

Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program

Budget allocation modified 05/3/2012 – see page 6

FY 2012 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 15, 2012



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

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

RURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY EDUCATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **May 15, 2012** (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: Policy@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 **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program** RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of funding and requests applications for the **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program** for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to **meet national goals for addressing nutrition and health promotion activities as well as address the needs of rural Americans**. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 is approximately \$1.4 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program** projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program** grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The authority for this program is under Section 502 (i) of Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2662). The Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program addresses the Individual and Family Health Education component of the authorization.

B. Purpose and Priorities

As specified in 7 U.S.C. 2662, grants will be made to establish the **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Programs** carried out by the eligible organizations in rural areas. The assistance provided by these programs, to the extent practicable, shall be coordinated with and delivered in cooperation with similar services or assistance by other Federal Agencies or programs for rural residents.

C. Program Area Description

Many individuals and families living in rural areas and communities, including farm families, experience disparities in nutrition, health and health care services. Challenged by low levels of employment and education, geographic barriers and isolation, lack of quality nutrition and health education and health-promoting activities, and accessible health care services, rural residents are more likely than non-rural residents to report a fair to poor health status and have higher rates of health complications, morbidity and mortality. Negative health behaviors and familial and environmental risk factors experienced by children and adults alike underlie such chronic health conditions as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. In addition, the opportunity to receive nutrition and health information or engage in health promotion activities is limited and, when available, may not be appropriate for the diverse populations living in rural areas.

Effective programs and services are needed to provide timely and adequate health information and promotion opportunities to a diverse audience of rural residents of any age with consideration for health and life stage, healthy living behaviors, health literacy and social opportunities for individuals and families to engage in promotion of their own health and health of others. Nutrition, physical activity, health and well-being are identified as fundamental components to such programs and services, supported by the use of information technology, and the collaboration with Extension educators and other relevant partners to sustain health promotion activities and successfully enhance the quality of life in rural communities.

For FY 2012, the Rural Health and Safety Education Programs will focus on issues related to one or more of the following areas:

1) Individual and Family Nutrition and Health Education Programs that provide individuals and families with:

- Information as to the value of good health at any age;

- Information to increase individual or family's motivation to take more responsibility for their own health;
- Information about and access to nutrition and health promotion and educational activities; and
- Training for volunteers and health services providers concerning nutrition and health promotion and health care services for individuals and families in cooperation with state, local and community partners.

2) Farm Safety Education Programs that provide information and training to farm worker and farm families concerning safety in the work place, including information and training concerning, but not limited to:

- The prevention of occupational injury and death rates;
- The prevention of exposure to farm chemicals; and
- The prevention of agricultural respiratory diseases and dermatitis.

3) Rural Health Leadership Development Education Programs that assist rural communities in developing nutrition and health care services and facilities that will provide the maximum benefit for the resources invested and assist community leaders and public officials in understanding their roles and responsibilities relative to rural health services and facilities, including but not limited to:

- Community decisions regarding funding for and retention of rural hospitals;
- Rural physicians and allied health professionals recruitment and retention;
- The aging rural population and senior services required to care for the population;
- The establishment and maintenance of rural emergency medical services systems; and
- The application of computer-assisted capital budgeting decision aids for rural health services and facilities.

Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program encourages projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (CoP). Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one or more of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

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. Approximately \$1.4 million is available to fund applications in FY 2012. Funds will be allocated as follows:

- 60% of available funds will be allocated to fund successful applications submitted by 1862 Land-Grant institutions. Proposed project budgets in this group must not exceed \$200,000, including indirect costs, for project periods of one (1) year; and
- 40% of available funds will be allocated to fund successful applications submitted by 1890 and 1994 Land-Grant institutions. Proposed project budgets in this group must not exceed \$150,000, including indirect costs, for project periods of one (1) year.

Given the focus of this grant opportunity -- program development and implementation -- in the proposed project budgets **no more than 40% of direct costs may be allocated to salaries and no less than 60% of direct costs should be allocated to program implementation/outreach activities.**

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 2012, applications may be submitted to the **Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program** as one of the following types of requests:

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

(2) Resubmitted Application. A resubmitted application is an application that has previously been submitted to the Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program but was not funded. Project Directors (PD) must respond to the previous panel review summary; see Response to Previous Review, Part IV, B, 3. b. Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria (Part V, B) as New Applications.

The following types of applications submitted to the Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program in FY2012 **will not** be considered for funding:

- (1) Multiple applications from the same institution;

- (2) Multiple applications from a team proposing to conduct the same project in different locations;
- (3) Projects that have received funding through Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program for two (2) or more years in the past five (5) years.

