eAuthentication Account Creation

Job Aid

Before You Begin

This document provides instructions for external users to create a USDA eAuthentication Account, which is necessary for accessing ezFedGrants.

*To create a valid eAuthentication Account and access ezFedGrants, you must register for an account **AND** verify your identity, as explained in this document.*

After creating and validating your eAuthentication Account, you will be able to submit an ezFedGrants access request, as described in the **Submit ezFedGrants Access Request Job Aid**. For an overview of the entire onboarding process, review the **ezFedGrants External User Onboarding Quick Reference**.

Key Terms

- **External User:** An individual who interacts with USDA agencies or offices on behalf of an organization. External users may also be referred to as recipients, applicants, cooperators, or agency customers.
- **ezFedGrants:** A system for managing Federal awards. External users access the ezFedGrants External Portal to complete tasks such as viewing and applying to Federal funding opportunities, viewing and signing award documents, and submitting claims and progress reports, among other actions.
- **eAuthentication:** A customer registration and identity verification system that allows external users to access USDA web portals, such as ezFedGrants, by logging-in to these portals with their eAuthentication username and password.

You Will Need

To register for an account, you will need:

- A valid email address
- Your residential/street address as printed on one of the following valid, government-issued photo IDs:
  - A driver's license issued by a US state or a province of Canada.
  - A photo ID card issued by a US state or a province of Canada.
  - A United States Military or United States Federal Government PIV/CAC (Smart) identification card.
  - A valid passport issued by any country listed on the US Department of State website.

After registering for an account, you must verify your identity **either** in person (Physical Identity Verification) **or** online (Digital Identity Verification). The requirements for each method are as follows:

- **In-Person Identity Verification:** You must have one of the abovementioned photo IDs **and** the address on that ID **must match** the address you use to register your account.
- **Online Identity Verification (OIV):** You must have a US Social Security Number (SSN) **and** sufficient US-based background information for the identity verification service to generate a questionnaire. You will not be able to determine if you meet the second requirement until you initiate the DIV process; therefore, please ensure that you meet the Physical Identity Verification requirement (above) as a precaution.

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Data Note

The screenshots provided with these instructions are a representative sample for the purpose of training, which contain sample data and may not depict the entire screen.

In addition, these instructions focus on the **minimum system requirements** for the above-described procedure(s). You may need to complete additional fields or provide additional information not specifically described in this document.

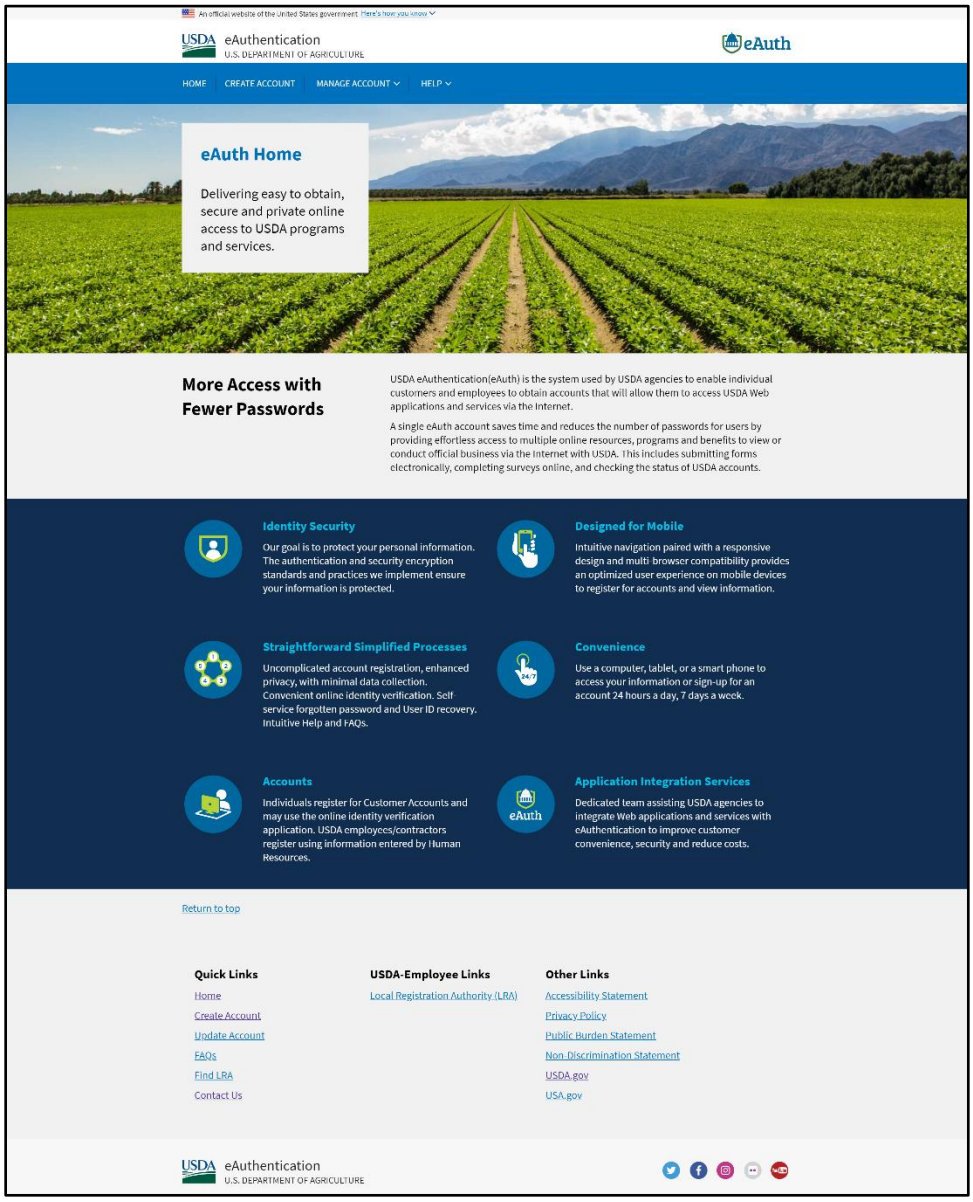
Account Registration

First, you must register for an eAuthentication Account. This involves providing your basic details (name, address, contact information), creating a username and password, and activating your new account.

