

**METRIC**

**A-A-20098F**

**November 24, 2015**

**SUPERSEDING**

**A-A-20098E**

**February 23, 2009**

## **COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**

### **BEVERAGE BASES (POWDERED)**

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description (CID).**

**1. SCOPE.** This CID covers powdered beverage bases (beverage bases) packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties. **Please note: This does not guarantee purchase of this item by USDA.**<sup>1</sup>

### **2. PURCHASER NOTES.**

#### **2.1 Purchasers *must specify* the following:**

- Type(s), flavor(s), and formulation(s) of beverage bases desired (Sec. 3).
- When analytical requirements are different than specified (Sec. 7.1).
- When analytical requirements need to be verified (Sec. 7.2).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

#### **2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:**

- Food Defense (Sec. 10.1) and Manufacturer's Quality Assurance (Sec. 10.2). Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: Sec. 10.1.1 with 10.2.1 or 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

**3. CLASSIFICATION.** The beverage bases must conform to the following list which must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

---

<sup>1</sup> For USDA purchase specifications please visit the following website: [Commodity Purchase Specifications for Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](http://www.ams.usda.gov).

## A-A-20098F

### Types, flavors, and formulations.<sup>2</sup>

- Type I** - Unsweetened
- Type II** - Sweetened with nutritive sweetener
- Type III** - Sweetened with non-nutritive sweetener

- Flavor 1** - Orange
- Flavor 2** - Lemon
- Flavor 3** - Lime
- Flavor 4** - Lemon-Lime
- Flavor 5** - Grape
- Flavor 6** - Cherry
- Flavor 7** - Fruit Punch
- Flavor 8** - Lemonade
- Flavor 9** - Strawberry
- Flavor 10** - Tropical Punch
- Flavor 11** - Berry
- Flavor 12** - Apple Cider
- Flavor 13** - Raspberry
- Flavor 14** - Cranberry
- Flavor 15** - Tangerine Strawberry
- Flavor 16** - Peach
- Flavor 17** - Strawberry Kiwi
- Flavor 18** - Cranberry Pomegranate
- Flavor 19** - Pink Lemonade
- Flavor 20** - Raspberry Lemonade
- Flavor 21** - Tea with Lemon
- Flavor 22** - Cranberry Grape
- Flavor 23** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

- Formulation a** - Not fortified
- Formulation b** - Fortified with not less than 20 mg ascorbic acid per serving
- Formulation c** - Fortified with vitamin pre-mix
- Formulation d** - Fortified with ascorbic acid and enhanced with maltodextrin
  - Ascorbic acid - Not less than 45 mg per serving
  - Maltodextrin - Not less than 13 g per serving
- Formulation e** - Fortified with ascorbic acid and enhanced with maltodextrin
  - Ascorbic acid - Not less than 30 mg per serving
  - Maltodextrin - Not less than 30 g per serving
- Formulation f** - Fortified with ascorbic acid and enhanced with caffeine
- Formulation g** - Fortified with potassium and vitamin pre-mix and enhanced with sodium

---

<sup>2</sup> Not all options are available from every manufacturer. Check with the manufacturer/distributor for availability.

A-A-20098F

- Formulation h** - Fortified with ascorbic acid and calcium  
**Formulation i** - Fortified with ascorbic acid, calcium, and vitamin pre-mix  
**Formulation j** - Fortified with protein, fiber, and vitamin pre-mix  
**Formulation k** - Fortified with calcium  
**Formulation l** - Enhanced with fiber  
**Formulation m** - Fortified with potassium and enhanced with sodium  
**Formulation n** - Fortified with not less than 90 mg ascorbic acid per serving  
**Formulation o** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products *must meet the requirements of the:***

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 7).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's product assurance (Sec. 8).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 11).

**5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.**

**5.1 Processing.** The beverage bases must be processed in accordance with Current Good Manufacturing Practices (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 110).

