

Plant Protection Act Section 7721 Program **Frequently Asked Questions**

Under the [Plant Protection Act Section 7721](#) (PPA 7721), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) annually makes funds available to cooperators to support projects that strengthen the nation’s infrastructure for plant pest detection and surveillance, identification, threat mitigation, safeguarding the nursery production system, and to respond to plant pest emergencies. It authorizes permanent funding for the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program (PPDMDPP) and the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN), at \$90 million per year. Below are responses to frequently asked questions received by the PPDMDPP and NCPN. Follow these links for more information about the PPA 7721 [PPDMDPP](#) and [NCPN](#) programs.

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Requesting PPA 7721 Funding

How much funding is available?

There is approximately \$73 million available for PPDMDPP projects, and \$10 million available for the NCPN.

Who is eligible to submit a suggestion?

State and Federal agencies, Tribal nations and Tribal partners, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, and industry are all eligible to submit suggestions.

May a foreign entity submit a suggestion?

Foreign entities are not allowed to submit a suggestion; however, they may collaborate with a domestic entity that submits a suggestion. The suggestion should describe why it is necessary to engage foreign collaborators to accomplish proposed activities.

Can stakeholders submit more than one suggestion?

Yes. There is no limit to the number of suggestions an individual or entity can submit; however, each PPDMDPP suggestion must be specific to a single goal area.

Are there any limitations on how PPA 7721 funding can be used?

To ensure consistent and proper use per Congressional intent, funding should not be used to:

- Duplicate or be duplicative of other PPQ initiatives or PPA 7721 funded projects;
- Purchase vehicles (lease, vehicle fuel, and routine maintenance are allowed);
- Build or purchase structures;
- Pay the salaries of permanent Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ) personnel. Salaries for TDY positions and LAs may be eligible; or
- Develop or maintain IT applications and systems that:
 - Require long-term funding;
 - Contain personally identified information.

Can PPA funding cover tuition and student stipends?

Yes, proportionate to the time spent on the project. For example, a student spending 20% of their time on the project should only receive 20% of the tuition and stipend through this funding.

Do suggestions that propose to continue ongoing work have preferred status?

No. Suggestions that request continued funding for ongoing work will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria applied to new suggestions. PPA 7721 is annual funding and therefore, funding is not guaranteed beyond the one-year funding cycle. A suggestion that received prior-year funding must establish new objectives and anticipated milestones for the ongoing work and include them in the current year suggestion submission.

What is the percentage of allowable overhead a cooperator can charge?

As established by law (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA), PPA 7721 restricts indirect costs charged against a cooperative agreement to be the lesser of:

- 15% of the total Federal funds provided under the cooperative agreement; or
- The indirect cost rate applicable to the recipient.

Can funding be requested for programs facing reduced funding or defunding at the federal level?

The program is not intended to specifically address fiscal challenges. While a cooperator could request funding that meets a need generated by a reduction or loss in funding to a particular program, that suggestion must still meet all the requirements for PPA 7721.

Submitting a PPDMDPP Suggestion

How do I submit a suggestion?

PPDMDPP suggestions must be submitted electronically using the PPA 7721 ServiceNow application. Suggesters must have eAuthentication to access the system. Suggestions submitted by other means will not be accepted.

Please review the document, *Guidance for Completing and Submitting a PPA 7721 Suggestion*, on the [PPDMDPP website](#), for step-by-step instructions on submitting a suggestion using the PPA 7721 ServiceNow application.

What should be included in a PPDMDPP suggestion?

In addition to basic information about the suggestion (suggestion title, budget estimate, contact information, etc.), suggesters should provide the following:

- Description of the suggestion's alignment with PPDMDPP goals, objectives, and strategies, defined in the FY 2027 PPA 7721 *Implementation Plan*, which is posted on the APHIS [PPDMDPP website](#);
- Potential or expected impact and deliverables;
- Proposed technical approach;
- Roles and responsibilities, as well as budget allocations for any cooperators who will receive funding or are participating in suggestion activities;
- Relevant prior experience;
- Major milestones;
- Accomplishments to date (specifically when reapplying for suggestions previously funded through PPA 7721).

Suggesters are strongly encouraged to discuss suggestions with the appropriate PPQ Program Managers, State Plant Health Directors, State Plant Regulatory Officers, and all cooperators prior to submitting suggestions.

PPA 7721 suggestions should be designed for a one-year project, with clear deliverables to be achieved within that timeframe. PPA 7721 is annual funding and therefore, funding is not guaranteed beyond the one-year funding cycle.

What is the difference between a single entity suggestion and a group suggestion?

Single Entity Suggestion: If all funding will be provided to one cooperator through a single agreement, that suggestion is considered a “single entity suggestion.” Any distribution of funds to subcontractors within the suggestion are to be managed by the cooperator, not APHIS. Include a breakdown of contractor funds to be distributed in the budget template under the “Contractual” budget category, and submit a separate budget for each contractor in the Contractual tab(s). Add as many contractual tabs as needed. This will help reviewers understand how funds will be allocated to carry out the suggestion. If you have collaborators or partners who assist but are not receiving any funds, do not list them.

