



NCIMS
National Conference on
Interstate Milk Shipments



Milk and Shellfish Grant Program

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TRAINING GRANT GUIDANCE

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

APPLICATION PERIOD FOR TRAINING REQUESTS: **October 2, 2023 – November 10, 2023**

*Improving implementation of and compliance with the guidelines of the
National Grade "A" Milk Safety and National Shellfish Sanitation Programs*

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GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in collaboration with the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC), the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS), and the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), is proud to announce the 2024 State Cooperative Grant Program for National Grade “A” Milk Safety Programs and National Shellfish Sanitation Programs (the *Milk and Shellfish Grant Program*). This program provides funds for training and equipment purchases in support of milk and shellfish regulatory programs. Knowing that resources are limited for all food protection partners, FDA, ISSC, NCIMS, and AFDO have worked diligently to design simple application, funding, and reporting systems. Applicants to this program can expect a straightforward application process with streamlined reporting requirements.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information or technical support, please contact the AFDO Milk and Shellfish Grants Management Team at (717) 814-9873 or msgrants@afdo.org.

II. MILK AND SHELLFISH GRANT PROGRAM GOALS

The following are the goals for Milk and Shellfish Grant Program funding:

1. Support state and territorial (Puerto Rico) National Grade “A” Milk Safety Programs and state National Shellfish Sanitation Programs to participate in technical training, including FDA-supported Grade “A” Milk training courses, FDA-supported Shellfish training courses, Milk or Shellfish seminars, LEO Milk or LEO Shellfish training courses, other justifiable alternate program specific training; and
2. Provide equipment to assist regulatory programs with their implementation of the Grade “A” Milk Safety program and/or the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

This grant guidance document focuses on the Milk and Shellfish Grant Program Goal # 1. Supporting state and territorial (Puerto Rico) National Grade “A” Milk Safety Programs and state National Shellfish Sanitation Programs to participate in technical training, including FDA-supported Grade “A” Milk training courses, FDA-supported Shellfish training courses, Milk or Shellfish seminars, LEO Milk or LEO Shellfish training courses, and other justifiable alternate program specific training. A separate equipment grant guidance document may be published later if funding becomes available.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Funding is available to:

State or territorial (Puerto Rico) agencies with the regulatory/rating authority, or that provide a state laboratory service, to implement the National Grade “A” Milk Safety Program; *and/or*

State agencies with the regulatory authority, or that provide a state laboratory service, to implement the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

IV. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GRANT APPLICATIONS PER PROGRAM

MILK: A single agency with authority to implement the National Grade “A” Milk Safety Program (regulatory/rating authority or laboratory service) may submit one training application which is currently projected as:

- One (1) National Grade “A” Milk Program 2024 Calendar Year Training Request (Fall 2023)

SHELLFISH: A single agency with authority to implement the National Shellfish Sanitation Program may submit one training application for funding which is currently projected as:

- One (1) National Shellfish Sanitation Program 2024 Calendar Year Training Request (Fall 2023)

V. SUBMISSION DEADLINES

All applications must be made through the on-line grant management portal, <https://msgnants.fluxx.io>.

Applications for **Calendar Year 2024 Training Subawards** can be submitted beginning October 2, 2023. All applications must be completed and successfully submitted through the portal by November 10, 2023, at 7:59 PM Eastern Time.

VI. AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

We expect around \$3,000,000 in funding will be available for the Calendar Year 2024 Training and Equipment Subawards.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

Funds may be used to assist eligible agencies (with Milk and/or Shellfish regulatory/ rating authority or that provide a state laboratory service) in completing training that meet the goals and objectives of the *Milk and Shellfish Grant Program*:

I. CALENDAR YEAR 2024 TRAINING SUBAWARDS

Training Subawards allow programs to make an annual funding request for Calendar Year training needs, to support Milk Sanitation Rating Officers (SROs), Laboratory Evaluation Officers (LEOs), Shellfish Sanitary Survey Officers (SSOs), Shellfish Standardization Officers (SSOs) and other regulatory staff members to attend required training and other courses. Applicants have the opportunity to request travel funds and registration fees when applicable (FDA courses do not have registration fees) for a program’s annual training needs to allow attendance at training courses, workshops, and seminars that advance the goals of the National Grade “A” Milk Safety Program and/or the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

The minimum request for these subawards is \$500. There is no maximum amount, but the total requested funding should not average more than \$2,100 per person/per course, unless a detailed budget justification is provided. Programs may submit a request for multiple staff members, which may cover all or just a portion of their travel/training needs.