**5.2 Food defense.** The beverage bases must be processed and transported in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) *Guidance for Industry: Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.<sup>3</sup> This guidance identifies the kinds of preventive measures food manufacturers, processors, or handlers may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions. The implementation of enhanced food defense preventive measures provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients, and post-production finished product.

**6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.**

**6.1 Ingredients.** All ingredients must be declared by their common or usual name in descending order of predominance by weight (21 CFR § 101.4(a)) unless exempted by 21 CFR § 101.100. The beverage bases must contain ingredients appropriate for the type(s), flavor(s), and formulation(s) of beverage bases specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. The

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.

**A-A-20098F**

beverage bases may contain natural or artificial flavors, acidulants, antioxidants, stabilizers, clouding agents, U.S. certified colors, anticaking agents, emulsifiers, fillers, ascorbic acid, and other ingredients.

**6.1.1 Sweeteners.** Nutritive or non-nutritive sweeteners may be used in the sweetened beverage bases. The nutritive sweeteners must be white, refined, granulated cane or beet sugar, fructose, or a combination thereof. The non-nutritive sweeteners must be aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, sucralose, or a combination thereof, or other non-nutritive sweeteners approved by the FDA for food use.

**6.1.2 Formulation.** The levels of fortification and enhancement must be as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. The levels of fortification for the use of the term “fortified” in the labeling of these foods must be in accordance with 21 CFR § 101.54(e).

**6.1.3 Additional ingredients.** Additional ingredients may be used as permitted by the FDA. When used, the additional ingredients must be of Food Chemicals Codex purity or United States Pharmacopeia-National Formulary (USP-NF) quality and meet the related FDA regulations on food additives or generally recognized as safe (GRAS) requirements.

**6.2 Finished product.** The beverage bases must be uniformly blended, free-flowing, homogenous dry mixtures, free from hard lumps. Granulation may vary from a fine powder to small agglomerated crystals. Powder may be homogeneous or speckled in color. When reconstituted per the manufacturer’s instructions, the beverage bases must fully dissolve within two minutes with constant stirring. The beverage bases must be a clear to slightly cloudy, sediment free liquid. The hydrated beverage bases must have the appearance and distinct odor and flavor as specified in TABLE I.

**TABLE I. Finished product requirements.**

<b>Flavor</b>	<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Odor and Flavor</b>
Flavor 1 - Orange	bright orange	distinct orange, sweet and sour
Flavor 2 - Lemon	pale to bright yellow	lemon, sweet and sour
Flavor 3 - Lime	bright green	lime, sweet and sour
Flavor 4 - Lemon-Lime	pale green	lemon-lime, sweet and sour
Flavor 5 - Grape	purple grey to blue	sweet grape
Flavor 6 - Cherry	bright red	sweet candied cherry
Flavor 7 - Fruit Punch	reddish orange	sweet fruit blend
Flavor 8 - Lemonade	pale yellow	lemon, sweet and sour
Flavor 9 - Strawberry	pink	sweet strawberry

A-A-20098F

**TABLE I. Finished product requirements. (continued)**

<b>Flavor</b>	<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Odor and Flavor</b>
Flavor 10 - Tropical Punch	light red	tropical fruit blend
Flavor 11 - Berry	red	berry, sweet
Flavor 12 - Apple Cider	dark amber	apple and cinnamon, sweet
Flavor 13 - Raspberry	dark red	raspberry, sweet
Flavor 14 - Cranberry	bright red	cranberry, sweet and sour
Flavor 15 - Tangerine Strawberry	pale white to grey	tangerine and strawberry, sweet
Flavor 16 - Peach	orange-brown	peach, sweet
Flavor 17 - Strawberry Kiwi	light pink	strawberry and kiwi blend
Flavor 18 - Cranberry Pomegranate	red	cranberry and pomegranate blend, sweet and slightly tart
Flavor 19 - Pink Lemonade	pink	lemon, sweet and sour
Flavor 20 - Raspberry Lemonade	pink	mild raspberry and lemon, sweet and sour
Flavor 21 - Tea with Lemon	brown	sweet tea with lemon
Flavor 22 - Cranberry Grape	dark purple red	grape and cranberry blend, sweet and sour

**6.3 Foreign material.** All ingredients and finished product must be clean, sound, wholesome, free from foreign material, and free from evidence of rodent or insect infestation.

