


# BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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## *FY 2010 Request for Applications*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 6, 2010**

 **U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE;  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.311.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on April 6, 2010 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA announces the availability of funds and requests applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for fiscal year (FY) 2010. The BFRDP provides resources to support the development of educational outreach curricula, workshops, educational teams, training, and technical assistance programs to assist beginning farmers and ranchers (includes beginning forest landowners, hereafter) in the United States and its territories with entering, establishing, building and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. The estimated amount available for support of this program in FY 2010 is \$18,240,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for BFRDP projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a BFRDP award. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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**PLEASE READ**

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1. The establishment of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (Institute) at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is mandated in section 251(f) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971(f)) as added by section 7511(a)(4) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). All programs and authorities delegated to CSREES have transferred to the Institute on October 1, 2009.
2. In FY 2010, the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse project type will not be offered. Applications are solicited for the following project types: (i) Standard Grants; and (ii) Educational Enhancement Teams. In FY 2010, a limited number of Educational Enhancement Team grants will be awarded.
3. In FY 2010, a new project type called Development Grants are made available to assist organizations: (i) that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (or the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System); (ii) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities with the goal of enhancing beginning farmer and rancher programs; and (iii) with future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

In FY 2010, Standard BFRDP Project applications that are considered meritorious, but rank below the funding line during the peer review process will be considered for a Development Grant. Please note the additional eligibility requirements under Project Types in Part II.C. **Applicants may not apply directly for Development Grants.** In FY 2010, a limited number of Development Grants will be awarded. Applicants should indicate in the first line of the abstract whether the organization wants the application to be also considered for a Development Grants.

4. Applicants are discouraged from submitting projects with similar objectives to those currently funded by other programs at NIFA. Such submissions should be disclosed in the Current and Pending Support Form. If projects are recommended for funding, changes in the budget and project objectives will be required before the projects can be funded.
5. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit at Colleges and Universities offering 4-year degree programs are discouraged.
6. As required by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), priority will continue to be given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. Partnerships

should be clearly identified in the abstract, management plans, supporting letters and reflected in the budget. **Applications with a minimum of 25% of the budget allocated to partner organizations will be given priority consideration for funding.**

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

Section 7405(c) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 3319f(c)), as amended by section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), requires the Secretary to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of providing education, outreach, training and technical assistance to benefit beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States, including programs and services (as appropriate) relating to:

- (a) Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
- (b) Resources and referral;
- (c) Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in understanding how to acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
- (d) Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies;
- (e) Entrepreneurship and business training;
- (f) Model land leasing contracts;
- (g) Financial management training;
- (h) Whole farm planning;
- (i) Conservation assistance;
- (j) Risk management education;
- (k) Diversification and marketing strategies;
- (l) Curriculum development;
- (m) Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization;
- (n) Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and range management;
- (o) The acquisition and management of agricultural credit;
- (p) Environmental compliance;
- (q) Information processing; and
- (r) Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

Section 7405(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(d)) requires the Secretary to establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams to develop curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States.

Section 7405(e) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(e)) requires the Secretary to establish an online clearinghouse that makes available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

In FY 2009, the Clearinghouse project was competed and awarded and will be continued in FY 2010.

To develop the BFRDP and the first RFA in FY 2009, a stakeholder input meeting was held on October 27, 2008. For information regarding the stakeholder meeting, please visit

[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag\\_systems/in\\_focus/smallfarm\\_if\\_bfrcgp.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/smallfarm_if_bfrcgp.html). Stakeholder comments can be found on [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). This stakeholder input was considered and used in the development of the FY 2009 RFA. Additional stakeholder input was received by emails, as well comments during professional meetings and from webinars held in October 2009. The proceedings of the webinars were recorded and are available at: [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag\\_systems/in\\_focus/beginning\\_farmers\\_ranchers\\_stakeholder.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/beginning_farmers_ranchers_stakeholder.html). This additional stakeholder input was used to develop the FY 2010 RFA. The stakeholder comments received on the interim rule for the BFRDP (at subpart J to 7 CFR 3430) also were considered in the development of this RFA and are available at [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

## **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The primary goal of BFRDP is to enhance food security by providing beginning farmer and rancher producers and their families in the U.S., as appropriate, with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, and enhance their sustainability. Other goals include enhanced sustainability of resources and inputs for biofuel production.

**Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority.**

The expected short-term (five year) outcomes of BFRDP are the training and development of more than 6,000 beginning farmers and ranchers through the establishment of a one-stop electronic clearinghouse for all beginning farmer and rancher training materials and programs; the development of seamless beginning farmer and rancher education curricula and development programs that addresses the different needs of different audiences; and recruitment and training of prospective beginning farmers and ranchers to address the various legislative and national priorities.

