



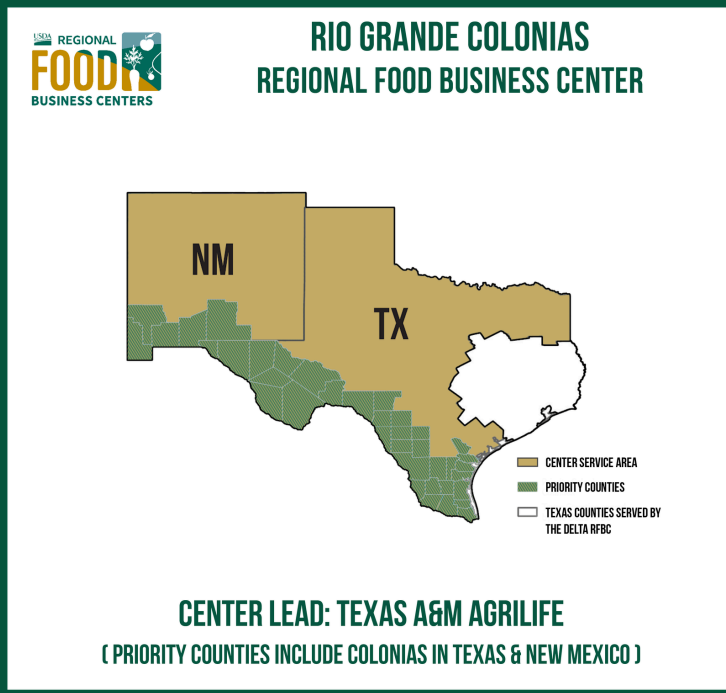
# NEWSLETTER

Supporting small and mid-sized farmers and food businesses in Texas and New Mexico through post-harvest technical assistance, coordination, and funding opportunities.

You have subscribed to our newsletter, which will keep you up-to-date with all offerings from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center. We will also share information about other regional food systems events, training resources, funding opportunities, and more. Thank you for reading!

## ABOUT US

The Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center is one of twelve Centers nationwide tasked with serving small to mid-sized farmers and food businesses with post-harvest support in three categories: Coordination, Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building. Each Center has a unique, regionally tailored approach. Our Center is serving Texas and New Mexico with focused assistance to Colonias in both states. Texas is fortunate to have support from two Centers, the Delta USDA Regional Food Business Center is serving 53 counties in East Texas. Visit our website to learn more about our service area!



## WHAT ARE NAICS CODES?

The **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)** is a standardized way to classify businesses based on their economic activity and is essential when applying for grants and contracts. Whether you are registering as a new business or looking to expand, knowing your NAICS code(s) can help you access the right opportunities and resources.

Need help finding yours? Visit <https://www.census.gov/naics/> for more information.



## CENTER UPDATE

We are excited to announce that both of our Center’s grant funding opportunities launched on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025! If you are a small or mid-sized farmer or food business in Texas or New Mexico consider submitting an application!

Beyond grant launches our team is hiring more staff to support clients and building a variety of technical assistance resources—which includes the launch of our webinar series in February! You can view all past webinars on our website in English and Spanish. Our Technical Assistance team is gearing up to make even more resources available in coming months, so stay tuned!

## SAVE THE DATE FOR REGIONAL TRAININGS & EVENTS!

- **Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training** -- April 22-23 or June 24-25, *Virtual*
  - Register Here: <https://preparedness.nmsu.edu/events/psagrower.html>
- **Food Summit: A Farmer, Rancher, and Community Event** --- April 22, Brownsville, Texas
  - Register Here: <https://ecohealthinstitute.com/food-summit2025/>
- **Field Guide Festival** -- April 25-27, Austin, Texas
- **New Mexico Local Food Summit** -- May 28-29, Albuquerque, New Mexico



# GRANT COMPARISON CHART

FRONTERA FARM AND FOOD BUSINESS GRANT		BUSINESS BUILDER FARM AND FOOD GRANT
Awards up to \$50,000		Awards up to \$100,000
Open to Center's 38 Priority Counties		**Open to small and mid-sized farmers and food businesses across Texas and New Mexico
Non-Competitive		Competitive Request for Applications (RFA) Process
Focused support from a Business Development Coordinator		Business Development Coordinator available upon request
Required Technical Assistance		Optional Technical Assistance
Zero or more years in business		Minimum of two years in business

\*\*The Business Builder Farm and Food Grant is open broadly to small and mid-sized farmers and food businesses across Texas and New Mexico, with the exception of 53 counties in East Texas being served by the Delta USDA Regional Food Business Center.



## GRANT READINESS CHECKLIST

Are you considering applying for a grant from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center? Review the criteria outlined below to make sure you are eligible and ready!

- ☒ **For-profit or non-profit** farm or food business (small-medium sized agricultural, value-added producer, or food system-related business)
- ☒ Farm or food business must be **registered** in Texas or New Mexico.
- ☒ Must have a **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number**. For information on how to get a UEI number visit this [link](#).
- ☒ Must have a **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code(s)**. For information on how to lookup your NAICS code visit this [link](#).
- ☒ **Food producers** must have an annual gross revenue of less than \$500,000. **Food businesses** must have an annual gross revenue of less than \$5,000,000.
- ☒ Project request must be for an eligible **post harvest activity**. Visit our website [rgcolonias.org](http://rgcolonias.org) for more information about eligible costs.

## WHICH GRANT SHOULD I APPLY FOR?



Our Center's grant programs have unique eligibility criteria. You may qualify for one, both, or neither, depending on factors such as your business type, location, or the project you are looking to fund. If you find that you are eligible for both you are welcome to submit two applications, however, keep in mind the two applications must be for different projects and the cap on funding is still \$100,000 from our Center or any combination of other Regional Food Business Center grant opportunities. If you are deciding between grants, some considerations to keep in mind are the project duration and scope, amount of money needed, and your familiarity with applying for federal grants. Read below for additional guidance.

