

Tribal Colleges Education Equity Program

2011 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 23, 2011



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

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

Tribal Colleges Education 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 close of business (COB) on February 23, 2011 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). 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 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 Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFA-OGFM@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 Colleges Education Equity Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Tribal College Equity Program (TCEG) for fiscal year (FY) FY 2011 from Ilisagvik College and Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College to enhance educational opportunities for Native Americans by strengthening instructional programs in the food and agricultural sciences. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an Appropriations Act for FY 2011. Enactment of additional Continuing Resolutions or an Appropriations Act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2011 is approximately \$3,342,000.

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. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	4
A. Legislative Authority and Background.....	4
B. Purpose and Priorities	4
C. Program Area Description	5
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION.....	8
A. Available Funding	8
B. Types of Applications.....	8
C. Project Types	8
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	9
A. Eligible Applicants	9
B. Cost Sharing or Matching.....	9
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....	10
A. Electronic Application Package.....	10
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	11
C. Submission Dates and Times.....	15
D. Funding Restrictions.....	16
E. Other Submission Requirements.....	17
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS.....	19
A. General.....	19
B. Evaluation Criteria.....	19
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	21
D. Organizational Management Information.....	21
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION	22
A. General.....	22
B. Award Notice.....	22
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	23
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements.....	24
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT	24
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION	26
A. Access to Review Information.....	26
B. Use of Funds; Changes	26
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards.....	27
D. Regulatory Information	27
E. Definitions.....	27

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.

This RFA was developed to respond to the needs of two schools: Iisagvik College and Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College. These two institutions did not apply for a new 4-year continuation grant in 2010 and are therefore eligible to apply for a 3-year continuation grant in 2011.

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 NIFA's following national critical needs areas:

1. Development of sustainable energy;
2. Increased global food security;
3. Adaptation /mitigation of agriculture and natural resources to global climate change;
4. Reduction of childhood and adolescent obesity; and
5. Improved food safety.

Awards are made upon approval of each institution's application for grants that relate to institutions' long-range goals. 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.

Applications are being solicited for the TCEG under the following areas:

- (1) Curricula Design and Materials Development;
- (2) Faculty Development and Preparation for Teaching;
- (3) Instruction Delivery Systems;
- (4) Student Experiential Learning;

- (5) Equipment and Instrumentation for Teaching; and
- (6) Student Recruitment and Retention.

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.

Stakeholder Input on Tribal Colleges Equity Program

Each TCEP application must have a stakeholder plan. The plan will establish, implement and describe a procedure for gathering stakeholder input regarding the focus on the planned activities and priorities of this extension program.

This report is not to exceed one page (double spaced)

Accordingly, each applicant must:

- a) 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
- b) Provide a statement of how collected input was considered.

TCEG encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension ([http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY -
_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf](http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf)). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Implementation Plan (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) ([http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary_of_eXtension_Terms
#Community_of_Practice_.28CoP.29](http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary_of_eXtension_Terms#Community_of_Practice_.28CoP.29);) or form new COPs that focus on providing educational opportunities for Native American scholarship and career development. (For examples of developing COPs and guidance on forming COPs, see http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Main_Page).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. In FY 2011, NIFA anticipates approximately \$3.3 million will be available for support of TCEG Program. Of this amount, NIFA anticipates approximately \$186,000 will be available to fund new TCEG applicants. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an Appropriations Act for FY 2011. Enactment of additional Continuing Resolutions or an Appropriations Act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The remainder will be used to support the TCEG awards eligible for continuation.

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.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2011, applications may be submitted to the TCEG Program under this RFA as:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the TCEG Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

In FY 2011, NIFA is soliciting TCEG applications for a three-year **continuation grant**. Applications should be submitted for a 3-year project period. A continuation grant is an award for which an application is approved for three 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 2011 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 2011. In this application, budgets for the subsequent three years should be estimated and total \$93,750 for each remaining fiscal year (2012 & 2013).

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by Ilisagvik College and Fond Du Lac Community College. **Only applications from these schools will be accepted in response to this RFA.** Both schools are designated 1994 Land Grants by the Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended. In Section 533(a), the act 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 the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process.

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. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system.**

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI 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 Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to “Get Registered” on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

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. 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-003401** 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), **or submitting the application** then 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

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts 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 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.

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>.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application please review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable request for applications. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

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.

2. SF 424 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. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of **TCEG**.

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. Field 8. Project Narrative.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single or double spaced and up to 2 additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (12 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

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 3-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; or how the project will build on previous work done at the college or university.
 - 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 Plant will be reflected in your program planning and/or implementation (see Part I, C.); and
 - e. Include a summary of previous award accomplishments or if this is a first-time application name the primary objective for the first year of the grant.

