



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

National Institute of  
Food and  
Agriculture

# **Request for Applications**

## **Tribal Colleges Education Equity Program**

**Fiscal Year 2010**

**Application Deadline: March 22, 2010**

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)  
10.221**

**Program Code Name: Tribal College Equity Program  
Program Code: KX**

**NIFA Funding Opportunity Number  
USDA-NIFA-TCEG-002777**

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

**TRIBAL COLLEGES EQUITY PROGRAM**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.221.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time on March 22, 2010. Applications received after this deadline will normally 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 with six months of the release date of this RFA.

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 Tribal College Equity Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA announces the availability of funding and requests applications for the Tribal College Equity Program (TCEG) for FY 2010 to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans by strengthening instructional programs in the food and agricultural sciences. NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2010 will be approximately \$3,000,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for TCEG projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a TCEG grant.

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

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

Authority for this program is contained in the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note) as amended by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601 note). Under this authority, appropriated funds are to be awarded to the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (hereinafter referred to as 1994 Institutions) for Education capacity building and funds are to be distributed equally among institutions that meet eligibility requirements.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The purpose of the TCEG Program is to provide funding to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans in the food and agricultural sciences. The TCEG program is intended to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver relevant formal education opportunities. The TCEG is intended to be a component of the applicant 1994 institution's land grant roadmap or strategic planning process. To the extent practicable, priorities should reflect the following national critical needs areas:

1. Sustainable energy
2. Global food security and hunger
3. Climate change
4. Nutrition and preventing childhood obesity
5. Food safety
6. Sustainable rural economies

Awards are made upon approval of each institution's application for grants that relate to institutions' long-range goals. As indicated in Part I, C., an application may address one or more program areas, and may be focused on one or more subject matter areas.

Recognizing that strengthening instructional programs is a long-term ongoing process, the TCEG program is interested in funding subsequent phases of previously funded projects in order to strengthen institutional capacity, and institutions are encouraged to build on a theme over several grant awards to reach institutional long-range goals.

### **C. Program Area Description**

Applications must focus their activities on one or more of the following program areas:

#### **Curricula Design and Materials Development**

To promote new and improved curricula and materials **for courses offered for college credit or certificate programs** to increase the quality of teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Emphasis may be on the development of modules or courses of study, degree programs, or instructional materials; the use of new instructional approaches to enhance student

learning; or the introduction of new subjects or new applications of knowledge pertaining to the food and agricultural sciences. The acquisition of library materials is also relevant.

Topics related to agriculture are found in numerous disciplines, from engineering and technology to chemistry and biology to the social sciences. Accordingly, academic institutions should broaden the treatment of agriculture in the overall undergraduate curriculum. In particular, faculty in colleges of agriculture should encourage discussion of agriculture in courses throughout the institution and work with colleagues from other departments to develop shared introductory courses that serve multiple populations and can illuminate underlying themes shared by agriculture and other disciplines.

### **Faculty Development and Preparation for Teaching**

To promote development of college faculty teaching competencies, subject matter expertise, or skill in recruiting and advising students. Developmental activities may include both formal training and non-formal continuing education. Academic institutions should ensure that the responsibility for faculty development rests with departments, colleges, and institutions, rather than on individual faculty members. Academic institutions should also enhance institutional rewards for high-quality teaching and curriculum development, especially including rigorous consideration in hiring, tenure, and promotion.

Each faculty recipient of monetary support or development opportunity must be employed, either full or part time at an “eligible institution” as defined in this RFA and must be a citizen or national of the United States.

### **Instruction Delivery Systems and Strategic Partnerships**

To encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Differences in the learning styles of students often require alternative instructional methodologies. Academic institutions should include representatives from community organizations, tribal entities, industry and other employers on visiting committees, on advisory boards, and in strategic planning. Conversely, companies should include academic faculty on their advisory committees. In addition, exchange programs should be developed to enable agriculture professionals to spend semesters teaching at academic institutions and enable faculty to spend sabbaticals working outside of academe. Finally, opportunities for students to work in professional settings should be developed and expanded. These opportunities can include internships, cooperative education programs, summer opportunities, mentoring and career programs, job shadowing, and other experiences.

### **Student Experiential Learning**

To develop scientific and professional competencies by providing students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-life situations. Such experiential learning opportunities are most effective when they advance decision-making, group learning and communication skills as well as technical expertise. 1994 institutions are encouraged to develop culturally relevant and appropriate programs that relate academic content to individual,

community or tribal needs and challenges.

Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or development purposes must be enrolled at an “eligible institution” as defined in this RFA and must be a citizen or national of the United States.

### **Equipment and Instrumentation for Teaching**

To provide teachers and students with suitable, up-to-date equipment. The initiative may include the acquisition of laboratory or classroom instructional equipment to assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences higher education programs. Requests may entail acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional equipment, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment.