## 7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.

**7.1 Analytical requirements.** Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analytical requirements for the beverage bases must be as follows:

**TABLE II. Analytical requirements. (percent by weight)**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Flavor</b>	<b>Formulation</b>	<b>Moisture (percent maximum)</b>
Type I - Unsweetened	All	All	2.0
Type II - Sweetened with nutritive sweetener	All <sup>4</sup>	a - c <sup>4</sup> d e f - m n	2.0 3.5 6.0 2.0 4.0

<sup>4</sup> Flavor 12 Apple Cider, Formula b must not exceed 1.0 percent moisture

## A-A-20098F

TABLE II. Analytical requirements. (percent by weight) (continued)

Type	Flavor	Formulation	Moisture (percent maximum)
Type III - Sweetened with non-nutritive sweetener	All <sup>5</sup>	a <sup>5</sup>	5.0
		b - c <sup>6</sup>	4.0
		d - h	5.0
		i	5.5
		j - l	5.0
		m	2.0
		n	4.0

**7.1.1 Caffeine.** The caffeine content for Formulation f must not be less than 80 mg and not more than 110 mg per serving.

**7.2 Analytical verification.** Purchaser must specify manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

**7.2.1 USDA verification procedures.** When USDA certification (Sec. 10.4) is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing will be performed as follows:

**7.2.2 Product verification sampling.** When USDA verification of analytical requirements is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing must be performed on a composite sample. The composite sample must be 113.4 g (4 oz) prepared from five randomly selected subsamples. Subsamples must be a minimum of one can/jar/envelope and must contain the appropriate number of cans/jars/envelopes to yield a 113.4 g (4 oz) sample when composited.

**7.3 Analytical testing.** When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analyses must be made in accordance with the following methods from the AOAC International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA):

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
Moisture	925.45A
Caffeine	980.14

**7.4 Test results.** Test results for moisture must be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent. Test results for caffeine must be reported to the nearest mg per g. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements will be cause for rejection of the lot.

<sup>5</sup> Flavor 13 Raspberry, Formula a must not exceed 3.0 percent moisture

<sup>6</sup> Flavor 21 Tea with Lemon, Formula b must not exceed 5.0 percent moisture

A-A-20098F

**8. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE.** The manufacturer/distributor must certify that the beverage bases provided meets the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same beverage bases offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

**9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.** The delivered beverage bases must comply with all applicable Federal and State mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the beverage bases in the commercial marketplace. Delivered beverage bases must comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. When a known allergen is included in the beverage bases, the beverage bases must comply with the allergen labeling requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

**10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS.** Purchaser must specify 10.3 or 10.4. Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: 10.1.1 with 10.2.1, or 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.

**10.1 Food defense.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Food Defense System Survey (FDSS) must be conducted by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division. Food defense requirements include a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials and other ingredients and post-production finished product. The plan must address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter, when applicable, and processing, including all raw material sources; (4) shipping and receiving; (5) storage; (6) water and ice supply; (7) mail handling; (8) personnel security; and (9) transportation, shipping, and receiving.

**10.1.1 FDSS.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS must be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division. The FDSS verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. An AMS, FDSS verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's *Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.

**10.1.2 Food defense section of the Plant Systems Audit (PSA).** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a food defense audit will be conducted as part of the PSA. The audit will be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division auditors. This verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. The food defense section of the PSA verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's *Guidance for*

**A-A-20098F**

*Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance.*

**10.2 Manufacturer's quality assurance.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer will be required to provide evidence, by certificate, that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid or no later than 10 business days from the date of the awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

**10.2.1 Plant survey.** A plant survey conducted by USDA, AMS, or other survey performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110).

**10.2.2 PSA.** A PSA conducted by USDA, AMS, or other audit performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110), and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program.