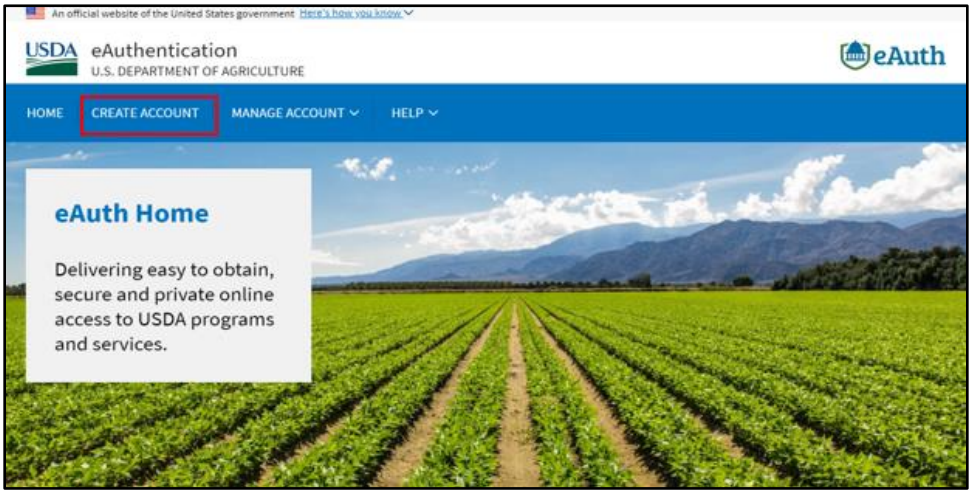
After registering for an account, you must verify your identity to complete the eAuthentication Account Creation process.

Enter User Details & Security Questions

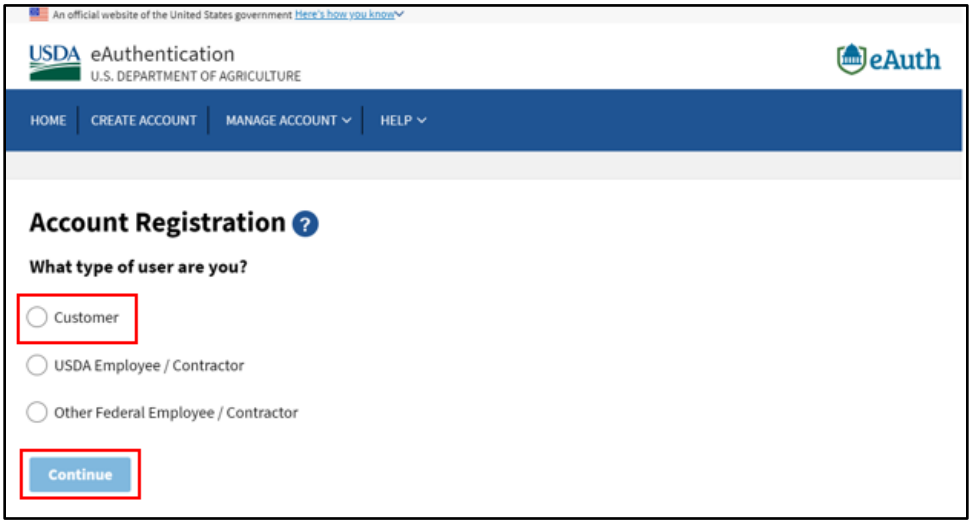
1. Go to the **USDA eAuthentication Home** page at https://www.eauth.usda.gov/home.



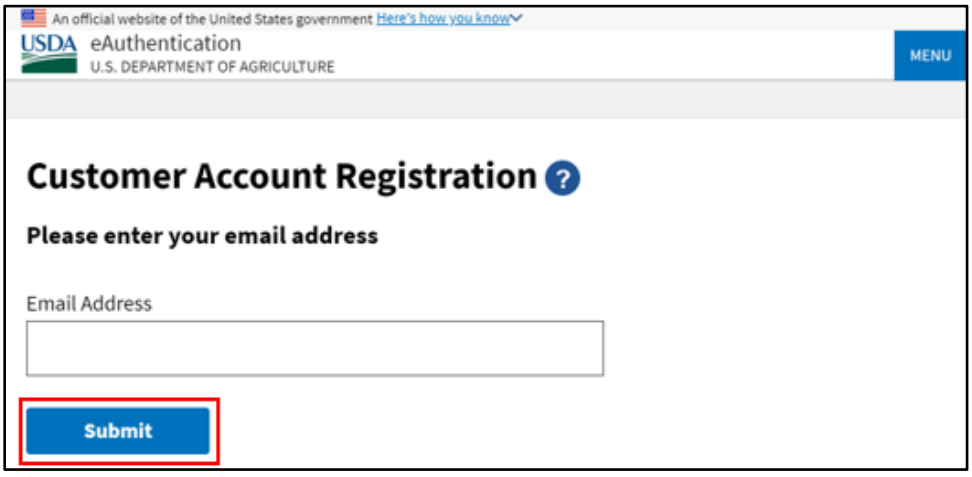
2. Click the **Create Account** link.



