

## 1890 Capacity Building Grants FAQ

Fiscal Year 2024

1. The RFA was amended on page 33 to clarify that grant funds may not be used to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility. However, funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. What is the definition of **minor alterations, renovations, or repairs**?

**Alterations:** Improvements that consist of any betterment or change to an existing property to allow its use for a different purpose or function. See also the definition of "Improvements."

**Renovation:** Improvements that consist of any betterments or changes to an existing property to allow its continued or more efficient use within its designated purpose. See also the definition of "Improvements."

**Improvements:** (Renovations/Alterations) Any betterment or change to an existing property to allow its continued or more efficient use within its designated purpose (Renovation), or for use for a different purpose or function (Alteration). Building improvements also include improvements to or upgrading of primary mechanical, electrical, or other building systems, and site improvements not associated with construction projects.

**Repair:** Restoration of a failed or failing primary building system or real property component to a condition that restores its effective use for its designated purpose.

**Minor Renovations:** Projects necessary to install movable or special-purpose equipment, inclusive of those physical changes directly incident to and required to accommodate these types of equipment. Minor-renovation projects include related design, inspection services and construction management services. Minor-renovation excludes all general improvements, such as alteration of existing laboratories, conversion of existing office space into laboratories, or other structural or physical changes to a facility which are not directly related to the installation of moveable or special-purpose equipment.

*Major renovation* means any individual or collection renovation that has a cost equal to or exceeding \$250,000. It excludes minor renovations and repairs except when they are included in a purchase application.

*Minor renovation* means improvements to facilities, which do not meet the definition of major renovation.

2. Which Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning Projects require pre-approval? What documents are required when requesting pre-approval?

Pre-approval is **not required** for partnership with the following two USDA-NIFA funded AI institutes, as outlined in the RFA on page 14. Pre-approval is required for any other AI/ML partnerships.

- a. USDA-NIFA AI Institute for Future Agricultural Resilience, Management, and Sustainability
- b. USDA-NIFA AI Institute for Next Generation Food Systems.

Provide a signed letter on official letterhead detailing the justification for a partnership outside of these two recommended AI/ML institutes as well as commitment letters from your proposed partners. Send these to Dr. Rizana Mahroof, [Rizana.mahroof1@usda.gov](mailto:Rizana.mahroof1@usda.gov), and David Wagner, [david.wagner2@usda.gov](mailto:david.wagner2@usda.gov).

3. Are subaward documents such as Current & Pending, Conflict of Interest, Letters of Support/Commitment require for unpaid partnerships/collaborators?

No. These documents are required for Co-PDs and paid consultants/collaborators. Unpaid collaborators' roles and responsibilities are described in the narrative.