**10.3 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the beverage bases distributed meet or exceed the requirements of this CID. The manufacturer/distributor must certify via a Certificate of Conformance or other adequate documentation (*as specified by the purchaser*) that the beverage bases meet the analytical requirements specified in Sec. 7 of this CID.

**10.4 USDA certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division, must be the certifying program. SCI Division inspectors must certify the quality and acceptability of the beverage bases in accordance with SCI Division procedures, which include selecting random samples of the beverage bases, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official SCI Division score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, SCI Division inspectors will examine the beverage bases for conformance to the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) in effect on the date of the solicitation.

**11. PACKAGING.** Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking must be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.



A-A-20098F

**12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES.** When Section 10.4 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of beverage bases and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 7). When USDA analytical testing is specified, SCI Division inspection personnel must select samples and submit them to the USDA, Science and Technology Program (S&TP) laboratory for analysis.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11 or *as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order*).

### **13. REFERENCE NOTES.**

#### **13.1 USDA services.**

**13.1.1 USDA certification and Plant Survey.** For a USDA certification and plant survey contact the Associate Director, Inspection Operations, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-2482, fax (202) 720-0393, or via E-mail: [Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov).

**13.1.2 USDA FDSS and PSA.** For a USDA FDSS and PSA contact the Chief, Auditing Services Branch, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-5021, fax (202) 260-8927, or via E-mail: [fvaudits@ams.usda.gov](mailto:fvaudits@ams.usda.gov).

**13.1.3 Analytical testing and technical information contact.** For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact a member of the Laboratory Approval and Testing Division, S&TP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272, telephone (202) 690-0621 or via E-mail: [KerryR.Smith@ams.usda.gov](mailto:KerryR.Smith@ams.usda.gov).

#### **13.2 Sources of documents.**

##### **13.2.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents are as follows:**

Copies of the AOAC International OMA may be obtained from: AOAC International, 2275 Research Boulevard, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-3250, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org> for nonmembers and <http://www.eoma.aoac.org> for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.

**A-A-20098F**

Copies of the Food Chemicals Codex and U.S. Pharmacopeia may be purchased from: **United States Pharmacopeia Convention, 12601 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD 20877, telephone (800) 227-8772 or (301) 881-0666, Fax (301) 816-8148 or on the Internet at: <http://www.usp.org>.**

**13.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:**

Applicable provisions of the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503, and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act are contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from: **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000. Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover/ NOVUS, and American Express) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (866) 512-1800, (202) 512-1800. These documents may also be obtained free of charge on the Internet at:**

**<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>.**

Copies of Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance is available online from: **FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) on the Internet at:**

**<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.**

Copies of this CID and the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) are available from: **Director, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240, Washington, D.C. 20250, via E-mail: [CIDS@ams.usda.gov](mailto:CIDS@ams.usda.gov) or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids> and**

**<http://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/condition-food-container-manual>.**

Copies of this CID are also available online at: **ASSIST Online (<https://assist.dla.mil>) or ASSIST Quick Search (<http://quicksearch.dla.mil>) or from the Standardization Documents Order Desk, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Document Services, Building 4D, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094.**

Beneficial comments, recommendations, additions, deletions, clarifications, etc., and any data which may improve this document should be sent to: **DLA Troop Support, ATTN: DLA-FTSA, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5092 or Fax (215) 737-2963, or via E-mail: [dscpsubswb@dla.mil](mailto:dscpsubswb@dla.mil).**

A-A-20098F

**MILITARY INTERESTS:****Custodians**

Army - GL  
 Navy - SA  
 Air Force - 35  
 DLA - SS

**CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITIES:**

DOJ - BOP  
 HHS - FDA  
 USDA - SCP  
 VA - OSS

**Review Activities**

Army - MD, QM  
 Navy - MC

**PREPARING ACTIVITY:**

DLA - SS

(Project No. 8960-2015-001)

**NOTE:** The activities listed above were interested in this document as of the date of this document. Since organizations and responsibilities can change, you should verify the currency of the information above using the ASSIST Online database at <https://assist.dla.mil>.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.