3. On the **Account Registration** screen, choose **Customer** for your user type and click **Continue**.



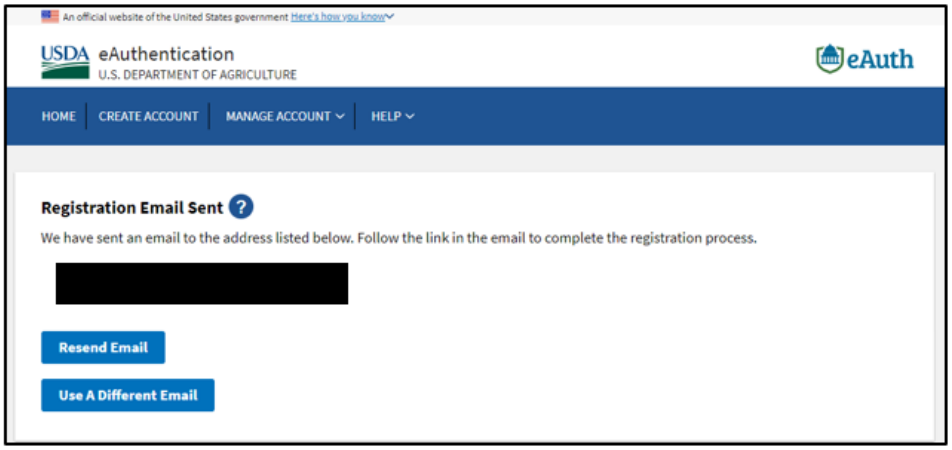
4. On the **Customer Account Registration** screen, enter your email address. When complete, click **Submit**.



Please ensure your information is correct as incorrect details may prevent you from activating your account and/or verifying your identity.

Activate Account

1. You should now see the **Registration Email Sent** screen, which explains that you should soon receive an email with instructions for completing the registration process. If you do not receive the email, you can select the option to **Resend Email** or to **Use A Different Email**.

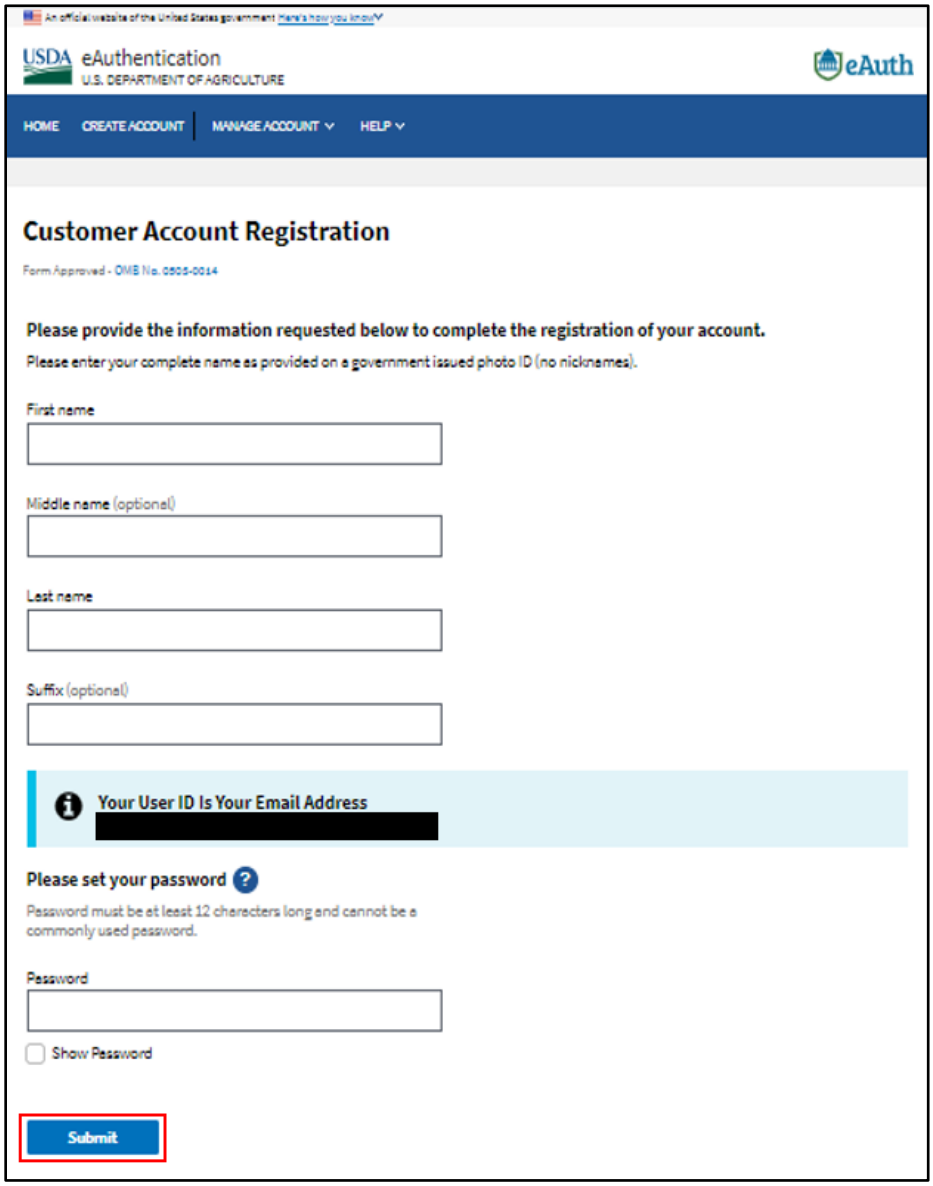


Note: The confirmation email link will expire in 30 minutes from the time it was generated. If the link expires, you will need to start the account registration process over.