Separate Grant Guidance for CY 2024 Equipment Subawards will be provided prior to the Equipment portal opening if funding is available.

PROJECT IDEAS

The *Milk and Shellfish Grant Program* is designed to fund projects that assist programs in achieving and/or maintaining compliance with requirements and goals of the National Grade “A” Milk Safety Program and the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. Specific courses prioritized by this funding program are listed below. When necessary due to funding limitations, training for SROs, LEOs and SSOs may be prioritized over other training needs.

Please note that only certain costs, including funding for specific courses and registration fees, are allowable under the Milk and Shellfish Grant Program. **See the *Program Rules, Terms, and Conditions* section for more detail.**

I. CALENDAR YEAR 2024 TRAINING SUBAWARDS

SUGGESTED TRAINING FOR CY 2024, AS WE EXPECT CONTINUED COVID-19

TRAVEL LIMITATIONS: Given that a significant number of face-to-face courses and meetings for CY 2024 continue to be presented virtually, please consider the following suggestions for eligible CY 2024 Training requests:

- Any courses or seminars that meet the intent of the Milk and Shellfish Grant Program, and that have published dates for CY 2024, will be considered eligible – please include the status of the course or seminar in your application.
- According to the latest information available, we do expect that Regional Seminars for both Milk and Shellfish will be scheduled for CY 2024 – please feel free to include in your application.
- FDA is open to considering alternative web-based training for CY 2024 (**reimbursement of materials and registration fees only**), provided it meets the intent of this grant program and includes a strong justification.
- Requests for in-state training and/or staff training meetings, university-based on-line courses, and other types of training will be considered, when adequate justification is provided describing how the alternate training(s) will support the goals of this funding program.
- **Important Note on the Milk and Shellfish courses provided by the FDA Office of Training, Education, and Development (OTED):** According to the latest information available, FDA/OTED **does** plan to offer face-to-face Milk and Shellfish courses through September 2024.

II. ELIGIBLE TRAINING

Eligible Training needs for **National Grade “A” Milk Safety Programs** include:

- FD577 Special Problems in Milk Protection (1, 2)
- FD371 Milk Pasteurization Controls and Tests (1)
- FD372 Milk Plant Sanitation and Inspection (1)
- FD375 Dairy Farm Sanitation and Inspection (1)
- FD373 State Milk Laboratory Evaluation Officer
- FD374 Laboratory Examination of Dairy Products
- FD378 Preventive Controls for Grade “A” Dairy Regulators
- FD578 Advance Milk Processing
- Western Milk Seminar
- 3-A Sanitary Standards Association Meeting
- DPC Dairy Practices Council Meeting
- FEMA Emergency Response Course
- NADRO National Association of Dairy Regulatory Officials
- Other Training may be funded as a secondary priority, as funding permits and when a strong justification is provided by the applicant agency, such as: in-state training; staff training meetings; out of state standardizations travel; university-based training; and applicable online courses.

Eligible Training needs for **National Shellfish Sanitation Programs** include:

- FD242 Sanitary Survey of Shellfish Growing Areas
- FD245 Shellfish Plant Standardization
- FD248 Shellfish Risk Assessment Risk Management
- FD342 Advanced Sanitary Survey of Shellfish Growing Areas
- FEMA Emergency Response Courses
- GIS Courses
- GSASSC Gulf and South Atlantic States Shellfish Conference
- ISS Interstate Seafood Seminar
- NESSA New England Shellfish Sanitation Association
- PacRim Pacific Rim Shellfish Sanitation Conference
- PARLEOM / NELEOM Methodology and Policy Meetings
- Participation in a Dye Study
- Seafood Alliance HACCP Training
- Shellfish Program Management Meetings
- Other Training may be funded as a secondary priority, as funding permits and when a strong justification is provided by the applicant agency, such as: in-state training; staff training meetings; out of state standardizations travel; university-based training; and applicable online courses.

(1) Confirmed local delivery or other confirmed deliveries only.

(2) “State Rating Officers” and “State Rating Officers in Training” only will be considered.

Program Rules, Terms, and Conditions

I. ALLOWABLE COSTS

Allowable costs include training costs, travel costs, and registration fees (except for FDA courses).

Indirect costs are permissible with a signed and current federal cost rate agreement, or at the de minimis rate of 10%. (Additional guidance on the de minimis rate can be found at: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=5a32387e087a2cd0368f361f5afb9ec6&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1414&rgn=div8.)

