflammatory and analgesic treatments for poultry.
- If successful, could be approved by the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine](#) or [USDA's Center for Veterinary Biologics](#), as appropriate, for use in the United States.

### **Topic 3: Conduct research to further understand avian influenza in poultry and to improve response strategies**

Priority will be given to projects that address gaps in understanding of:

- HPAI virus introduction and transmission routes, including but not limited to the role of ventilation systems in transmission.
- HPAI virus circulation on commercial poultry premises, including but not limited to within infected and/or vaccinated poultry flocks.
- HPAI virus persistence in the environment or wildlife in areas with high poultry density. Projects may address new technologies that support early detection in wild birds that disseminate the virus.
- Strategies to enhance flock-level immunity for HPAI, including but not limited to vaccines or vaccine regimens that will reduce or halt disease spread.
- Strategies or methods to improve virus elimination on impacted poultry premises.
- Innovative strategies to improve biosecurity on poultry premises. Projects may include developing, evaluating, and delivering products or applied training to help poultry producers develop, implement, and monitor enhanced biosecurity plans.

- Innovative solutions to improve response strategies or minimize depopulation of poultry.
- Novel or improved diagnostics to detect HPAI in poultry, including those that differentiate vaccinated from infected animals.

## **What type of therapeutics are of highest priority?**

Therapeutic drugs of highest priority include those that are already approved but could be supplemented to add:

- a new species (for example, chickens);
- a new claim for HPAI; or
- a claim to treat or control the clinical signs of a viral disease (for example, anti-inflammatory and analgesic treatments for poultry).

Other priorities could include therapeutic drugs for breeding and laying hens, therapeutics that cover multiple classes of poultry, or therapeutic drugs that could be administered to flocks as a medicated feed or water. Adamantane and neuraminidase inhibitor drugs for use in poultry will not be considered.

Other areas to explore include identifying genomic targets to modify poultry susceptibility to HPAI or generating poultry with intentional genomic alterations that result in resistance to HPAI infections.

## **Who can apply for funds?**

The following entities are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity:

- For-profit organizations, non-domestic (non-U.S.) entities (foreign organizations), and non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. organizations<sup>\*</sup>
- Colleges and universities, including university research foundations

- State, national, allied, or regional producer organizations with direct or significant economic interest in poultry production
- State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organizations or specialty boards recognized by the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)
- Federal agencies
- Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than Institutions of Higher Ed
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS status, other than Institutions of Higher Ed
- State departments of agriculture
- State emergency agencies
- Small businesses

\* These entities require additional review and approval processes. For more information, contact us at [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov).

## **May a foreign entity apply?**

Yes; however, any organizations including non-domestic (non-U.S.) entities (foreign organizations) or non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. organizations require additional review and approval processes. For more information, email us at [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov). Foreign entities will also have to apply by sending the completed proposal to [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov).

## **Are there limitations on what the HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge funds can be used for?**

HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge funds cannot be used for construction, land acquisition, or costs incurred prior to the effective date of the agreement. For details, see the full [notice of funding opportunity](#) (395.8 KB) and the [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) (250.67 KB).

## **What if I have submitted a proposal that fits the priority topics to another funding opportunity but am waiting to see if it will be funded?**

Please contact us to discuss your situation by emailing [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov).

## Application

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### When are applications due?

All applications are due by **May 19, 2025, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.**

Non-Federal applicants must submit all application materials via [ezFedGrants](#).

Federal applicants and foreign entities must submit all application materials via email to [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov).

### Where can I find application materials?

Instructions and application materials are available at [Funding Opportunity: HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge](#). You can also find the full notice of funding opportunity, including the instructions for applicants, at [ezFedGrants](#) and [Grants.gov](#) by searching Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10025-VSSP0000-25-0015**.

### What should I do first to apply for HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge funds?

We urge interested applicants to complete the following steps as soon as possible:

1. Register and maintain an account with the [U.S. Government System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#).

2. Create a [Login.gov](#) account.
3. Establish an [ezFedGrants](#) account.

For more details, visit [How To Apply for APHIS Funding: Getting Started](#).

## **How do I apply for funds?**

Non-Federal applicants must submit all application materials via [ezFedGrants](#).

Federal applicants and foreign entities must submit all application materials via email to [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov).

## **Can I submit more than one proposal?**

Yes. You may submit more than one proposal. You may also collaborate on multiple proposals. However, please realistically consider your ability to successfully complete multiple projects in the same timeframe.