2. When you receive the confirmation email, follow the instructions provided in the email to activate your eAuthentication Account.

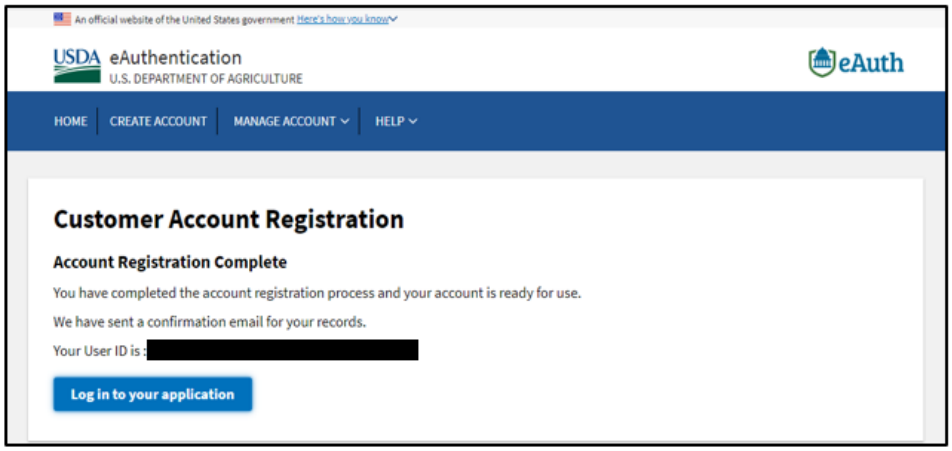
The confirmation email will ask you to **Continue Registration**. If your first name and/or last name **do not** match your government-issued photo ID, you **will not** be able to verify your identity and you will need to create a new eAuthentication Account.

3. On the Customer Account Registration, complete all fields and press **Submit**.



Please ensure your information is correct as incorrect details may prevent you from activating your account and/or verifying your identity. When creating your password, please follow the provided instructions of the password being at least 12 characters long and not commonly used, ex: Welcome12345.

4. You should now see the **Customer Account Registration – Account Registration Complete** screen, which explains that you have completed the account registration process and your account is ready for use. You will receive a confirmation email for your records.



This is not the end of the process. You must still verify your identity (next section of this document) before you can use your eAuthentication Account to access ezFedGrants

Identity Verification

After registering and activating your account, you must verify your identity to complete the account creation process and use your eAuthentication Account, with a verified identity, to access ezFedGrants. You can verify your identity online **OR** in person by visiting a Local Registration Authority (LRA). You only need to complete one of the identity verification options, but **not all users are eligible for online identity verification**.

Online Identity Verification (OIV) occurs online and requires you to correctly answer a series of identity/background questions about yourself. If you are unable to answer enough questions correctly, you do not meet the Online Identity Verification requirements (described at the beginning of this document), or you do not feel comfortable using the Online Identity Verification tool, **you must use the In-Person Identity Verification option**.

In-Person Identity Verification requires you to visit a USDA Service Center and present your government-issued photo ID to a Local Registration Authority (LRA). The address on the photo ID you use to verify your identity **must** match the address you used when you registered your account.

Instructions for both identity verification methods are provided below.

Online Identity Verification

Online Identity Verification requires you to correctly answer a series of questions about your background and personal identity, such as previous addresses, relatives' names, former names, schools you attended, etc.

The **Online Identity Verification** quiz service is provided by Experian. You may be familiar with Experian as a provider of credit reports and credit scores, however: ***Online Identity Verification DOES NOT run a credit check.*** Information from Experian databases is **temporarily** used to create the quiz questions. This information may be credit-related, therefore, being familiar with the information on your credit report may assist in completing the quiz. The information **is not** retained, and the USDA **does not** have access to your credit information.

If you are unable to pass the quiz, uncomfortable with using the OIV tool, or do not have enough background/identity information for a quiz to be generated, **you must verify your identity in person** by vising a Local Registration Authority (LRA). In this case, please refer to the **In-Person Identity Verification** instructions.