C. Project Type

Applications seeking funds to conduct pilot projects are encouraged. Funds allocated to pilot projects are not intended to fund stand-alone projects but, rather, projects that will lead to further work applicable to rural health and safety education. Applications proposing to conduct pilot projects must justify how the Rural Health and Safety Education grant will allow the applicant to become competitive for future funding. Awards for pilot projects will be limited to one (1) year of funding and will not be renewable.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by Land-grant colleges and universities that are eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.), and the Act of August 30, 1890 (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), including Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University and the University of the District of Columbia.

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.

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 or cost sharing support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

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/assets/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.** Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

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-RHSE-003744** 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

1-800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035

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

Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET). Get help now!

Please have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov, to help expedite your inquiry:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

See http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp or <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 THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (i.e., content format, pdf file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, subsequent submissions of an application 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/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs.

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. 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 be approximately 250 words and include the relevance of the project to the goals of the **Rural Health and Safety Education Grants Program**.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed **10** pages (not including bibliography) of written text, single or double spaced, with standard 12-point font and one inch margins, and up to **3** additional pages for related figures and tables. This maximum (**13** pages) has been established to ensure ease of review as well as fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Section 1: Introduction

A clear statement of the goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities which substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include any preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. All works cited should be referenced. (See Bibliography & References Cited in Field 9).

Section 2: Statement of Need, Site Location, Potential Benefits

- Describe the targeted health issue(s) to be addressed and why it is important to rural health;
- Provide the criteria used to select rural location/community; see Part VIII, section E for definition of “Rural”;

- Provide the criteria used to select the population group (e.g., children, adults, ethnic or cultural group) to be served;
- Provide relevant health statistics or other data to document the need for this issue to be addressed in the target community;
- Describe the potential benefit to the population group or community served of a planned collaboration or partnership (if appropriate);
- If the project seeks to contribute to an existing eXtension COP, briefly describe how it will complement or enhance the COP;
- If proposing to conduct a pilot project, the applicant must show how the Rural Health and Safety Education grant will enable the project to become competitive for future funding; and
- Describe how this project will enhance health promotion, health education, and/or accessibility to health activities by the population served.

Section 3: Objectives

Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort must be included in all proposals. Objectives should be measurable within the timeline of the proposed project.

Section 4: Methods

The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include:

- Scope and duration of the project;
- A description of the proposed project activities, related to the objectives provided and in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out; a project timeline is acceptable;
- A brief description of participant recruitment strategy(ies) to be used;
- Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- Anticipated program outcomes and impacts;
- Development and implementation challenges that may be encountered; and
- Limitations to proposed procedures.

Section 5: Evaluation Design and Methodologies

Proposals should contain a strong outcome evaluation component. Describe the evaluation design and methodologies, based on your stated project objectives, which will be used to measure the extent to which the objectives were met.

This section should address but not necessarily be limited to:

- Focus of evaluation as to population being served;
- Provide evaluation metrics which will be measured for each objective;
- Methodological framework(s) within which information will be collected (i.e., sample survey, questionnaire, or other);
- Type of data to be collected, as linked to expected results listed in Section 4; and
- Analytical procedures used to evaluate data.

At a minimum, the evaluation should enable you to answer the following questions:

- Has the program been successful in attaining the stated implementation objectives?

- Are you implementing the services or training that you initially planned to implement?
- Are you reaching the intended target population?
- Are you reaching the intended number of participants?
- Have expected changes in participants’ knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviors been achieved? and
- Have you developed the planned collaborative relationships?

Section 6: Communication Plan

Briefly describe how results from this project will be communicated to stakeholders and the public. For example, you may want to consider how project outputs or findings might be suitable for delivery through existing eXtension Communities of Practice (<http://www.extension.org/>).

Consider how project outputs or findings could be used to strengthen NIFA priorities or health related programs.

Section 7: Program Sustainability

Since the program is of short duration, describe how it may link to ongoing programs and opportunities in the rural community to increase short- and, if applicable, long-term sustainability.

Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited

No page limit. Submit as an attachment in PDF format. Title the attachment as “Bibliography & References Cited” in the document header and save file as “BibliographyReferencesCited”.

All work cited in the text should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete, include titles and all co-authors, conform to an acceptable journal format, and be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

Field 12. Other Attachments.

Project Management - PDF Attachment. No page limit.

Provide a brief summary of key staff and their functions, timelines, accounting procedures (for funds used by the parent organizations and local sites), reporting, percent of time dedicated to this project, time commitment of project staff to other projects, and collaborative efforts with the grantees. For educational and training programs, provide documentation of program coordination with the appropriate local and/or community partners involved. Title the attachment as “Project Management” in the document header and save file as “ProjectManagement”.

Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment. 1 Page Limit. Title the

Attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘ResponsetoPreviousReview’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary titled, “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW”. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

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. Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide includes information about the individuals for which a Senior/Key Person Profile must be completed, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

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.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. and VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “enter “Rural Health and Safety Education”) and the program code (i.e., enter “LX”); Note that program code must be entered in upper case.)

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest. See Part VI, 1.6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

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 May 15, 2012 (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.

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 this 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

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for:

- General Purpose Equipment – Equipment which does not have a particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose. It includes passenger carrying vehicles, typewriters, furniture (tables, chairs, file cabinets, book cases, etc.), copy machines, fax machines, etc;
- Entertainment – Banquets, awards ceremonies, and meals for persons not in a travel status, tickets to shows or sporting events, and alcoholic beverages;
- Incentives – Federal funds may not be used to offer targeted program participants incentives (e.g., fast-food coupons, gift certificates, etc.) to entice participation. This is prohibited under the OMB Circulars;
- Renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space;
- Purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space;
- Planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities; and
- Miscellaneous – Any expense that is not directly related to the program or project would be considered unallowable. Costs such as child-care services hired so a person can attend a meeting or kitchen help hired to prepare refreshments for a field day, promotional or thank-you gifts such as T-shirts, coffee mugs, or canvas carry-all bags are unallowable because they are not directly related to the project plan.

Pursuant to Section 720 of the General Provisions in Title VII of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Programs (HR 112-284), indirect costs are limited to 30 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 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

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.”

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

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. Those that do not meet these requirements and were submitted no later than 48 hours prior to the deadline will be notified of required changes. 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 experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) based on the proposals received, who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include 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:

1. Significance of the Problem and Potential for Advancing the Quality of Rural Health for Individuals and Families, Health Promotion, and/or Related Issues of Health Care Access (Introduction and Statement of Need)

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of rural health to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include: identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed; body of knowledge, preliminary data and other past activities used to substantiate the need for the proposed project; justification and criteria used to select rural area/community and population group to be served; innovation; and how the proposed project will advance health education, promotion, access and/or equity for individuals and families living in rural areas.

2. Proposed Approach, Program Design and Methodology (Objectives and Methods)

This criterion is used to assess the soundness of the proposed approach. Elements considered include the adequacy of the scope of the project to produce expected outcomes/changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviors in population under study; objectives; soundness/evidence-base of educational curricula to be used in the project; proposed activities

and sequence of activities; participant recruitment; methodology and limitations of the proposed approach; project timeline; and expected new products and results (e.g., educational approaches including training curricula, workshops, meetings, conferences, exhibits, publications, electronic communication, fact sheets, newsletters, and mass media).

3. Evaluation Design and Methodologies

This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of the evaluation design and evaluation methodology, and its capacity to measure the extent to which program objectives are met. Elements considered include: evaluation question(s), the methodological approach proposed for answering these questions, justification for the type of data to be collected, a data collection plan, data analysis plan, and strengths and limitations of the proposed evaluation approach.

4. Communication Plan and Program Sustainability

This criterion is used to assess whether there are clear and acceptable strategies to communicate the results from this project to stakeholders and the public, as well as plans for project sustainability.

5. Project Management

This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of proposed project management, including key staff and their functions, reporting, accounting procedures (for funds used by the parent organizations and local sites), and coordination of collaborative efforts with local and/or community partners involved in the project.

6. Budget

This criterion is used to assess the extent to which the total budget adequately supports, is appropriate to the project being proposed 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 any collaborating institution(s); and appropriateness of the budget relative to time committed to the project by key project personnel.

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., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, Virginia 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. 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 pre-award 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:

2 CFR Part 220 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87).

2 CFR Part 230 – Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

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, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 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 3016 – USDA Implementation of Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

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

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

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

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

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

7 CFR Part 3407—USDA 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.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Aida Balsano, Ph.D.
National Program Leader – Child and Family Development
Division of Family and Consumer Sciences
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
Telephone: 202-720-4436
Fax: 202-720-9366
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Cynthia Reeves, Ph.D., MPH
National Program Leader – Nutrition and Health
Division of Family and Consumer Sciences
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
Telephone: 202-720-0742
Fax: 202-720-9366
E-mail: creeves@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.

In addition, the following definitions apply to this RFA:

For definition of Rural and to determine county eligibility by state refer to the 2003 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes classification scheme at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/RuralUrbanContinuumCodes/2003/> .