**Target Audience:** Not less than 25% of the program funds for standard BFRDP projects each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Please note that all the applications do not need to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.

For your application to be considered under this category, you must

1. Identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s);
2. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be recruited and provided with culturally appropriate training, education, outreach and/or mentoring; and
3. Provide evidence of strong track record of having previously served the needs of the target audience.

## **Priority Topics for FY 2010:**

### Priority Topics for Standard BFRDP Projects

Applicants should carefully consider the topics which will be encompassed within the project activities of their application. Applicants shall clearly identify in their application the subject topics below (I through V). To achieve the program goals, standard BFRDP projects will be expected to develop and disseminate educational curricula and training materials on one or more of the following 25 topics to beginning farmers and ranchers in rural and peri-urban areas, including prospective commercial farmers in urban areas:

#### **I. Production and management strategies to enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers.**

1. Mentoring, apprenticeship, and internship activities;
2. Curriculum development;
3. Whole farm planning;
4. Conservation assistance (conservation planning, not funding of conservation projects);
5. Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and rangeland management;
6. Specific types of practices, (i.e., sustainable, organic, Best Management Practices, Integrated Pest Management); and
7. Farm safety.

#### **II. Business management and decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers.**

8. Information processing;
9. Resources and referrals (understanding asset based farming opportunities available, including external resources such as Farm Service Agency loan programs, Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation programs, and other appropriate private and/or public resources focused on beginning farmers and ranchers);
10. Entrepreneurship and business training;
11. Financial management training, including assessment and training for establishing Individual Development Accounts (grant funds can not be used to match IDA funds or provide micro loans);
12. Tax management, including record keeping for taxes and tax form preparation;
13. Risk management education; and
14. The acquisition and management of agricultural credit.

#### **III. Marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers.**

15. Diversification and marketing strategies; and
16. Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization (production and/or marketing).

#### **IV. Legal strategies that assist beginning farmers with acquisition and transfer.**

17. Basic Agricultural Law;
18. Technical assistance for beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers (excluding financial payments);
19. Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies, including training for absentee landowners to bring their land into production;
20. Environmental compliance (understanding rules and regulations); and

21. Development of model land leasing contracts (including alternative land acquisition contracts).

**V. Other Priority Topics to enhance competitiveness and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers for the next generation.**

22. Climate change, including how agriculture affects and is affected by it and adoption of new technology and production practices;
23. Development and use of alternative energy and energy conservation practices, especially crops for sustainable bioenergy production;
24. Enhance access and adoption of new technologies for crops and livestock production, processing and marketing practices to enhance food security; and
25. Production, processing and marketing of safe and nutritious food.

Priorities for Educational Enhancement Teams

To achieve the program goals, Educational Enhancement Team proposals will be expected to demonstrate the ability to provide all of the following:

**I. Assess and Identify Gaps in the Education, Training and Mentoring of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**

- Establish educational teams that encompass broad geographic, product and/or other appropriate scale. Educational teams should include, if possible, specialists (including Extension, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Community-based Organization (CBO) and State Government employees and other eligible partners) with knowledge and expertise in programs serving beginning farmers or ranchers. The team should, if possible, use the expertise of officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture (**excluding NIFA**) with direct experience in programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that may be taught as part of the curriculum for the program or workshop. Employees of other federal agencies may also be appropriate for inclusion on Educational Enhancement Teams.
- Collect and synthesize information of the available beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula (including but not exclusive of USDA funded) and different audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity; including access to and suitability of programs to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. Identify gaps in the existing education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula to address the needs of the different audiences.
- Evaluate the beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring programs (including but not exclusively USDA funded) to identify what is and what is not successful regarding programs and services offered. Depending on the project, success can be measured by different methods, including numbers of participants who completed training, began to farm, continued to farm, adopted different production, marketing and/or business practices, etc. Incorporate these findings to guide curriculum and program development in future years through special projects.

## **II. Assist the Development of Seamless Beginning Farmer and Rancher Training Programs by Collaborating with Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Providers**

- Develop curriculum and train-the-trainer programs to address the gaps in the existing education, training, outreach and mentoring programs. The Educational Enhancement Teams should ensure that the new curriculum includes modules designed for specific audiences of beginning farmers or ranchers based on their crop (or potential crops) or regional diversity.
- Support special projects to incorporate the lessons learned from beginning farmer and rancher program evaluation and to address the gaps identified in the curriculum evaluation.
- Support special projects for developing training, coordination, and communication networks, to enhance long term impacts of BFRDP, as may be appropriate and necessary.
- Facilitate communication with all the beginning farmer and rancher training, education, mentoring and outreach programs and the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about the available beginning farmer and rancher education curricula and training materials and programs across the country.
- As appropriate, encourage collaboration and coordination among Standard BFRDP Project grantees to enhance impacts of the program.
- Educational Enhancement Teams should identify the Project Director (PD) (or one of the Co-PDs) who must serve on a Team to assist the development and functioning of the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse. The Team may require monthly conference calls and one in-person meeting to implement the activities of the Clearinghouse and the submitted budget should reflect these activities.