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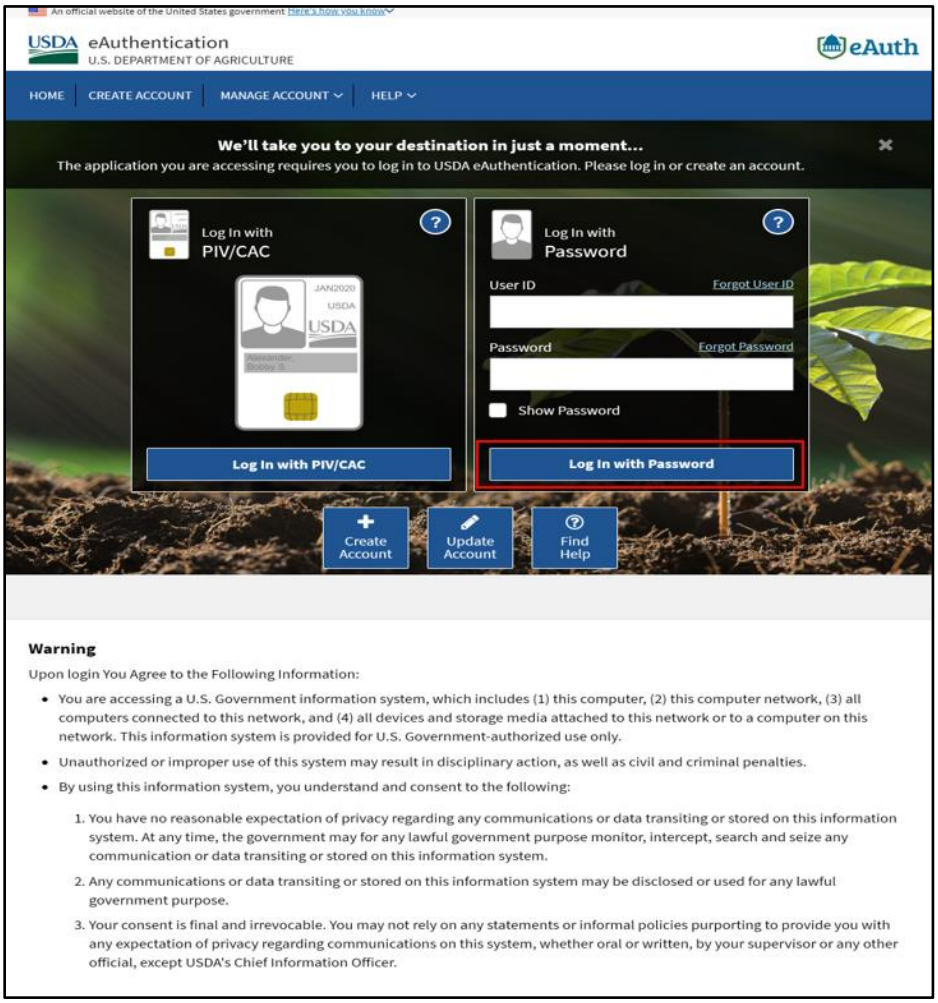
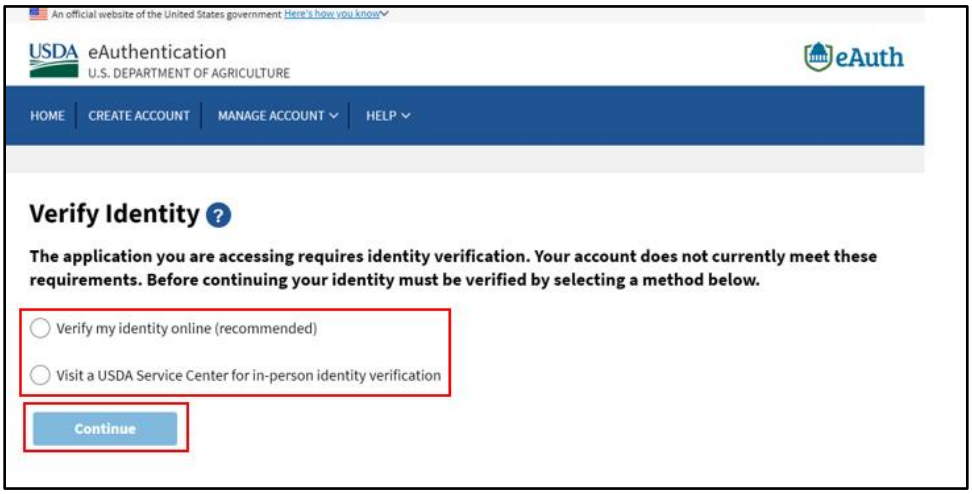
1. Once you have activated your USDA eAuthentication Account, visit the ezFedGrants website at https://grants.fms.usda.gov. You should automatically be redirected to the eAuthentication login page.

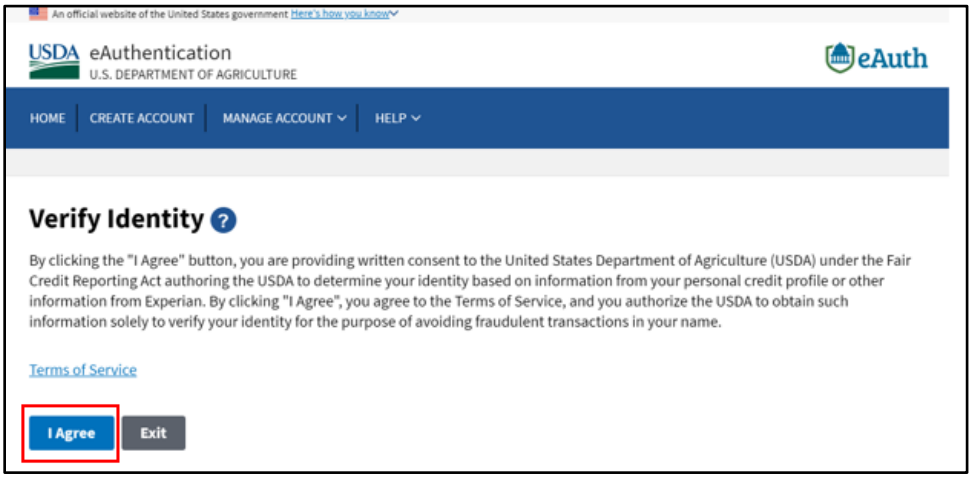


2. Enter your newly created credentials and click **Log in with Password**.

3. The Verify Identity page will be displayed. Select **Verify my identity online** or **Visit a USDA Service Center for in-person identity verification** and click **Continue**.