### **Student Recruitment and Retention**

To strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to secure the future strength of the Nation's scientific and professional work force by attracting and preparing academically outstanding students for careers as food and agricultural scientists and professionals. It is, therefore, in the best interest of institutions with programs in agriculture to foster greater awareness among pre-college students. Colleges and universities should reach out to expose K-12 students and teachers to agricultural topics and generate interest in agricultural careers. Programs that might be considered include agriculture-based high schools, culturally relevant agricultural education programs, summer high-school or youth programs in agriculture, and partnerships with youth-focused programs, such as tribal or community youth programs.

Modest financial incentives to enroll and specialize in the food and agricultural sciences may be offered to students enrolled in any of the eligible institutions. Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or development purposes must be enrolled at an “eligible institution” as defined in this RFA and must be a citizen or national of the United States.

### **Available Program Area Reference Materials**

The following reference materials will be helpful in supporting your application and improving your project. The National Academy of Science 2009 report entitled, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World* recommends that academic institutions with undergraduate programs in agriculture implement nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, please refer to [http://dels.nas.edu/ag\\_education/report.shtml](http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml) and click on recommendations.

A 2009 white paper on Human Capacity Development was prepared by the Academic Programs Section of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. Copies of the white paper entitled “Human Capacity Development - The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS),” can be found at: <http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

### **Stakeholder Input on Equity Program**

As part of the TCEG application, a detailed plan is required to establish, implement and describe a procedure for gathering Stakeholder input regarding the focus on the planned activities of this program. Accordingly, each applicant must:

- a) report actions taken to seek Stakeholder input that encourages their participation;
- b) provide a brief statement on the process used by the recipient institution to identify individuals and groups who are Stakeholders and to collect input from them; and
- c) provide a statement of how collected input was considered.

Each applicant must submit with the application, a report not to exceed one page (double spaced) that describes actions to seek stakeholder input on Equity program priorities and how this was considered in setting program/project goals. (see Part IV, B, 3(c)).

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

NIFA anticipates approximately \$3,000,000 will be available to fund applications in FY 2010. There is no commitment by NIFA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Awarded funds will be distributed equally among institutions that meet eligibility requirements. FY2010 Equity Funds for ineligible 1994 institutions or of those who fail to apply by the application submission date will be redistributed equally among the remaining eligible 1994 institutions.

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**

Under this RFA, only new applications for four-year continuation awards may be submitted to the TCEG Program. These are project applications not previously submitted to TCEG. All new applications will be reviewed by a review panel using the process and criteria described in Part V – Application Review Requirements.

### **C. Project Types**

In FY 2010, NIFA is soliciting TCEG applications for a four-year **continuation grant**. Applications should be submitted for a 4-year period. A continuation grant is an award for which an application is approved for the four years, but each year of funding is awarded on an annual basis and subject to the availability of annual appropriations and satisfactory progress of the project.

Awards made in FY 2010 will provide funds for the first year of the project. It is anticipated that approximately **\$93,750** will be awarded to each eligible institution under the TCEG program for FY 2010. In this application, budgets for the subsequent three years should be estimated and total \$93,750 for each remaining fiscal year (2011, 2012 & 2013).

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by any of the Tribal colleges and universities designated as 1994 Land-Grant Institutions under the Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended. This Act, as amended in Section 533(a), requires that each 1994 Land-Grant Institution be accredited or making progress towards accreditation and be recognized as a legal entity. If accreditation is being sought, a college must demonstrate its progress towards accreditation by a letter from a nationally recognized accreditation agency affirming receipt of application for an accreditation site visit or other such documentation.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of project goals and objectives.

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

NIFA does not require matching support for this program.

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the Program Director (PD) first contact their institution's Authorized Representative (AR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.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-TCEG-002777** in the appropriate box and click "Download Package." From the 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://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, page 12). 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 APPLICATION CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING 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.**

### **1. 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 13. Proposed Project** – For the start date of the project, select a date at least six months after the submission due date for the program. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

**Field 20. Pre-application** – Do not fill out this portion of the form

### **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. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7. on the Form). **This must be a PDF attachment.**
  1. The Summary should not exceed 250 words
  2. The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and Co-PDs listed
  3. The title of the project (must **be descriptive of the program**)
  4. Must be a self contained specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on goals, strategies and specific projected outcomes
- b. Project Narrative (Field 8. on the Form). **This must be a PDF attachment**

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 15 pages of written text, double spaced with one inch margins and ‘Times New Roman’ 12 point font, and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables – 20 pages total.