Group Suggestion: If there will be multiple cooperators working together to accomplish a specific project and APHIS will establish separate agreements with each cooperator receiving funds, that suggestion is considered a “group suggestion.” A cooperator is someone that is receiving funding directly from APHIS. In a group suggestion, only one cooperator should submit the suggestion for the group. The group suggestion must include the following information:

1. Name of each cooperator receiving funding;
2. Each cooperator’s state;
3. Identification of the primary and the sub-cooperator;
4. Amount of funding that each cooperator (including the submitter) will receive. Funding for all cooperators listed must add up to the total budget requested. Funding for a cooperator should only include requests for more than \$0; and
5. A separate budget tab completed in the budget template for each cooperator. Add as many Cooperator tabs as needed.

Do suggestions have to focus on specialty crops?

Suggestions that focus on specialty crops remain a high priority for PPDMDPP funding; however, the program will consider unexplored opportunities or emerging pest threats outside the specialty crop arena in all goal areas. For more information, refer to the [USDA Definition of Specialty Crop](#).

Do suggestions have to focus on PPQ quarantine pests?

Suggestions that address pests that could potentially threaten U.S. agriculture will be considered even if those pests are not listed as PPQ quarantine pests. The targeted pest and its risk to U.S. agriculture must be detailed in the suggestion, regardless of quarantine status.

What should I do if I won’t have an accomplishment report to submit with my suggestion?

If the cooperator does not have an accomplishment report yet for the previously funded project, they should submit a status report of activities completed to date and identify the accomplishments they hope to achieve by meeting the objectives of their suggestion under the current agreement. This report will be attached electronically as an uploaded document when submitting the next suggestion for continued funding.

Evaluating Suggestions

How will the review process work and what criteria will be used to evaluate suggestions?

Each suggestion will be reviewed to confirm the suggestion meets the following five criteria:

- Focuses on a plant pest;
- Fits within the goal area to which it was submitted;
- Answers all fields within the ServiceNow suggestion form completely;
- Includes the required budget template, filled out completely; and
- Includes a narrative report (if applicable for a repeat suggestion).

Suggestions that fail to meet these five criteria will be removed from funding consideration.

Suggestions will be reviewed by representatives from APHIS, the National Plant Board, other Federal agencies, Tribal nation representatives, the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, and the research community. PPDMDPP suggestions are evaluated for goal alignment, impact, feasibility, past performance, use of best practices, and innovation to address critical needs and opportunities to strengthen prevention, detection, and/or mitigation efforts towards plant pests and diseases.

How and when will I know if my suggestion was funded?

Review of FY 2027 suggestions will begin late September 2026. Notification of suggestions receiving funding will be made via the release of the FY 2027 Spending Plan in early 2027.

Suggesters will not be individually notified of funding decisions; the Spending Plan announcement serves as the official notification. Sign up for the PPA 7721 stakeholder registry notice to receive notification of the Spending Plan release and other PPA 7721 updates at [APHIS Stakeholder Registry](#). Ensure you are signed up for the PPA 7721 Topics (found under Plant Health Information > Plant Health in the US (Domestic) > Pest Management > Plant Protection Act Section 7721 Information) to receive notifications.

Cooperative and Interagency Agreements

Is PPA 7721 funding awarded as a grant?

No. PPA 7721 funding is provided through cooperative agreements and interagency agreements. Grants and Agreements are similar in that they are both used when the purpose is to transfer funds or property as a public support or stimulation. The difference is that **substantial involvement by APHIS** is included in cooperative and interagency agreements. Recipients of federal funding through these agreements can expect APHIS to collaborate and participate in designing the requisite work and financial plan.

Can states have overlapping agreements?

States can have overlapping agreements, but only if the work to be performed under the current fiscal year agreement is different from that occurring under the previous fiscal year agreement. New fiscal year funding cannot be used to finish previous fiscal year work. In addition, cooperators with overlapping agreements must submit to APHIS separate reports and requests for payment for each agreement.

Can states structure agreements so that they run back-to-back?

Yes. When work funded by a prior year agreement must be completed for FY 2027 work to begin, the effective start date of the FY 2027 agreement can be adjusted as needed. The FY 2027 agreement must be signed, and work must begin on or before September 30, 2027. Remember, funds received in FY 2027 cannot be held for use solely in FY 2028 even though the agreement's performance period is one year and may not end until sometime in 2027. Work of some nature (such as planning or procurement) must commence in FY 2027.

Miscellaneous

Can I patent the product of my research or deliverables of my project?

Yes. Funded suggestions that may result in a marketable or patentable product may require a Technology Transfer Agreement with USDA, in addition to a cooperative agreement. More information can be found within the Patents and Inventions section of the General Terms and Conditions for APHIS Cooperative Agreements and Grants document.

Is it possible to get feedback on my suggestion if it wasn't included in the Spending Plan?

Yes. To obtain feedback on a suggestion that wasn't included in the PPA 7721 Spending Plan, send an email to the PPA 7721 Team at ppa-projects@usda.gov. Include the title of your suggestion, goal area, and the suggestion number in your request. Please allow up to 14 business days for a response to these requests.

National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)

How can I apply for NCPN program support?

NCPN issues its Request for Proposals (RFP) annually at the same time as suggestions are sought for PPDMDPP. NCPN's RFP is independent of the PPDMDPP suggestion process. Applications for support can be made directly to the NCPN program per the RFP instructions. Visit the [NCPN website](#) for general information regarding the NCPN program.