4. Upon selecting the **Verify my identity online (recommended)** option, you must press **I Agree** to the Terms of Service. Clicking Exit will opt you out of the online process. Selecting the Terms of Service link will allow you to view the entire Terms of Service.

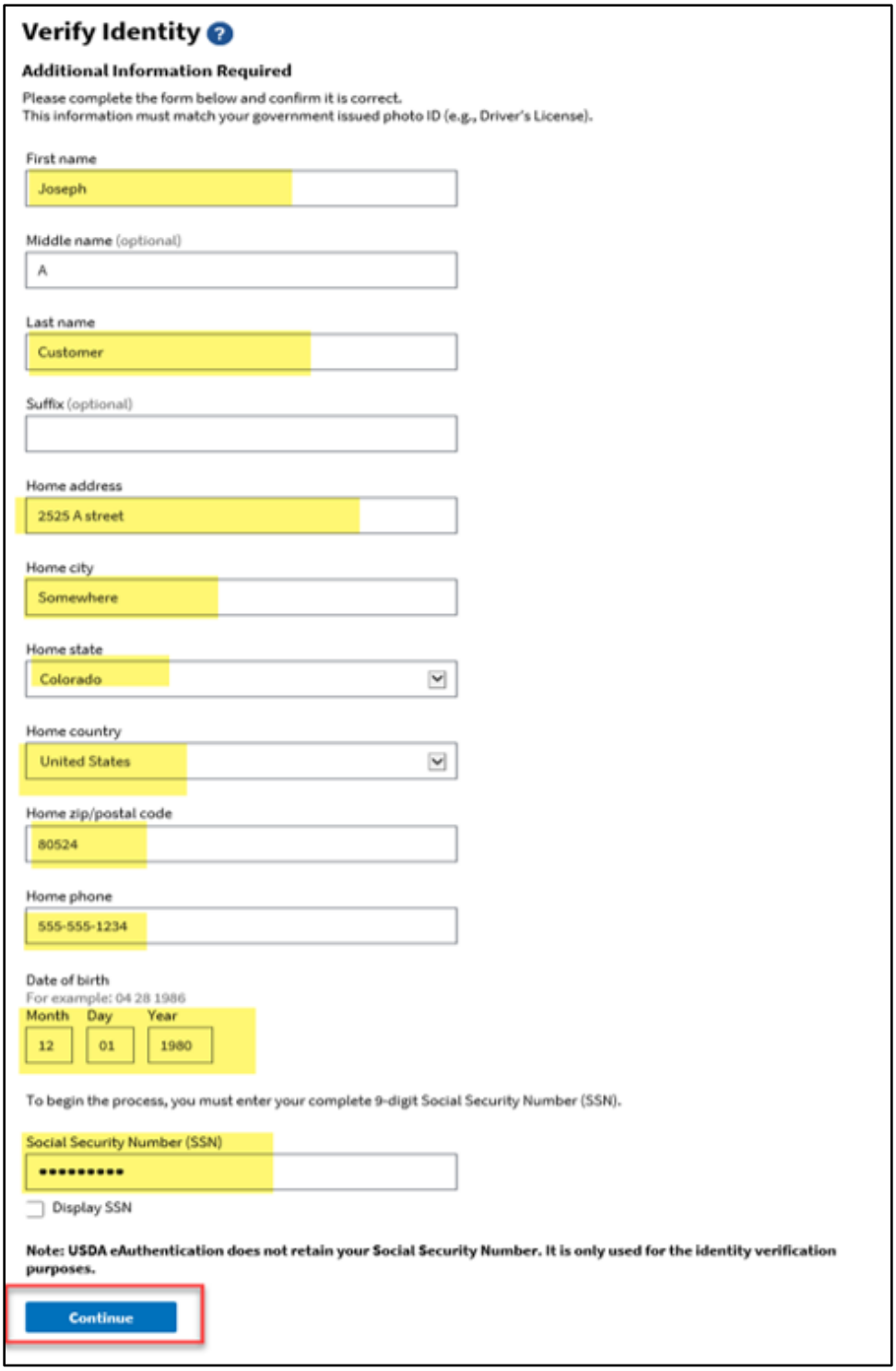


If you do not feel comfortable using the Online Identity Verification Process, you must verify your identity in person by visiting an LRA. Instructions are provided in the **In-Person Identity Verification** section of this document.

As explained previously at the beginning of the Identity Verification section of this document:

*The OIV service **DOES NOT** run a credit report or affect your credit score. Information from your credit history is used to generate the questions, but this information **IS NOT** retained by the USDA. Use of the OIV tool **DOES NOT** impact your credit score or credit eligibility.*

5. On the next Verify Identity screen, complete the account profile form and click **Continue**.



Note: Both your date of birth and social security number is required. If you have opted to visit a Local Registration Authority, the social security number field will not be displayed. Instead, you will be redirected to the LRA locator website when clicking Continue.

Please ensure you have entered your SSN correctly.

6. After successfully submitting your completed form, you'll need to complete the Identity Verification Quiz. If enough data is found for you in Experian, you will be presented with 5 identity verification quiz questions.