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. If this is your first grant, describe any collaboration with research or extension programs at your school.
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.

On-Line Data: *You may find citing references helpful in describing methods and planning in your project. These resources and publications may be useful to you should you wish to do this.*

1. Education Resources Information Center <http://www.eric.ed.gov/> This is a comprehensive database on education research, including papers on serving Native American youth and teens.
2. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> Use the College Navigator for ease research. There is a database on Tribal Colleges under “more search options” in the section called “specialized missions”. Use the drop down box to find it.
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/> This federal site offers data on state employment, local employment, job prospect by field, data on green jobs and a host of other information that may be helpful. Users can narrow the search down by type of work--say food scientist, dietician or farmer and rancher.
4. A publication of interest: The Path of Many Journeys, The Benefits of Higher Education for Native People and Communities, Institute for Higher Education Policy in collaboration with American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the American Indian College Fund, February 2007.

The use of Logic Models 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.

At its most fundamental level, a logic model should be a graphic representation that depicts the project’s inputs, activities and potential outcomes and impacts.

This link may be helpful as you plan your logic model.

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/education/in_focus/tribal_if_tribal.html

In the narrative, 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.

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 (one-page).** 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.

You must attach ‘Current and Pending Support’ information (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 33, item 5.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above. Make sure time commitment does not exceed 100% for all current and pending projects. All projects listed must show a commitment of time even if it is 1%.**

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.

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 three year project period and a cumulative budget. Annual budgets should each total \$93,750. The first year (2011) budget must be detailed and the two remaining fiscal years (2012-2013) can be approximate. A Budget Narrative in PDF format that justifies and documents specific expenditures and subcontracts **for each 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 funds should be requested for this purpose in the budget and narrative.

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 Tribal College Equity Program) and the program code (i.e., enter "KX").

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 February 23, 2011 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.

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.

Carefully Monitor for Confirmation E-mails from Grants.gov

Institutions (the submitting official) will receive 3 emails from Grants.gov on the progress of their submission. Applicants should be monitoring their Inbox for e-mail messages that confirm their submission status. The confirmation e-mails are as follows:

- First e-mail: Confirms receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system.

- Second e-mail: indicates that the application has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency OR has been rejected due to errors.
- Third e-mail: confirms that the application has been passed to Grants USDA

If applicants do not receive the first 2 e-mails within 24 hours they should contact Grants.gov to determine what corrective steps need to be taken. Be sure to obtain a case number from the Grants.gov help desk for future reference.

The third e-mail message should arrive within two weeks. If it does not, please call the National Program Leader, Tim Grosser at 202-690-0402. You should have a grants.gov tracking number if you received the first two mails. Be sure to have that number when you call, so your application can be tracked

Once the application has been accepted it will be assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, 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 for competitive programs 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

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible under the program provided such organizations are necessary to conduct the project.

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. In addition, any collaborating institution may also take 22 percent from their portion of the grant, provided they have an official negotiated indirect cost rate from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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.

The following list of costs, although not all-inclusive, are not permitted:

- Entertainment
- Meals (except when provided to maintain the continuity of a meeting)
- Tickets to shows or sporting events
- Alcoholic beverages
- Costs associated with banquets and award ceremonies.

Awards and Certificates of Achievement are disallowed by OMB Circular, A-21 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, and OMB Circular A-22 – Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.

Any expense not directly related to the program or project is considered unallowable. Examples include child-care services, kitchen help hired to prepare refreshments, and promotional or appreciation gifts such as clothing, coffee mugs, or bags.

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 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. Equity 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 (Field K))
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.”

Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

- 1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is hit, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on February 23, 2011. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.
- 2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)
- 3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff perform precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

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, 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:

Criteria
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 TCEG Program Objectives listed under Part I, B.

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? If this is a first-time proposal, applicants may substitute successes from a pilot project, a similar project or feasibility study suggesting funding this project would be beneficial.

- 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 (parts 3015 and 3019 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 grant applications considered for review and to project grants 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, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122 (2 CFR Parts 220 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

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 Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

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

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

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant 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

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions.

Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the terms and conditions of the award (see Part VI, B.9. for a link to view the NIFA award terms and conditions).

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Tim Grosser;
Division of Community and Education;
Institute of Youth, Family and Community;
National Program Leader;
National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
USDA;
Waterfront Centre;
Room 3240;
800 9th Street, SW;
Washington, DC 20024;
Telephone: 202-690-0402;
Fax: 202-720-2030;
E-mail: 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 any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. 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.