## **III. Build Capacity of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers to be Self Sustaining.**

- Assist any interested stakeholders in accessing beginning farmer and rancher training, education, outreach and mentoring programs and other opportunities to access grants, loans and other services to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers. Ensure appropriate broad community communication concerning the existence of such services through the Educational Enhancement teams.
- Conduct train-the-trainer meetings and workshops, including online education, to enhance access to all federal and state agency programs and funding for beginning farmers and ranchers, including CBOs, NGOs and others desiring grantsmanship training.
- Enhance success for America's young and beginning agricultural producers, including support for the National Young Farmers Education Association National Forum and other youth programs (e.g., K-12) to identify issues and develop innovative programs.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or make a specific number of awards. For FY 2010, \$18,240,000 is available to fund the Educational Enhancement Teams and Standard BFRDP grants.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method\\_of\\_payment.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html).

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2010, applications may be submitted to the BFRDP as one of the following:

(1) **New application**. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) **Resubmitted application**. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the BFRDP, but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (use R&R Other Project Information. See Part IV, B.3, Field 12, Response to Previous Review). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

### **C. Project Types**

Applications will be accepted for one of two project types: (i) Standard BFRDP Projects; and (ii) Educational Enhancement Teams Projects.

For FY 2010, grants will be available for support of Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Teams Projects. For Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Projects Proposals, applicants must not request more than \$250,000 per year for a maximum grant period of three years. Requests exceeding these budgetary guidelines will be excluded from NIFA review and the applicant will be notified of such action.

#### **(i) Standard BFRDP Projects:**

##### **(a) Standard Grants**

The long-term goals of the Standard BFRDP projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming, ranching and forestry opportunities. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit at Colleges and Universities offering four-year degree programs are discouraged. Priority topics are: (I) production and management strategies that enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers; (II) business management and

decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers; (III) marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers; and (IV) legal strategies that assist beginning farmers and ranchers with farm transfer and acquisition.

### **(b) Development Grants**

Development Grants are designed to assist organizations: (i) that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture; (ii) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities with the goal of enhancing beginning farmer and rancher programs; and (iii) with future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

In FY 2010, Standard BFRDP Project application that is considered meritorious, but ranks below the funding line during the peer review process will be considered for a Development Grant.

**Applicants may not apply directly for Development Grants.** In FY 2010, a limited number of Development Grants will be awarded. Applicants should indicate in the first line of the abstract whether the organization wants the application to be also considered for a Development Grant and a letter from their Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) of the applicant institution stating that the organization has never received any competitive awards from NIFA.

### **(ii) Educational Enhancement Teams:**

The long-term goals of the Educational Enhancement Teams projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs; and develop train-the-trainer kinds of projects to address these gaps. The Educational Enhancement Teams will periodically collect and analyze information on the impacts of the beginning farmer and rancher programs on specific audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity; including access and suitability of programs to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. The Team also may support special projects for training, coordination, and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged and/or underserved customers and other clientele groups with particular beginning farmer and rancher education and training needs, as may be appropriate and necessary. To maintain regional balance, priority will be given to applications serving beginning farmer and rancher audiences not served by previously funded Educational Enhancement Projects. The lead organizations for Educational Enhancement Teams funded in FY 2009 are located in Northeast and North Central regions, see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmerandrancher.cfm> for complete list of awards.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State cooperative extension services; Federal, State, or tribal agencies; community based organizations and nongovernmental organizations; junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; private for-profit organizations; and other appropriate partners. Inclusion of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged. Individuals are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

NIFA, pursuant to the authorizing legislation for the BFRDP, requires that in order to receive any awards under this program, the recipient must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the award. The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute and must be secured prior to award.

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see [http://www.grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp). To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions,**” enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-BFR-002918** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

**If assistance is needed to access the application package** (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://www.grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

## **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

**Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.**

**If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.**

### **1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**Field 5. Legal Name** – Enter the legal name of the organization to which the award should be made.

**Person to be contacted on matters involving this application** – Enter the information for the contact person related to this application preferred by the institution.

**Field 11. Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project** – The title should be a brief (**140-character-maximum including spaces**), clear, and concise description of the proposed project.