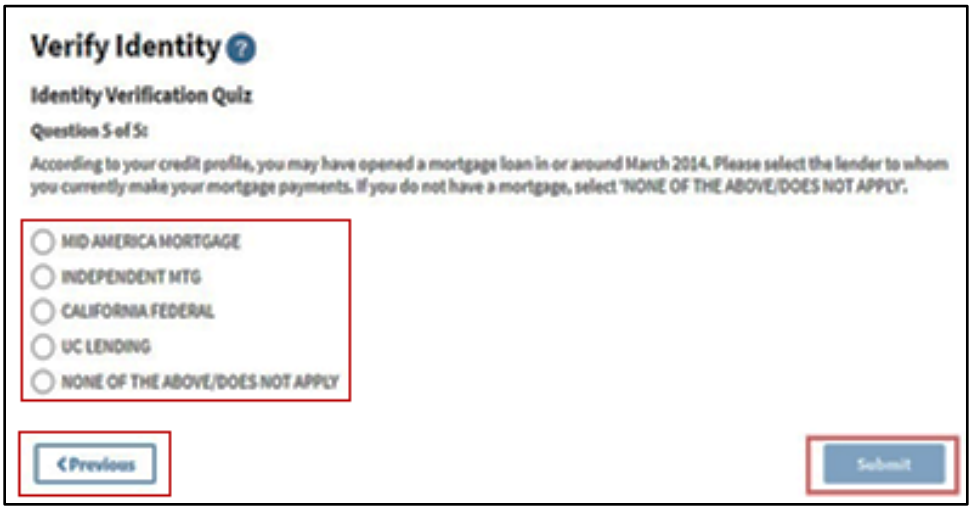
   Each question is on a single page and you do have the option to return to the previous page.

   You must provide answers to all 5 questions.

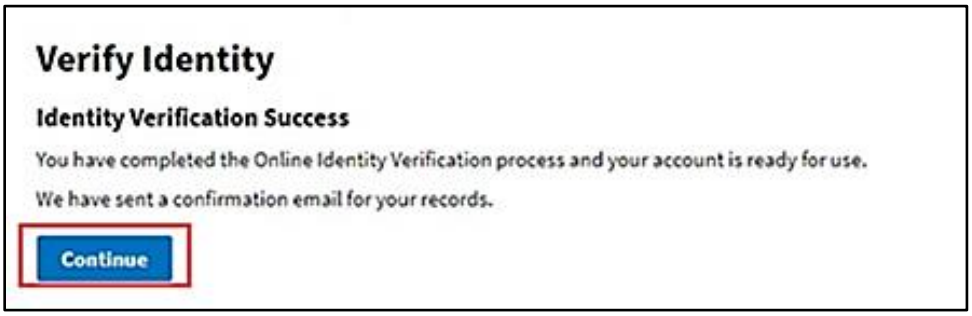
   Note: The questions are generated from openly-reported credit and background information stored in Experian databases. This is the same information you would find on your credit report. Providing your SSN on the previous screen prompts the Experian OIV service to generate a quiz based on information tied to your SSN.

   *As stated previously, the Online Identity Verification service **DOES NOT** run a credit report or affect your credit score.*

7. After answering all 5 questions, click the **Submit** button at the bottom of the **Question 5 of 5 - Verify Identity** screen to submit your quiz responses.



8. If you provided enough correct responses to pass the quiz, the **Identity Verification Success** screen will appear. Your online verified identity account will be ready for use and you will receive a confirmation email. After clicking **Continue,** you will be taken back to the ezFedGrants application.



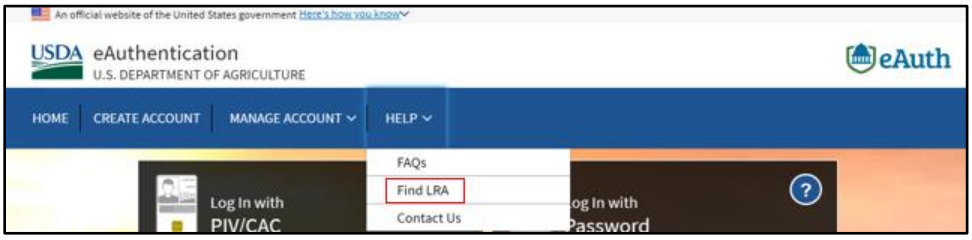
If you are not able to pass the quiz on the second attempt, you must verify your identity in person by visiting a Local Registration Authority (LRA). Please refer to the **In-Person Identity Verification** instructions below.

In-Person Identity Verification

If you are unable to answer enough questions correctly, you do not meet the Online Identity Verification requirements (described at the beginning of this document), or you do not feel comfortable using the OIV tool, you must use the In-Person Identity Verification option.