**I have several different proposal ideas for projects that support the funding priority topics. Should I combine them into one big proposal and application package?**

No. Submit separate application packages for separate projects. This helps reviewers score each project on its individual merits and improves the likelihood of funding.

## **When should the project start and end? How long will I have to complete the project?**

We recommend that cooperators plan for project start dates no sooner than August 1, 2025, but we may allow flexibility to accommodate specific project needs. A project's duration will depend on the nature and scope of the project, but we expect

all projects to be completed no later than 3 years after the start date.

## Cooperative and Interagency Agreements

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### What is competitive funding, and how does it work in a cooperative or interagency agreement?

In the HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge, proposals are awarded based on a competitive process where a team of experts evaluate the merits of the proposals using predetermined criteria. Funding is based on the merits of the proposal and application package, and recipients are not predetermined. Final decisions are made by USDA.

When cooperative or interagency agreements are awarded through a competitive process, applicants must submit a complete and polished proposal—there is no opportunity for modifications or discussion with cooperators during the review process.

After projects are selected, those with non-Federal entities are funded through cooperative agreements. This means there will be substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency and the recipient entity in carrying out the funded activity.

Projects with other Federal entities are funded through interagency agreements. If you're a Federal entity interested in applying, contact us at [sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov](mailto:sm.ap.hpai.challenge@usda.gov) to discuss prior to submission.

### Is cost-sharing required?

No.

### What is the limit on indirect costs (administrative costs)?



You may use your current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) rate. If you have an expired NICRA or have never had an approved rate, you may use a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs.

For detailed information and guidance on calculating indirect costs for your project budget and financial plan, please refer to the updated [Guidelines for Use of Funds](#) (250.67 KB).

## **What happens with equipment purchased under a funded project after the project has ended?**

APHIS intends to have recipients retain equipment purchased through the HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge-funded projects as long as the requirements and conditions set forth in [2 CFR § 200.313](#) and the [General Terms and Conditions for APHIS Cooperative Agreements and Grants](#) are met.

## **If a patent or invention is developed during this project, what do I need to know?**

The Bayh-Dole Act, Public Law 96-517, is followed when intellectual property (IP) is developed under a Federal award. Bayh-Dole allows the cooperator to take ownership of their developed IP if they elect to do so. It also permits the Federal funding agency (for example, APHIS) to retain a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up license to use the developed technology—or have someone else use for or on behalf of the U.S. government—for government purposes. Ownership of intellectual property under this funding opportunity shall be in accordance with the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, 37 CFR 401.14. For more details, refer to the [General Terms and Conditions for APHIS Cooperative Agreements and Grants](#).

## **Proposal Review and Notification**

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## **How are proposals reviewed, and who reviews them? Who makes the final decision?**

Application packages that meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be evaluated by a team of subject matter experts nominated by APHIS. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, reviewers may have no association with projects they are reviewing. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a reviewer shall recuse themselves as appropriate. The review team may seek counsel from additional subject matter experts as appropriate. Proposals are scored based on the merits of the application relative to the evaluation criteria, which are listed in the notice of funding opportunity. USDA considers the review team's recommendations in making final funding decisions.

## **Will partial funding of a proposal be considered?**

Yes. Based on reviewer recommendations, APHIS may award less than the requested amount of funds to a project. In these cases, applicants may accept or decline the award that is offered. If applicants accept a reduced funding level, they will submit a revised application that addresses reviewer concerns and aligns with the lower award amount. APHIS will provide additional guidance to applicants in these situations.

## **When and how will I find out if my proposal is funded, and when will funds be awarded?**

APHIS will publish the spending plan and list of projects resulting from this funding opportunity and notify applicants of their award status promptly after the spending plan is approved by USDA. Applicants will be notified by email and through announcement of the awarded projects on the [APHIS website](#). We anticipate announcing awarded projects in mid-2025.

## Other Submission Requirements

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### What if animals will be used in my project?

Proposals should clearly state in their work plans whether research involving vertebrate animals will be included as part of the project. If research involving vertebrate animals will be conducted during the project, the applicant must clearly describe how they plan to comply with the regulatory requirements and standards for animal welfare outlined in [9 CFR Part 2, Subpart C](#).

### What if dual use research of concern is included?

Proposals should clearly state in their Work Plans how they will implement all appropriate biosafety and biosecurity risk mitigation measures. This includes compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to that implementation if they fall within the scope of the U.S. Government Policy for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern.

## For More Information

To learn more, visit [Funding Opportunity: HPAI Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge](#).

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