**Field 12. Proposed Project** – For the start date of the project, select September 1, 2010. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

**Field 17. Complete Certification** – By submitting the application, the applicant has certified to all applicable assurances and certifications. **Please read the Certifications before submitting the application.**

**Field 20. Pre-application** – Do not fill out this portion of the form. The BFRDP is not accepting pre-applications in FY 2010.

### **2. R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

(a) For the purpose of this RFA, questions in Field 4 pertain to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Under 7 CFR Part 3407 (NIFA's implementing regulations of NEPA), NIFA must determine whether the proposed activity requires the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, or whether such activity can be excluded from this requirement on the basis of several categories. Note that even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may or may not fall within a categorical exclusion, NIFA may determine that an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is necessary for a proposed project should substantial controversy on environmental grounds exist or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have significant environmental effect. **It is requested that Field 4 be completed in the following manner.**

*Field 4a.* – Check yes or no.

*Field 4b.* *If yes, please explain* – Type “See Field 4d below.”

*Field 4c.* *If this project has actual or potential impact on the environment, has an exemption been authorized or an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) been performed?*

The applicant should review the categorical exclusions in the table on the next page and determine if the proposed project falls within one or more of the exclusions.

Check “Yes” if one of the categorical exclusion listed in the table on the next page applies. Also, check yes if an EA or EIS has been performed. Attach a copy of the EA or EIS, if performed, in Field 12. Other Attachments.

Check “No” if the proposed activity does not fall into one of the categorical exclusions listed in the table below OR if an EA or EIS has not been performed. If “No” is checked, attach an explanation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed activity in Field 12. Other Attachments. This may require completion of an EA or EIS.

*Field 4d.* If applicable, enter the appropriate Exclusion Code in Field 4d. If an EA or EIS file is attached in “Field 12. Other Attachments,” enter “Please see attached.”

## USDA NIFA NEPA Exclusion Codes Table

Exclusion Code	Description
<i>Department of Agriculture Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 1b.3 and restated at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(1)(i) through (vii))</i>	
(a)(1)(i)	Policy development, planning, and implementation which are related to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes, or similar administrative functions
(a)(1)(ii)	Activities that deal solely with the functions of programs, such as program budget proposals, disbursement, and transfer or reprogramming of funds
(a)(1)(iii)	Inventories, research activities, and studies such as resource inventories and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity
(a)(1)(iv)	Educational and informational programs and activities
(a)(1)(v)	Civil and criminal law enforcement and investigative activities
(a)(1)(vi)	Activities that are advisory and consultative to other agencies and public and private entities, such as legal counseling and representation
(a)(1)(vii)	Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad
<i>NIFA Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(2)(i) through (ii))</i>	
The following categories of research programs or projects of limited size and magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment:	
(a)(2)(i)(A)	Research conducted within any laboratory, greenhouse, or other contained facility where research practices and safeguards prevent environmental impacts
(a)(2)(i)(B)	Surveys, inventories, and similar studies that have limited context and minimal intensity in terms of changes in the environment
(a)(2)(i)(C)	Testing outside the laboratory, such as in small isolated field plots, which involves the routine use of familiar chemicals or biological materials
(a)(2)(ii)	Routine renovation, rehabilitation, or revitalization of physical facilities, including the acquisition and installation of equipment, where such activity is limited in scope and intensity

(b) Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract – (limited to **250 words**) **PDF Attachment**. The Project Summary should include the following:

- i) Title of the project
- ii) Name of the project director and the applicant institution;
- iii) Name of co-project directors, associated partner/collaborating institutions, and the percentage of the budget allocated to each partner/collaborating institution;
- iv) Request for consideration for a Development Grant;
- v) The first line of the abstract must indicate whether the application can be considered for a Development grant.
- vi) The second line of the abstract must indicate which specific Project Type (see II, C);

- vi) Type of Application (New or Resubmitted);
- vii) For Standard BFRDP Projects identify the specific topic(s) the proposed project addresses (see Part I, B); and
- viii) For Educational Enhancement Team Projects identify the region, geography, crop, commodity, race, gender, age, or other characteristic. To be considered for the 25% of the program funds allocated to address the needs of the limited resource or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; or immigrant or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers and ranchers, please identify the target audience and the percentage of the budget allocated to address the needs of this target audience. Indicate any prior experience the applicant has in addressing the needs of any beginning farmers and ranchers.

Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’. An applicant’s failure to provide the requested information in the Project Summary may result in NIFA failing to review or, even though an application may be reviewed, may preclude NIFA from making an award. A suggested template for the Project Summary/Abstract can be found at: [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/project\\_summary.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc).

