



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grants Support Technical Assistance workshop

BIOENERGY, CLIMATE, AND ENVIRONMENT  
FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY  
YOUTH, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY  
FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

# NIFA

## Automated Standard Application for Payments

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Tara Warner  
Lily Eskanos  
Jace Ewalt



# Agenda

- NIFA's ASAP Support Team Introduction
- What is Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP)?
- ASAP Return Fund Changes
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Tips
- ASAP Contacts and Training
- Questions



# NIFA's ASAP Support Team

Tara Warner  
Division Director (Financial Management Director)

Lily Eskanos  
Branch Chief (Accounting & Operation Branch)

Jace Ewalt  
ASAP Team Lead

Samuel Giles  
Staff Accountant

Betty McGaughey  
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Jan Gallagher  
Staff Accountant

Shelly Snyder  
Staff Accountant

Terry Whitby  
Staff Accountant

Keshara Roy  
Staff Accountant

All can be contacted via [ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov](mailto:ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov)



# What is ASAP?

- ASAP is a secure funds disbursement system owned by the Department of Treasury.
  - Completely electronic payment application.
- ASAP is not a USDA system, so technical issues and changes to ASAP accounts must be directed to the Department of Treasury's ASAP Help Desk.
- The primary tasks for NIFA's ASAP Support Team (ASAP-ST) include:
  - Enrolling grantees in ASAP,
  - Creating ASAP accounts,
  - Authorizing funds, and
  - Assisting grantees in troubleshooting issues.





# How Does ASAP Work?

- Federal agencies and organizations utilizing federal funds enroll to use ASAP.
- Federal agencies establish and maintain accounts in ASAP to control the flow of funds to organizations.
- Federal agencies enter spending authorizations into grantee ASAP accounts in accordance with their program needs and schedules.
- Payment Requestors at organizations initiate payment requests through ASAP to meet cash needs (i.e. draw downs).



# What do the ASAP statuses mean?

- **Open** – Time frame after the account was created and when it falls during the POP (period of performance)
- **Liquidated** – 120-day time frame following POP, please note you are still able to draw funds during this time
- **Suspended** – Last 4 business days of every month, administrative issues, or time frame after the 120-day period has expired but the grant has not been closed
- **Closed** – Account has been deauthorized, de-obligated, and closed



# User Roles and Responsibilities

User Role	Description
Point of Contact	Adds user or modifies their roles
Head of Organization	Approves changes to user and their roles
Financial Official	Enters and maintains banking account information
Authorizing Official	Adds Payment Requestors and Inquirer Only users
Payment Requestor	Initiates payment requests
Inquirer Only	Can only run reports so no other role allowed



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# ASAP Return of Funds





# ASAP Return Fund Changes

- ASAP has lifted the 32-day restriction for returning funds via ACH.
- Search for transactions in 180-day increments.
- Banks may require a bank company ID to accept the ACH debt.
  - ASAP Bank Number: 0510-3680-3
- ACH or Fedwire are still the required methods.
- Submitting an updated SF-425 is still required.



# Requirements for ACH Return

- Ensure your bank allows ACH Debits.
- A user can initiate an ACH payment return regardless of the date of settlement if the following two criteria are met:
  - The account status is **NOT** "Closed," and
  - The return will not cause the account balance to exceed the total cumulative authorizations.
- To apply the return to the appropriate payment the application expanded the search criteria up to 180 calendar days.
- Grantees can return either the full or partial amount but can only process one return per payment.



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# FAQs



# Why am I unable to access my funds?

- New Awardees must be enrolled in ASAP.
- User must have role of Payment Requestor.
- Account status must be open or liquidated.
- ASAP is suspended the last 4 business days of every month for month-end reconciliations.



# Why am I unable to access my funds?

- New Awards –
  - Allow 5 to 10 business days for the Department of Treasury to verify banking information.
  - Once verified, funds will be released between 7 to 10 business days provided that no funding is withheld.
- Existing Awards –
  - Allow between 7 to 10 business days from the amendment approval date for recent extension to the period of performance or a release of funds.
- If funds are still not available after these timeframes, please contact the ASAP customer service at [ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov](mailto:ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov).





# How do I set up an ASAP account?

- The NIFA ASAP Support Team will initiate the grantee's account in ASAP.
- The grantee will then be emailed an individual login ID and temporary password to complete enrollment.
- Enrollment requires the timely completion of 5 tasks:
  - Point of Contact Names Organization Officials
  - Head of Organization Approves Officials
  - Authorizing Official Defines Recipient Profile
  - Authorizing Official Defines Recipient Organization Users
  - Financial Officials Defines Banking Information

**\*\*If you have not entered banking information, enrollment is not complete\*\***



# What if I cannot use ASAP to return funds?

- If funds **cannot** be returned via ASAP or Fedwire, Pay.gov may be used as a last resort.
- Pay.gov is a Department of Treasury website that allows individuals, states, and institutions to make secure electronic payments to the federal government using ACH or a credit/debt card.
- NIFA **does not** accept paper checks for return of funds or other payment remittances.
- Contact [ASAPCustomerService@usda.com](mailto:ASAPCustomerService@usda.com) for assistance with this option.



# Tips

- **Maintain User Control**
  - Login every 45 days
  - Maintain a POC (Point of Contact) and HOO (Head of Organization)
  - Recommend having 2 POCs
- Use the First In First Out (FIFO) accounting practice
- Withdraw funds before 120 days after the end of the award
- Initiate drawdowns on a regular basis
- Ensure the SAM.gov registry stays active



# Contacts and Training

For **funding issues**  
contact the NIFA  
ASAP-ST  
Customer Service:  
[ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov](mailto:ASAPCustomerService@usda.gov)

For **grant management**  
issues contact  
NIFA Awards  
Management  
Division:  
[Awards@usda.gov](mailto:Awards@usda.gov)

For **technical** issues contact  
the Department of Treasury  
ASAP Help Desk

- [ASAPHELPDESK@fiscal.treasury.gov](mailto:ASAPHELPDESK@fiscal.treasury.gov)
- 855-868-0151 (option 2, option 3) between 7:30 am and 6:00 pm Eastern weekdays

**ASAP Training** <https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/ASAP/>



# Questions ??



## Panelists



Dr. Lily Eskanos, Accounting Operations Branch Chief  
Kelly Van Allman, Operations Team Lead  
Jace Ewalt, ASAP Team Lead  
Sheila Zajkowski, Financial Closeout Team Lead

Questions/comments/feedback: [AdminOpsTeam.NIFA@usda.gov](mailto:AdminOpsTeam.NIFA@usda.gov)  
Subject line: Grant Support Technical Assistance Workshop:2024





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