

Sender's Address:

Fruitful Network Development LLC
7435 Valley View Road
Hudson, OH 44236

Date: February 3, 2026

Inside Address:

Dr. Carlos Ortiz
National Program Leader, Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Beacon Complex, Mail Stop 5SW011
P.O. Box 419205
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Salutation:

Dear Dr. Ortiz:

I am writing to inquire about Topic 8.6 and to request brief guidance on the scope and expectations for a Phase I proposal. I am the founder and technical lead of Fruitful Network Development LLC, a small business developing software tools to support coordination and efficiency in local and regional agricultural networks.

I have reviewed the Topic 8.6 solicitation and am preparing a Phase I proposal focused on feasibility testing. Before finalizing the approach, I want to confirm that my interpretation of the topic objectives and Phase I scope aligns with program expectations.

If possible, I would appreciate a short phone or video conversation (15–20 minutes) to discuss:

1. How reviewers distinguish an appropriate Phase I feasibility study from work suited to Phase II.
2. Whether Phase I proposals should emphasize prototype validation, pilot deployment, or evaluation design.
3. Common areas where Topic 8.6 submissions are found to be out of scope.
4. Guidance on framing coordination or network-oriented tools within rural or community development outcomes.

If a conversation is not feasible, I would be grateful for any written guidance or a referral to another contact for topic-specific questions.

Thank you for your time and for supporting the SBIR program. I appreciate your consideration and would be happy to provide a short written summary of my proposed Phase I focus in advance if that would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Dylan Montgomery
Founder & Technical Lead
Fruitful Network Development LLC
dcmontgomery@fruitfulnetworkdevelopment.com