(c) Field 8. Project Narrative – **PDF Attachment. 12-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Project Narrative’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Narrative’. This page limitation applies regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will not be reviewed. The page limit has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

**Project Narrative must include all of the following in the order given below:**

**(1) Introduction.** The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (the number of small, medium and large farms), critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience. If the project type is Educational Enhancement Projects, present the rationale for the geographic, product or other appropriate focus of the team and its composition. All works cited should be referenced (see item (d) Bibliography & Reference Cited of this section).

**(2) Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the objectives and expected outcomes of the project in relation to the needs identified in the introduction. Explain the specific relationship of the project’s objectives to the selected Project Type and its topic(s); and discuss the potential long-range outcomes of the project on the sustainability of U.S. beginning farmers and ranchers. Provide numbers of additional beginning farmers and ranchers served, the value of their enterprise, and the impacts on the structure of farming.

**(3) Approach.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed for each objective;

- A timeline of the proposed project, including activities and expected measurable outcomes for each year of the project (for Standard BFRDP grants, where appropriate, include estimates of numbers of beginning farmers served, how many beginning farmers and ranchers purchase land, enter into land leases, begin farming/ranching, change behavior to enter new markets, or other appropriate changes in behavior);
- How and where will the activities be provided and the appropriateness of the approach for the target audience;
- For Standard BFRDP Projects, how will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training;
- For Education Enhancement Team Projects, how will beginning farmer and rancher curriculums and programs be evaluated and help guide curriculum and program development in future years;
- How will the project be sustained beyond the life of the grant;
- How will the partnerships and collaborations be sustained beyond the life of the grant;
- Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project;
- Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures; and
- An evaluation plan, including means by which the outcomes will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted each year and at the end of the project.

**(4) Target Audience:** Not less than 25% of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Please note that all the applications do not need to address a target audience but can be open to all beginning farmers and ranchers. However, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify any prior experience the applicants have in addressing the needs of the target audience, the applicants ability to provide the appropriate (example, socio-economic and culturally sensitive) education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the target audience, and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s).

**(5) Personnel and Resources:** Describe in detail the key project personnel's experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project. Include preliminary data/information and clearly describe the impacts of the ongoing or recently completed activities. This information may include the years and locations of prior activities, number of training assistance or education activities previously carried out, number of participants and graduates from the program, success rate in completing the program, percentage of graduates who are still in farming, etc. In addition, explain how federal funds will be used to expand or enhance the current or previous projects.

(d) Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Bibliography & References Cited' in the document header and save file as 'Bibliography & References Cited'.

All work cited in the text, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must:

- Be complete;
- Include titles and all co-authors;
- Conform to an acceptable journal format; and
- Be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

See the example provided in Part III, 3.8. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Narrative.

(e) Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’ in the document header and save file as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’. If the project includes face-to-face training or other on-farm mentoring activities, describe in detail the facilities that are available to provide this training. List and explain all materials, facilities and instrumentation needed and available for the project. Provide a full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards

(f) Field 11. Equipment – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Equipment’ in the document header and save file as ‘Equipment’. Equipment purchases proposed for the project must be fully justified under this section. Other purchases (e.g., computers, laboratory materials, etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the ‘Materials and Supplies’ line item.

In addition to describing available equipment, items of nonexpendable equipment necessary to conduct and successfully complete the proposed project should be listed in Field C. of the R&R Budget and described in the Budget Justification (Field K of the R&R Budget).

(g) Field 12. Other Attachments

- **Logic Model – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ and save file as ‘Logic Model’. For guidance, see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html).
- **Management Plan – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Management Plan’ and save file as ‘Management Plan’. Because of the complexity of the BFRDP projects, it is important to have a clearly articulated management plan that describes the roles and functions of all partners (e.g., Project Directors and Co-Project Directors) and their organizations. Include time allocated by each partner for attainment of objectives; plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, outcome based reporting and communication; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance and partnerships. Relate the experience your organization and key staff have in designing and operating activities similar to those described in this application. In addition, evidence (e.g., letters of commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization) should be provided that the partners involved have agreed to abide by the Management Plan. Describe the

commitment of your organization and your partners to this project and how the project will be sustained beyond the period of the award. Include a strategy to enhance coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. An applicant's failure to provide the requested information in the Management Plan may preclude NIFA from making an award.

- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Collaborative Arrangements' in the document header and save file as 'Collaborative Arrangement'. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, i.e., who provide specialized expertise not available in the project team but are not involved in project management, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. An applicant's failure to provide the requested information may preclude NIFA from making an award.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'.

Appendices are strictly limited to two (2) examples of materials from previous projects similar to those proposed in this project.

- Reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals); and
- Preprints (only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals). Preprints attached in support of the application should be single-spaced. Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application.