II. NON-ALLOWABLE COSTS

Certain expenses and costs are not allowable under the *Milk and Shellfish Grant Program*. Please note the following restrictions:

- Vehicles: Costs associated with the procurement of vehicles, vehicle parts/service, and boats (including dinghies, dories, vessels, pontoons, sailboats, fishing boats, lifeboats, personal watercraft, canoes, skiffs, kayaks, launching platforms, boat/travel trailers and all motors) 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 subaward.
- Personnel: Personnel costs associated with training are not permitted. This includes employee salaries, fringe benefits, overtime, travel time, and time spent taking online courses.
- 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.
- Other Agreements, Grants, & Funding Sources: Any expenses reimbursed under other cooperative agreements, grants, contracts, and/or other funding mechanisms (including NCIMS and ISSC conference costs) must remain distinct and separate from any subaward of the Milk and Shellfish Grant Program.
- 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.
- Since there are no registration fees for FDA courses (FD245, FD371, etc.), registration costs for these courses cannot be paid with funds from this grant program.
- Insufficient Justification: Other costs may not be funded upon reviewer evaluation. All costs should clearly support Project Outcomes, with sufficient justification provided.

III. PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

The following rules and requirements apply to subawards administered under the *Milk and Shellfish Grant Program*:

1. Funding is available for state and territorial (Puerto Rico) National Grade “A” Milk Safety Programs and state National Shellfish Sanitation Programs and can be used for 2024 Calendar Year training needs.
2. Any travel costs associated with this grant program should adhere to the following general guidelines (feel free to contact the Milk and Shellfish 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. The General Services Agency (GSA) Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) breakdown may be accessed at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
 - b. Hotels will be reimbursed at actual room cost plus any applicable taxes 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.
 - c. 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. Per diem for meals which are provided at no cost to the participant as part of the program cannot be reimbursed.
 - d. Air travel is to be taken by the most economical 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. Use of Rental cars must receive advance approval.
3. Each Milk or Shellfish program may apply for funding for one (1) training grant for the Calendar Year 2024 funding cycle. If more than one (1) milk or shellfish application is made by a single program, only the first application will be evaluated.
4. Applications from a single program may be made by a single Point of Contact (POC), or multiple POCs.
5. For reasons of security and functionality, programs are required to complete all grant applications on-line using a modern, up-to-date browser. We recommend Google Chrome or any of the other browsers available for download at <https://www.afdo.org/grants/browsers/>
6. When completing the on-line application, any character count restrictions include spaces.
7. All required fields in each application (including Point of Contact, Authorizing Official, organization, budget, budget justification, and all proposal information) must be clear and complete.
8. All grant applications must be submitted through the on-line portal, <https://msgrants.fluxx.io>, by the relevant Submission Deadlines listed in the

Grant Program Overview

IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By applying for this funding opportunity, 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. Subawards will be based upon the submitted and approved project applications, and are subject to the following conditions:

- Award decisions are made by the FDA Project Officer for the FDA Cooperative Agreement that funds this program.
- 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 unless a written exception is granted by the AFDO Milk and Shellfish Grants Management Team. Contact the Grant Team at (717) 814-9873 or at msgrants@afdo.org.
- **Any changes to the scope, tasks, deliverables, or expenses of funded subawards must be approved in advance and in writing by AFDO prior to work being modified or completed. Please note that costs incurred for unapproved changes may not be reimbursed.**
- A Reimbursement Request and culminating Final Report must be submitted through the on-line grant portal no more than 45 days after the Project End Date. As part of the Reimbursement Request, the grantee must provide a full accounting of all expenditures made with funds from this grant award, accompanied by the documentation specified in the Reporting Requirements section of this document.

PROPOSAL SCORING

1. Applicants will receive an automated email notification upon the successful submittal of their application.
2. Applications received by applicable deadlines will undergo an administrative review.
 - Applications out-of-compliance with the Program Rules and Requirements will not be funded.
 - 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.
 - Applications that pass the administrative review will move to a final review by FDA.
3. The FDA/NCIMS/ISSC Joint Advisory Groups have 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.
4. Applications not awarded will be notified via email.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As with the application process, the on-line grants management system is used for project reporting and is aimed at minimizing the grantee's time burden. Grantees must submit their reports through the on-line grant management portal at <https://msgrants.fluxx.io>. Funds are generally awarded on a reimbursement basis after each Reimbursement Request is submitted and approved, but exceptions may be made based on the nature and duration of the project or the needs of the Program (determined on a case-by-case basis). **Note:** *A reimbursement check will be made payable to the organization; it cannot be made payable to any individual.*