- You may consider applying for the Business Builder Farm and Food Grant if:** your project scope is clearly defined and will cost over \$50,000; you have accessed federal grants previously and do not need technical assistance support to apply; your project will impact a substantial portion of the food system or a large population.
- You may consider applying for the Frontera Farm and Food Business Grant if:** your project scope is less defined or will cost under \$50,000; you would benefit from technical assistance in business literacy or grant writing; you have never applied for federal funding; you have a project in mind but are unsure where to start; you would benefit from the support of a Business Development Coordinator who can provide guidance on a wide range of topics.





# BUSINESS BUILDER FARM & FOOD GRANT

Client Journey

STAY TUNED FOR ANNUAL RFA RELEASE



1

## CLIENT INTAKE

- FILL OUT INTAKE FORM VIA THE RGC PORTAL

2

## ONBOARDING

- INTAKE CONFIRMED
- CASE PROFILE CREATED IN THE RGC PORTAL

3

## APPLY

- FILL APPLICATION VIA THE RGC PORTAL
- SUBMIT APPLICATION

4

## APPLICATION REVIEW & APPROVAL

- FINANCIAL REVIEW
- INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REVIEW
- GRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE DECISION
- USDA REVIEW

5

## AGREEMENT & FUNDING

- SIGN GRANT AGREEMENT
- FUND DISBURSEMENT (REIMBURSEMENT)

6

## EVALUATION & REPORTING

- TRACKING & REPORTING

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- TA IS AVAILABLE BUT NOT REQUIRED
- CLIENT COMPLETES EVALUATION FOR RECOMMENDED TA



# ARE YOU CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR THE BUSINESS BUILDER FARM AND FOOD GRANT?

**\*\*Make sure you meet these important deadlines!\*\***



Intent to Apply Due: April 3, 2025

- Fill out the intake form on our website. You must complete this step to be eligible to submit a formal application.



Applications Close: Midnight MST on May 2, 2025



# FRONTERA FARM & FOOD BUSINESS GRANT

Client Journey



1

## CLIENT INTAKE

- FILL OUT INTAKE FORM VIA THE RGC PORTAL

2

## ONBOARDING

- INTAKE CONFIRMED AND CASE PROFILE CREATED
- ASSIGNED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

3

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN

- NEEDS ASSESSMENT
- REQUIRED TA
- RECOMMENDED TA

4

## VERIFICATION & EVALUATION STEP

- TA COMPLETION CONFIRMED
- CLIENT COMPLETES REQUIRED TA EVALUATION

5

## APPLY

- SUBMIT APPLICATION VIA RGC PORTAL

6

## APPLICATION REVIEW & APPROVAL

- BDC REVIEW
- FINANCIAL REVIEW
- USDA REVIEW

8

## EVALUATION & REPORTING

- TRACKING & REPORTING

7

## AGREEMENT & FUNDING

- GRANT AGREEMENT
- FUNDS DISBURSEMENT (REIMBURSEMENT)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED GRANT QUESTIONS

## What types of businesses are eligible for grants from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA RFBC?

- The Center’s grants are open to for-profit or non-profit small to medium-sized farm and food businesses. Some eligible business types include: farms and ranches; non-profits/community-based organizations; for-profit businesses; value added producers; fleet/food distribution businesses; food hubs; shared kitchens and food production sites; co-packing facilities; food storage facilities.

## What kind of projects or activities can I pay for with grants from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA RFBC?

- All project budget proposals will be reviewed by both the Center and USDA to determine eligibility. Some examples of eligible post harvest costs include: working capital, staff time/labor costs, software implementation, marketing, trainings, purchase of special purpose equipment, supply chain coordination, business planning, product development, and business expansion.

## What types of costs are unallowable for grants from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA RFBC?

- Some unallowable costs include: farm, gardening, and production activities and supplies (including, but not limited to soil, seeds, shovels, gardening tools, greenhouses, and hoop houses); construction; land or property acquisition; paying off existing debt; fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements; goods or services for personal use; lobbying or any political activity; alcoholic beverages; contributions or donations; fundraising and investment management costs.



## UPCOMING WEBINARS!

- **How to Start a Business in Texas or New Mexico**
  - April 14<sup>th</sup> – [Register Here!](#)
- **Business Builder Farm and Food Grant Info Session**
  - April 16<sup>th</sup> – [Register Here!](#)
- **Food Safety at Farmers Markets**
  - April 28<sup>th</sup> – [Register Here!](#)
- **Basics of Bookkeeping**
  - May 12<sup>th</sup> – [Register Here!](#)
- **Cottage to Commercialization**
  - May 28<sup>th</sup> – [Register Here!](#)

## CONTACT US!

We are here to support you! For questions about grant and technical assistance eligibility, please visit our website and if you have additional questions about our Center, fill out the contact us form linked below:

-  [rgcolonias.org](https://rgcolonias.org)
-  <https://rgcolonias.org/contact-us/>

## FOLLOW US!

-  [facebook.com/rgcolonias](https://facebook.com/rgcolonias)
-  [@rgcolonias](https://instagram.com/rgcolonias)
-  <https://linktr.ee/rgcolonias>

# KEY PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

The Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center is led by **Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension** via a cooperative agreement with the **USDA**. The Center is also supported by the combined expertise of several Key Partners and Collaborators in Texas and New Mexico:

- **Key Partners:** University of Texas Rio Grande Valley - Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement (SARA), La Semilla Food Center, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in El Paso, Feeding Texas, and People Fund
- **Collaborators:** Desert Spoon Food Hub and Border City Distribution