Each Project Narrative is expected to be complete; however, additions to the Project Narrative (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

- **Matching Funds Documentation.** This program requires applicants to match Federal funds at an amount equal to at least 25% in the form of cash or in-kind contributions from non-Federal sources. Signed letters from each source of matching funds indicating the amount of funds committed to this project in the content of the letter are required, and should be attached in this Field #12. Recommended contents of these letters are described below in item #6, R&R Budget. A template for the verification of matching

funds is available at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/bfrdp.html> under “Related Information”.

- **Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment. 1-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘Response to Previous Review’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on **no more than one page**, titled, “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW.” If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- **Development Grants – PDF Attachment. 1-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Development Grants’ in the document header and save file as ‘Development Grants’. Letter from AR of the applicant institution stating that the organization has never received any competitive awards from NIFA (see Part II, C (b)).

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. A Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.

(1) Attach Biographical Sketch Field – **PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit (excluding publications listings) per PD, co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.** Title the attachment as ‘Biographical Sketch’ in the document header and save file as ‘Biographical Sketch – person name’.

(2) Attach Current and Pending Support Field – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Current and Pending Support’ in the document header and save file as ‘Current and Pending Support – person name’.

A suggested template for the Current and Pending Support can be found at:  
[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current\\_pending.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/current_pending.doc).

Current and Pending Support information is only required for personnel with PD or co-PD indicated as their Project Role on the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. All applications must contain a list of all Current and Pending Support detailing public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget, see template. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form. Total project time listed for each PD should be indicated as a percent effort and not exceed 100% for concurrent projects.

**5. R&R Personal Data** – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. If completing the information, **do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

## **6. R&R Budget**

This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project's budget. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. The following, additional information may be helpful:

(1) Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget for the entire project. There should be reasonable costs on the Educational Enhancement Team budget that reflect the cost of the monthly conference calls and attending a meeting to facilitate the activities of the Clearinghouse. In addition, the budgets for all projects should include cost to attend the annual Project Director meeting.

(2) Subcontract Arrangements. If it will be necessary to enter into a formal subcontract agreement with another organization(s), the "R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form" Annual and cumulative budgets and a budget justification are required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form.

(3) Field H. Indirect Costs – Refer to section IV. D. of this RFA for a discussion of the limitations on claiming indirect costs.

(4) Field K. Budget Justification – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Budget Justification' in the document header and save file as 'Budget Justification'.

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and linked to the different activities in the work plan. If consulting, collaborative, or subcontractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. Please include a cost breakdown for the consultant, including the letter of commitment, curriculum vita, number of days in service, travel, and per diem, as well as the rate of pay.

**To receive priority for partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include NGOs and CBOs with expertise in beginning agricultural producer and training outreach, applicants need to identify in the budget justification which budget items are being allocated to the NGO(s) and/or CBO(s).**

**Matching: Note:** All applicants are required to provide from non-Federal sources (unless otherwise specified by law) cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the federal funds requested. **The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as part of the Budget Justification attachment (see Field K on the Form R&R Budget). Include the matching amount, the budget category for the match, and detail how the matching support, from each source, will be used (e.g., salary and position supported). See instructions directly above, Field H, for restrictions on how to report indirect costs as matching contributions.**

**Cash and non-cash contributions from the institution and any third parties should be identified.**

**Each source of non-Federal matching funds must be accompanied by written verification of commitments of matching support (i.e., a signed letter from the AR of the source of matching funds; including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:**

**For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the AR of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.**

**For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the AR of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution (please provide the basis for the good faith effort (i.e., duties and position being paid)); and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.**

**If the contribution is to be split between cash and in-kind, the exact dollar amount for each category must be clearly stated. The letter should also clearly state the budget categories that the contributed dollars should be applied to and clearly state the individual items of in-kind contributions. All pledge agreements must be placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support. Any cost sharing commitments specified in the application will be referenced and included as a condition of an award resulting from this announcement. All pledged amounts must be specific and certain, not estimated.**

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments, A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

#### **7. Supplemental Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program”) and the program code (i.e., enter “BFRDP”).

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. **A Conflict of Interest List is required for all applications submitted to the BFRDP.**

A suggested template for the Conflict of Interest List can be found at:  
[http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict\\_of\\_interest.doc](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc).

A Conflict of Interest List must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch. Collate all Conflict of Interest lists into a single document. The lists can only be submitted as a single PDF attachment.

For all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch, list alphabetically by last name (and with last name first) the full names of individuals and indicate which categorical conflict(s) listed below applies:

- (a) All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions;
- (b) All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations;
- (c) All thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors; and
- (d) All persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting/financial arrangement/other conflict-of-interest in the past three years.