Changes to the project budget that exceed 10% of the total grant amount must be requested in advance of your final report submission, via email to msgrants@afdo.org. Amended budget line items should be approved before expenditures are incurred, and requested changes are not approved until you receive confirmation from AFDO Grants Management Staff regarding your requested changes. **Note:** *If you are ready to submit your Reimbursement Request but have not yet requested and received approval for budget changes that exceed 10% of the total grant amount, please submit your change request and wait for your approval before submitting your Reimbursement Request.*

I. REIMBURSEMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – ANNUAL TRAINING NEEDS SUBAWARDS

A **Milk and Shellfish Reimbursement Request** is required whenever you are seeking reimbursement for one or more completed courses, seminars, and/or meetings. Because your subaward is intended to meet all your Calendar Year 2024 training needs, more than one Milk and Shellfish Reimbursement Request can be submitted during the year.

Please visit <http://afdo.org/grants/msgrants> for complete Reimbursement and Reporting Instructions.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

1. Carefully review the details of this Grant Guidance document.
2. Gather all required information necessary to complete your application(s).
3. Ensure your computer meets the minimum browser requirements to ensure security and functionality with the system. We recommend Google Chrome or any of the other up-to-date browsers listed at <http://afdo.org/grants/browsers>.
4. Complete an on-line application using the grants management portal at <https://msgrants.fluxx.io> for each project for which your program chooses to apply.
5. Submit training applications (up to two per regulatory program (one milk/one shellfish)) by November 10, 2023 7:59 PM EST deadline and wait for funding determination (approximately 6 weeks after the grant program deadline).

STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION GUIDANCE

BEST PRACTICES

The following are a few best practices:

- Many applicants find it helpful to gather the required information into a single word processing document, and then later cut and paste that information into the grant portal. This can prevent the loss of worktime caused by Internet connection issues.
- Once you begin to type (or copy and paste) information into the portal, be sure to periodically hit the green “**Save**” button at the top of the screen. After clicking the “Save” button, you can log in and out of the system as often as needed 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, a “**Submit**” button will appear at the bottom of the screen. Do not click the “Submit” button until your application is complete.

STEP 1 – ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

From <http://msgrants.fluxx.io>, select the button “New User Registration” and take the Eligibility Questionnaire (users with an existing username in the Milk and Shellfish Grant Portal can skip to STEP 4 – APPLY FOR A GRANT).

STEP 2 – ACCOUNT REGISTRATION

Register as a Point of Contact for your program through the Milk and Shellfish grant portal. This step only appears if the answer to the Eligibility Quiz in Step 1 is answered as “Yes.”

STEP 3 – RECEIVE YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD

Within 2 business days of registration (but normally sooner) 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 Milk and Shellfish grants management portal and begin working on your application(s). Be sure to save your username and password, as these credentials may be used after you submit to check the status of your application(s). IN RARE CASES, SOME EMAILS ARE FILTERED OUT OR SENT TO SPAM FOLDERS. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE AN EMAIL WITH YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD WITHIN TWO (2) DAYS OF REGISTRATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE MILK AND SHELLFISH GRANTS MANAGEMENT TEAM.

STEP 4 – APPLY FOR A GRANT

Complete your grant application(s) by using your username and password to log into the Milk and Shellfish Grant Portal at <https://msgrants.fluxx.io>. Multiple POCs from a single Program 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, and no more than two (2) grants in total for the current grant cycle. If more than two (2) applications are made by a single Program, only the first application in each of the project categories will be evaluated.

Once you log into your user dashboard, click “Apply Now”, and select one of the following two categories to begin the application:

- GRADE "A" MILK SAFETY TRAINING
- SHELLFISH SANITATION TRAINING

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 Milk and Shellfish Grants Management Team at (717) 814-9873 or msgrants@afdo.org, **before the end date of the open application period.**

IMPORTANT WEB LINKS

MILK AND SHELLFISH GRANT PROGRAM HOMEPAGE – <http://afdo.org/grants/msgrants>

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.

MILK AND SHELLFISH GRANT PORTAL – <https://msgrants.fluxx.io>

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 training applications from October 2, 2023, through November 10, 2023, until 7:59 PM ET. This portal can also be reached through the AFDO Milk and Shellfish Grant Program homepage.

DOWNLOAD A MODERN BROWSER – <http://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 Program's information technology office for assistance.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please contact
the Milk and Shellfish Grants Management Team:

(717) 814-9873

msgrants@afdo.org