

Preparing Application B

Things to Consider Before Applying

Know what to expect

Read the Producer Diversification Overview (p. 3) which highlights the key aspects of the program.

Determine if you are eligible to apply

Basic eligibility requirements and rules are featured on pp. 4 & 5. Review criteria for each sector. Each sector has a definition of who qualifies as a producer and sector specific applicant requirements.

Determine if there is opportunity within this cost share program for your operation

One key element of this program is that it allows the producer to customize their project(s) according to the needs of their operation. Think about what improvement or expansions are needed to assist in increasing your farm income. Determine if this project is eligible for cost share within the program guidelines.

If the project is eligible, research the cost of the project and decide if your operation can afford to do this project. Your project may be eligible for cost share if approved, but the financial liability of completing the project is your responsibility. Approved projects must be completed prior to requesting reimbursement. **Cost share funding is not provided prior to project completion.**

The program timeline is another factor to consider. You will apply for cost share during the application period (October 1 – 7, 2020). Approval notifications will be announced in mid-December. Reimbursement packets will be mailed in January 2021. If you plan to complete the project regardless of whether it is approved for cost share, the earliest you may start your project is October 1, 2020. Invoices dated **prior** to October 1, 2020 are not eligible per TAEF Reimbursement Requirement.

The reimbursement request deadline is August 1, 2021. Your approved project(s) must be fully completed and reimbursement materials submitted by this deadline to be considered for cost share funding. **It is recommended you submit your reimbursement request as soon as your project is complete.** It is not necessary to wait until the reimbursement request deadline. Processing payments can take longer at deadline time due to the high volume of requests received.

Make the most of application tools to maximize your chances of approval

This program is competitive by industry sector. Each application will be reviewed by a committee and compared to other proposals within each sector. Your ability to describe your operation and justify how your project(s) will benefit your operation is important to increasing your chances of approval.

It is recommended to request the proposal questionnaire template (see p. 19 – required materials). This template provides the format and questionnaire required for your proposal. The proposal instructions (pp. 20 – 21) give key points to address within each question. Remember that the proposal is your opportunity to share who you are, what you do, and how your operation will benefit from cost share assistance.

Provide a comprehensive, yet concise, answer on each section of the questionnaire. Research all project costs and provide cost sources along with cost estimates. **Incomplete information is the number one reason for not receiving cost share funds.** Ask someone to review your application materials for completeness. Please note that TDA staff cannot review proposals prior to submission.

Communication is the key to success. Please contact TAEF directly if you have any questions or concerns by emailing producer.diversification@tn.gov. The reference list on p. 24 provides additional resources.

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Required Application Materials

1. Application B Form (pp. 25 – 26)

- Complete all sections of the form, date, and sign
- Special requirements for 50% cost share must be in the name of the individual applying for cost share

2. Proposal (pp. 20 – 21)

- Download a copy of the application proposal template online at www.tn.gov/taep in Producer Programs under Producer Diversification. A copy may also be requested by emailing producer.diversification@tn.gov.

This template provides the required format for preparing your written proposal. It outlines your agricultural operation(s), marketing plan, proposed project(s), and line-item budget(s).

3. Project budget and cost quotes (p. 21)

- Research all costs associated with each project
- Secure cost quotes for each project request
- Outline project costs in a line-item budget format

Providing a line-item budget allows the review committee to make adjustments to the budget if there are items listed which are not approved. This allows for a partial project approval – if needed. Funding allocation is based upon the final approved budget and the cost share percentage requested. Allocation amounts cannot exceed the program maximum.

4. Other support materials (p. 21) – if applicable

- Designs – required for infrastructure projects; *must include designs and dimensions*
- Pictures – “before” pictures are helpful to illustrate why expansion or enhancement is needed
- Graphic mock ups/examples - required for signage/marketing projects; *must include design with dimensions*

How to Submit

Make a copy of your application materials for your records and submit the original by mail.

Please consider using a traceable method of delivery if mailing your application. For example, USPS Certified Mail with Return Receipt method will provide the sender with evidence of delivery (to whom the mail was delivered and date of delivery).

- Applications will not be accepted if faxed or emailed.
- Applications are ineligible if postmarked or received prior to October 1 or after October 7, 2020.
- **Hand delivery is not allowed in 2020 due to concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Mailing Address

TN Dept of Agriculture
Attn: TAEP 2020 - B
P.O. Box 40627
Nashville, TN 37204

Review Process

Application B cost share requests are evaluated on a competitive basis by industry sector. Committee reviews begin once all applications are received and processed for evaluation. Only complete applications that include adequate information will be considered for evaluation. All committee decisions are final.

Approved applicants will receive a revised budget with reimbursement documentation. The revised budget indicates approved items per committee review, cost share allocation amount, and status of special requirement participation. All committee decisions are final.