Note: Other individuals working in the applicant's specific area are not in conflict with the applicant unless those individuals fall within one of the listed categories. The National Program Leader responsible for the BFRDP program must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on April 6, 2010 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review**

**panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

#### **D. Funding Restrictions**

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs for grants to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

**Claiming of indirect costs. The maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award budget or, alternatively, the maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed as a matching contribution (if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget). However, the maximum allowed indirect costs may not be claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution, unless the total claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. An awardee may split the allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total percentage of indirect costs under the project does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. For example, if a grantee's indirect costs are capped at 22 percent, the grantee may request 11 percent of the indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution. Or, the grantee may request any other, similar percentage combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect cost rate of 22 percent.**

An award made under this program may not be used for planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

**Note: Programs funds may not be used to buy land, match Individual Development Accounts funds, or purchase equipment for starting farm or ranch businesses. Program funds may only be used for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers. Program funds may not be used for research activities.**

#### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov".

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, community based organization, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

Priority will be given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include NGOs and CBOs with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. Only applications with a minimum of 25 percent of the Federal budget allocated to these partner organizations (i.e., NGOs and CBOs) will be given this priority. In addition, these partner organizations must have been involved and played an important role in the project design and development. Projects also must employ an equitable and appropriate decision-making and oversight process that includes all partners to be given this priority.

***Target Audience:*** Not less than 25% of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Please note that all the applications do not need to address a target audience but can be open to all beginning farmers and ranchers. However, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify any prior experience the applicants have in addressing the needs of the target audience, the applicants ability to provide the appropriate (example, socio-economic and culturally sensitive) education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the target audience, and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s).

All project applications submitted for funding shall be evaluated using the following criteria as provided by section 7405(c)(5) of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 3319(c)(5), specifically:

- **Relevancy** – Explanation and documentation that the project is directed toward specific topic areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA. These topics are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in FCEA. Relevancy also includes explanation of how the project addresses critical barriers faced by beginning farmers and ranchers. Successful multi-year track record of working with beginning farmers and ranchers and a description of how this project will enhance current or prior programs can be used to evaluate the relevance of the project. Alternatively, the relevancy can be evaluated by the description of the necessity of the project based on the needs identified for the target audience and the demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs that address these needs.
- **Technical merit** – will be evaluated on the basis of:
  - (a) Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
  - (b) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social, economic and cultural relevance, distance based versus face-to-face);
  - (c) Innovation and originality of objectives, activities and outcomes.
  - (d) Expected outcomes of the project in terms of the number of additional beginning farmers and ranchers served, the value of their enterprise, the needs of the targeted audience; and
  - (e) Sustainability beyond the life of the grant.
- **Achievability** - Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. Importance will be given to the description of how the success of the project will be measured and reported every year and potential pitfalls.
- **Expertise and track record of 1 or more applicants** - Importance will be given to the demonstration of expertise through successful multi-year experience in education, outreach, mentoring and/or training beginning farmers and ranchers. The successful multi-year experience can be demonstrated by the number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants or graduates of the program, success rate and their current occupation; the number of years a program or activity has been offered. There should be sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities including management. Also, important are qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project activities and in evaluating project outcomes; and demonstrable institutional experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.
- **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation. Includes the expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency**

**of the educational facilities and equipment for the proposed education and outreach methods, etc.**

- **Adequacy of Plans for Management of the proposed project**, including: time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, outcome-based reporting, and communication; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.

### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **D. Organizational Management Information**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to an award identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make awards to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the award shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the award effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds awarded by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the applicable Departmental assistance regulations (2 CFR 215, 2 CFR 220 and 2 CFR 230), and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015, 3019 and 3430 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Award Notice**

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

### **C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to applications considered for review and to projects awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015 – USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (containing general provisions applicable to grants and cooperative agreements, and the set of principles for determining allowable costs as set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now relocated at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, and 230, respectively).

7 CFR Part 3016—USDA implementation of Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations, now relocated at 2 CFR Part 215.

7 CFR Part 3021—Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—NIFA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3430—NIFA procedures to implement Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs—General Award Administrative Provisions and Specific Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

#### **D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

Upon the award of a grant, applicants will be requested to finalize annual goals and objectives against which progress will be measured on an annual basis. Grantees must submit an annual report narrative and budget summary detailing outcomes and expenditures on the project. A format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by NIFA.

Grantees are required to submit initial project information, annual and final comprehensive technical reports to NIFA's Current Research Information System (CRIS) at <http://cwf.uvm.edu/cris>. The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the agency contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before NIFA funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov>.