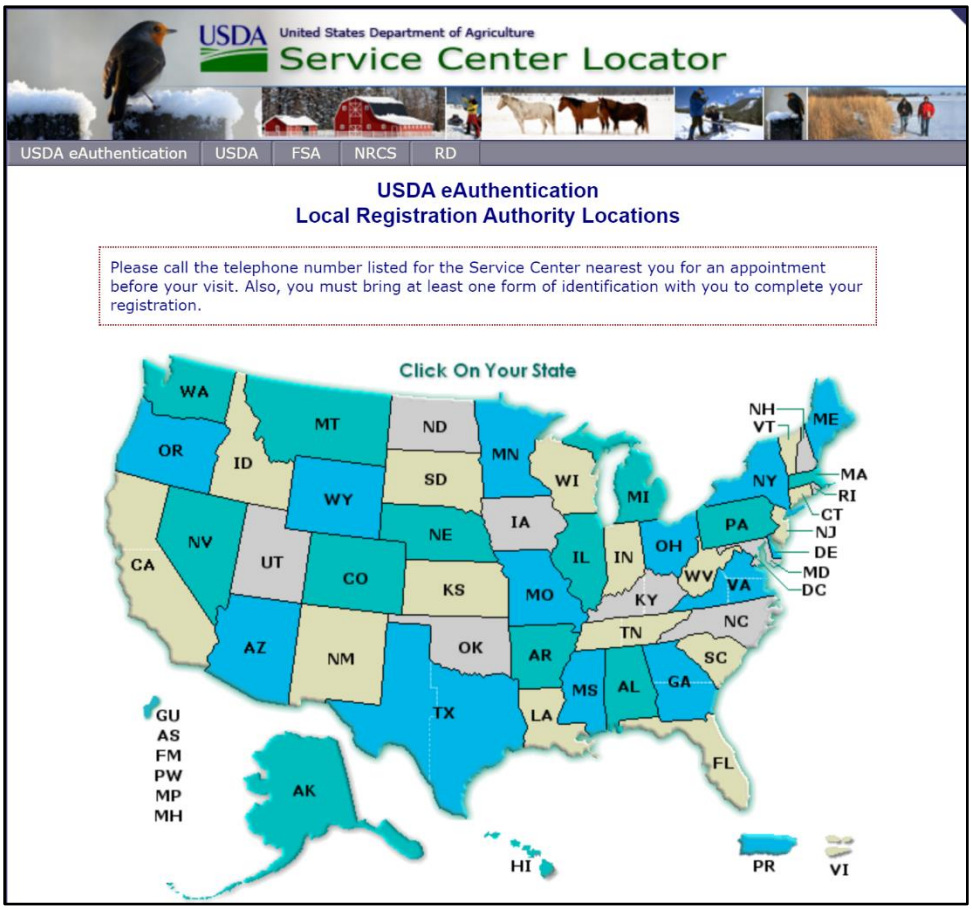
In-Person Identity Verification requires you to visit a USDA Service Center and present your government-issued photo ID to a Local Registration Authority (LRA). The address on the photo ID you use to verify your identity **must** match the address you used when you registered your account.

1. To begin the in-person identity verification process, access the **USDA eAuthentication Home page,** https://www.eauth.usda.gov/home, and click the **Find an LRA** link at the top of the screen.



2. On the **USDA Service Center Locator** site, click the two-letter ID of the US state or territory you are in or a nearby state/territory.

   For example, if you are in Canada or near the border of two or more states, you may wish to check for LRAs in nearby states that may be physically closer than the LRA(s) in your home state/country.



Note: If you are not located in or near a US state or territory, you should be able to verify your identity at a United States embassy or consulate.

3. A list of all LRAs/Service Centers in the selected state will appear. Once you have determined which Service Center you wish to visit, call the given phone number to make an appointment.

4. On the day of your appointment, bring at least one valid government-issued photo ID (as described at the beginning of this document) and the email address you used to register your account.

   The address on your photo ID **must** match the address you used when registering for your verified eAuthentication account.

5. You will receive a confirmation email once the LRA has verified your identity and your verified eAuthentication Account has been fully activated. You can now use your eAuthentication Account to access ezFedGrants.

See Also

Job Aids

- Using ezFedGrants – The Basics Job Aid
- Submit ezFedGrants Access Request Job Aid
- ezFedGrants External User Onboarding Quick Reference
- Land Grant Colleges & Universities Proximity to LRA Reference Table

FAQS

- Introduction to ezFedGrants FAQs
- Onboarding and Accessing ezFedGrants FAQs

Need Help?

For assistance with eAuthentication Account creation, please contact the eAuthentication Help Desk at 1-800-457-3642 (Option 1) or eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov. This information can also be found on the eAuthentication website Contact Us page (filter by OCIO).

For ezFedGrants-related questions, please contact the ezFedGrants Help Desk at ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov.

Version Control

Name	Date	Changes Made
Courtney Roberson	January 2020	**Content:** • Removed all references to Level 1 & Level 2 accounts • Updated all screenshots to reflect eAuthentication Next Generation account registration • Updated all links to point towards eAuthentication Next Generation URLs • Removed bullet point for job aid providing instructions for a locked eAuthentication account
April Murphy	August 2019	**Substantial revisions to format and some improvements to content.** Previous revisions documented below refer to prior format/content and may not align with current content.
April Murphy	February - May 2017	**Content:** • Removed confusing references to level 1 & level 2 accounts in document introduction and Account Creation steps 7 & 8. • Clarified prerequisites (particularly with respect to identity verification) • Clarified & reorganized Identity Verification section & subsection introductory paragraphs. • Added miscellaneous clarifications to Account Creation steps 3 & 7 and DIV steps 4 & 5. • New screenshot and text for Account Creation step 9 • Explained/Clarified source of questions for DIV questionnaire. **Formatting:** • Added table of contents • Corrected use of heading styles for Section 508 compliance • Updated document title, header, and footer. • Added Version Control table • Split procedure into Account Creation and Identity Verification sections. Split Identity Verification further into Digital and Physical subsections.
April Murphy	December 2016	Initial document created