The Project Narrative must include the following section headings:

1. **Opportunity Statement:** What issue or problem is being addressed and a one sentence vision statement for the program.
2. **Target Audience(s) and Program Areas:** Who is being impacted by the project activities and which Need areas are to be concentrated on.
3. **Specific Objectives and Activities of the 4-year Plan:** The Equity project should have an overall theme and strive for an overall impact on the food and agricultural science education within the Institution.
  - a. Briefly describe how proposed project builds upon previous Equity continuation projects and how it might differ.
  - b. Describe activities and major strategies to be undertaken; anticipated program delivery methods and observations on the feasibility of reaching program objectives.
  - c. Identify barriers and obstacles to reaching objectives
  - d. Include in your description how stakeholder input identified in your Stakeholder Report will be reflected in your program planning and/or implementation (see Part I, C.).
  - e. Include a summary of previous award accomplishments.
4. **Long-Term Benefits to the College or University:** Describe how project relates to any available institution or department strategic plan, roadmap or business plan. Explain the degree to which Tribal Extension and Research are being integrated or utilized within the Equity activities.
5. **Key Personnel and Responsibilities:** Who is responsible for doing what - Include cooperating institutions roles and responsibilities and their personnel.
6. **Timeframe for Completion:** An outline of activities and phases with projected dates of completion and responsible personnel.
7. **Expected Outcomes and Evaluation:** Identify appropriate methodologies for reviewing and evaluating the project and expected project outcomes. The use of a logic model is strongly encouraged. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project **before** writing your proposal. See Part IV.B.3, c. for details on where to attach this information to your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html). Discuss plans to identify successes and build upon and disseminate them.

Provide the numbers of students (or faculty) currently involved in food and agricultural activities and the number for those expected to be directly and indirectly impacted by activities. Indicate whether or not there is a Land Grant Office or Initiative and include other indicators of program success such as number of student interns, number of students graduating or going into four year or graduate food and agriculture programs, the number of institutional collaborations and amount of leveraged funds from other sources.

c. Other Attachments (Field 12. on the Form).

- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment.** 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, 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 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.
- **Stakeholder Implementation Plan – PDF Attachment.** Title attachment as “Stakeholder Implementation Plan” in the document header and save file as “Stakeholder Implementation Plan.”
- **Logic Model – PDF Attachment.**

#### **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.

#### **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**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must contain an annual budget for each year of the four year project period and a cumulative budget. Annual budgets should each total \$93,750. The first year (2010) budget must be detailed and the three remaining fiscal years (2011-2013) can be approximate. A Budget Narrative in PDF format that justifies and documents specific expenditures and subcontracts **for the first year is required.**

Reasonable travel and associated costs are allowable under the terms of this grant. PDs are required to attend a NIFA Project Directors' meeting and/or the NIFA Administrative Officers

Meeting at least once during the duration of the project and should be specified in the budget and narrative. Reasonable travel cost should be included in the budget to attend the meeting(s).

**7. R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment (Only required if application includes a subcontract to another organization)**

Subcontract Arrangements. If it will be necessary to enter into a formal subcontract agreement with another institution, must be detailed in the “R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment(s) Form.” Annual and cumulative budgets and a budget justification are required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 8. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form.

**8. 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. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Tribal College Equity Program”) and the program code (i.e., enter “KX”). Code is in UPPER CASE.

b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is required under this program for PD and Co-PD. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.

**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 **5:00 pm Eastern Time on March 22, 2010**. Applications received after this deadline will normally 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 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of submission due date, 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 Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), **limiting indirect costs 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.

A 1994 institution may take less than the allowable amount or forego indirect costs altogether - adjust budgets accordingly.

Neither Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program nor Tribal Colleges Extension Projects are supported under the TCEG Program.

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed under this program. With prior approval, and in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are essential to achieving the major purpose of the project. Grant funds may not be used for endowment investing.

### **Special Notices:**

1. NIFA will withhold all funds for a TCEG award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency.
2. If a grantee is in the process of negotiating an indirect cost rate with its federal agency, NIFA will withhold all funds from that grantee until the indirect cost rate has been established.
3. If an institution's indirect cost rate has expired or will expire in the near future, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application. (See Part IV, B.6. Budget Justification)
4. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the TCEG submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting a TCEG application.
5. In lieu of requesting indirect costs (if the applicant does not have a negotiated rate), an applicant may prepare a budget in which all charges in the budget are included as direct costs.

### **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 evaluated for program content 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, 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:

<b>Criteria</b>
Quality of Application; Statement of Need, and Program Objectives
Program Approach, Design and Implementation Methodologies
Institutional Commitment & Resources
Budget Cost Effectiveness
Evaluation Methods and Proposed Outcomes

#### **1. Quality of Application; Statement of Need and Program Objectives**

- Is the application logically structured and were RFA directions followed?
- Is the stated need or opportunity identified and how well stated a case does the applicant make for overcoming a problem or taking advantage of an opportunity?
- Is the Equity program Vision succinct and inspirational?
- Are the specific program objectives written in clear, concise, complete, measurable and logically arranged statements?