If a project is funded, beginning in the first year of funding, the project director will be required to attend annual project director meetings. Reasonable travel expenses should be included as part of the project budget.

For informational purposes, the “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on a **quarterly basis no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. A final “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS**

Applicants and other interested parties with questions or comments are encouraged to contact:

Dr. Siva Sureshwaran, National Program Leader, Competitive Programs Unit; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-720-7536 or Fax: 202-401-6070; E-mail: [ssureshwaran@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ssureshwaran@nifa.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed three years for Standard BFRDP Grants, including Development Grants, and five years for the Educational Enhancement Projects. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award. No-cost extensions are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR 3430.58.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher means a person that has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years (as defined by section 7405(a) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(a)).

Clearinghouse means an online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

Collaborator means the person or an organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) means a private, non-profit organizations that are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and that provide services to that local community.

Education means an act or process that delivers knowledge and informal educational programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Limited resource beginning farmer or rancher means beginning farmers or ranchers who have: 1) direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the sales amount established by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in each of the previous 2 years (in current dollars, adjusted for inflation each year, based on the October 2002 Prices Paid by Farmer Index compiled and updated annually by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)), and 2) a total household income at or below the National Poverty Level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) using Census Poverty Data. Please see: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

Non-governmental organization (NGO) means a legally constituted, non-[governmental](#) organization created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government and serving one or more communities.

Outcome based reporting should include an outcome statement with performance targets, necessary milestones, beneficiary engagement, key individuals, and verification. For a detailed description of outcome based reporting, see [http://nesare.org/downloads/big\\_grant\\_how\\_to\\_write.pdf.pdf](http://nesare.org/downloads/big_grant_how_to_write.pdf.pdf)

Partnership means a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.

Performance target means a specific, verifiable change in people's actions or conditions. It defines how many people will change and what degree of change constitutes success.

Peri-urban means urban areas that lie on the outer edges of the city.

Producer means individuals, families, or other entities in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management and marketing.

Qualified Public and Private Entities means public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Regions means (1) the Northeast region consisting of the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia); (2) the Southern Region consisting of 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas,

Arkansas, and Oklahoma); the North Central Region consisting of 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota); and the Western Region consisting of 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).

Rural communities means all communities with a population under 50,000.

Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender, prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).

### **Application Submission Checklist**

The following checklist contains suggested guidelines to verify prior to application submission:

- Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)? See Part III of the NIFA Application Guide.
  - Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing? Are all PDF documents numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed? Submitted applications that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.
- Have all seven required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature of the Adobe Reader (see section 1.8 of the NIFA Application Guide)?
  - SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
  - R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
  - R&R Other Project Information
  - R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
  - R&R Personal Data
  - R&R Budget
  - R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only if submitting a Collaboration Project)
  - Supplemental Information Form
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**
  - Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the name of the eligible college or university.
- ◆ **R&R Other Project Information**
  - Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?

- ❑ Project Summary/Abstract (PDF)
  - Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
  - Does this section adhere to the format?
  - If applicable, does the first line indicate whether you want to be considered for a Development Grant? If yes, have you attached a letter from your AOR that your organization has never received a competitive award from NIFA?
- ❑ Project Narrative (PDF)
  - Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?
  - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- ❑ Bibliography & References Cited (PDF)
  - Attach as PDF file in Field 9, but only if needed.
- ❑ Facilities & Other Resources (PDF)
  - Attach as PDF file in Field 10, but only if needed.
- ❑ Equipment (PDF)
  - Attach as PDF file in Field 11, but only if needed.
  - Remember, 'Equipment' is defined as having a value of over \$5,000 for each item. Most equipment purchased for these projects is actually reported, instead, as 'Materials and Supplies' on the R&R Budget Form.
- ❑ Outside Services, Letters of Support, Use of Facilities
  - Attach as PDF file in Field 12, but only if needed.

◆ **R&R Senior/Key Person Profile**

- ❑ Biographical Sketch (PDF)
  - Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?
- ❑ Current and Pending Support (PDF)
  - Has the current and pending support PDF for all PD(s) been attached?
  - Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, including this application?

◆ **R&R Personal Data DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

- ❑ Have all fields been completed except for the social security number?

◆ **R&R Budget**

- ❑ Have all fields been completed?
- ❑ Budget Justification
  - Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?
  - Are budget items individually justified?
  - For multi-institutional applications, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved?
  - Have the matching requirements been address?

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the award. All applicants will be required to provide appropriate matching documentation. See Part IV, B, 6 of this RFA for further details and specific instructions.

◆ **Supplemental Information Form**

- ❑ Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?
- ❑ Have you included the required Conflict of Interest List (PDF) attachment? (See format in NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.47, for instructions.) Include this one-page with lists of compiled attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.