## **2. Program Approach, Design and Implementation Methodologies**

- Will the program design and strategies likely produce the outcomes needed to meet the objectives?
- Are the scope and duration of the programs adequate to produce positive outcomes?
- Does the applicant adequately relate target issues to those identified in stakeholder input and participation?
- Are the objectives written to align with one or more of the six [CSREES Strategic Goals](#)?

## **3. Institutional Commitment & Resources**

- Is there evidence of an institutional or department strategic plan, roadmap or business plan?
- Is there alignment of proposed activities with any such plan?
- Is there alignment with institutional Research and Extension activities and best practices?
- Is there demonstrable institutional involvement from other faculty, departments, administration? Is the project sufficiently focused and does it contain a critical mass of leadership and resources to undertake the activity?

## **4. Budget and Cost Effectiveness**

This element relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel.

## **5. Evaluation Methods and Proposed Outcomes:**

- Is there an evaluation plan?
- Are there proposed outcomes? Is there any evidence of use of a logic model?
- Do the outcomes and results from prior support for TCEG projects provide sufficient evidence of long-term positive impacts to justify continued funding?
- Are there numerical indicators of current student or faculty involvement and projected numbers of student or faculty participation (for example: number of students graduating, working on internships, going on to 4 year food or agricultural degree programs,

workshops given and numbers attended or other indicators of program activity and accomplishment.

### **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 the award of a grant 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 grants 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 grant 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 grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's 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**

Once NIFA conducts peer panel and internal administrative reviews, successful applicants will receive a signed, electronic notification of their award. 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 grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

2 CFR Part 215—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110).

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 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide 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 3021—Governmentwide 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 Nonformula Grant Programs—General Grant Administrative Provisions and Program.

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**

### **Current Research Information System Required Reporting:**

Grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's **Current Research Information System (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>.

### **Annual Performance Report:**

Annual performance reports are due 90 days after the anniversary date of the award and should be submitted to the NIFA's CRIS.

Annual performance reports must include the following information:

- 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period;
- 2) if established goals were not met, the reasons;
- 3) documentation of outputs; i.e., significant activities, including dissemination activities, events, services or products that contribute toward achieving the goals and objectives of the project;
- 4) outcomes/impacts; i.e., a change in knowledge, actions or conditions; and
- 5) any other indication of increased capacity for carrying out the land grant mission.

### **Final Technical Report:**

A final technical report must be submitted to CRIS within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the final technical report should be a summary of the completed project, including:

1. A review of project objectives and accomplishments;
2. A description of outcomes resulting from the project and activities undertaken to disseminate these outcomes;
3. An explanation of partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project, including future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project;
4. A description of the project's impact on the PD(s), the institution(s) involved, and the community; and
5. Any pertinent data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The final technical report also must contain any other information specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

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 CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Tim Grosser;  
National Program Leader,  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture,  
USDA

Waterfront Centre  
Room 3240  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
telephone: 202-690-0402  
fax: 202-720-2030;  
e-mail: [tgrosser@NIFA.usda.gov](mailto:tgrosser@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 five years. 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.

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.

Eligible institution(s) (see 1994 Institution or 1994 Land-Grant Institution.)

Institutional Review Board refers to an administrative body charged with protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in activities conducted by the affiliated institution. It approves, requires modifications in, or disapproves all activities within its jurisdiction.

NIFA – means the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Tribal College or Tribal University means the same as 1994 Land-Grant Institution or 1994 Institution.

Tribe means any of the groups of Native Americans having origins in the original peoples of North America that are recognized by the Federal government.

## 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)? NIFA will only accept PDF attachments. 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 and doubled-spaced? 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 returned without review.
- Have all seven required components of the Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature of the Adobe (see section 1.8 of Part IV of the NIFA Application Guide)?**
  - R&R Cover Sheet
  - R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
  - R&R Other Project Information
  - R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
  - Personal Data
  - R&R Budget
  - R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only if submitting subawarding to another organization)
  - NIFA Supplemental Information Form

### ◆ R&R Cover Sheet

- Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the legal name of the applicant organization.

### ◆ R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

- Have all required fields been completed?

### ◆ R&R Other Project Information

- Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?
- Project Summary/Abstract (PDF)**
  - Is the Project Summary in PDF and attached in Field 7 of the Other Project Information form?
  - Does this section adhere to the format described in Part III, 3.1 A of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide?
- Project Narrative (PDF)**
  - Is the Project Narrative in PDF and attached in Field 8 of the Other Project Information form?
  - Are responses provided for items (1) through (7) of Part IV, B, 3.b?
  - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations described in Part III, 3.1 A of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide?

- 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.
- Other Attachments**
  - 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 as appropriate?
- 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?

◆ **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?