



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food  
and Agriculture

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The logo for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), featuring the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a background of stylized, overlapping orange and yellow shapes that resemble a sun or a field of crops.

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATION**

## ***TRIBAL COLLEGES EXTENSION PROGRAM: (SPECIAL EMPHASIS)***

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2022  
APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 14, 2022  
ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$500,000  
AVERAGE AWARD RANGE: \$60,000 - \$200,000  
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-009121  
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.517  
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Assistance Listing:** The TCEP-SE is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.517.

**Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines**

| Task Description                | Deadline   |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Application:</b>             | 5:00 P.M. Eastern, June 14, 2022   |
| <b>Letter of Intent:</b>        | Not Required   |
| <b>Applicants<br/>Comments:</b> | Within six months from the issuance of this notice<br>( <i>NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month</i> ) |

**Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.** NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when equity is grounded in the programs. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

**Stakeholder Input.** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and use comments to help meet the requirements of [Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@usda.gov](mailto:Policy@usda.gov) (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Tribal Colleges Extension Program: Special Emphasis RFA.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

NIFA requests applications for the Tribal Colleges Extension Program: Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 to support pilot projects in extension at the 1994 Land Grant institutions. A pilot project allows Extension offices to be responsive to community needs through two-year projects that address youth, agriculture, economic development, or other issues important to stakeholders. These projects can be used to supplement a Tribal College Extension Capacity Grant. The TCEP-SE is intended to be a component of the applicant 1994 institution's land-grant roadmap or strategic planning process. The amount available for this grant program in FY 2022 is approximately \$500,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for Tribal Colleges Extension Program: Special Emphasis projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

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## **PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority**

This program is authorized under Section 534(b) of 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 (AREERA) ([7 U.S.C. 7601](#)). This section amends Section 3 of the Act of May 8, 1914 (Smith-Lever Act) ([7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.](#)), as amended. Under this authority, appropriated funds are to be awarded to the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (hereinafter referred to as 1994 Institutions) for Extension work and funds are to be distributed on the basis of a competitive application process.

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

The purpose of the Tribal Colleges Extension Program: Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) is to give reservation communities opportunities for enhanced agricultural productivity, and help to supplement their existing extension capacity program, community resilience, traditional ecological knowledge, economic growth, and youth development by extending the reach of innovations in research and technology and enhancing informal, local educational programming. TCEP-SE supports social and behavioral science disciplines. Projects that integrate social and biological sciences are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing global demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources; improving health and reducing obesity by engaging in healthy diets; and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

Previous projects have addressed the following:

1. Tribal youth development
2. Workforce training for Tribal communities
3. Rural development and community counseling for opioids and other factors that affect rural communities
4. Rural prosperity, safety, and economic development through healthy communities
5. Access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply
6. Stewardship of lands through extension and outreach
7. Other Tribal priority areas that relate to agriculture and natural resources
8. Social and behavioral sciences

NIFA welcomes (but does not require) applicants to work with the [Extension Foundation](#) for the development and delivery of content for the public and for Extension professionals nationwide through [Connect Extension](#), or a [National Cooperative Extension Project website](#).

Traditional ecological knowledge is considered an acceptable topic of research, education, and extension for projects funded by this RFA, in pursuit of the aforementioned priorities, goals, and objectives.

***Leadership Skills Development.*** The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. TCEP-SE teaching applications must demonstrably incorporate a

leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

1. Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills; ethics and professionalism; and working in teams;
2. Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities;
3. Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and
4. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

The TCEP-SE is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#) Strategic Goals:

1. STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America’s Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities
2. STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
3. STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers
4. STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food
5. STRATEGIC GOAL 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities.

***Incorporation of Social Sciences and Enhancing Impacts.*** The TCEP-SE Program supports social and behavioral science disciplines. TCEP-SE projects that integrate social and biological sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities for students in applied research and related community development programs are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing global demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources; improving health and reducing obesity by engaging in healthy lifestyles and consuming healthy diets; and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

**Table 2:** Program Key Information

|  | <b>Title</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--|--------------|---|
| Program Code:                                |              | NK  |
| Program Code Name:                           |              | Tribal College Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) |
| CFDA Number/Assistance Listing:              |              | 10.517  |
| Project Type:                                |              | Single Function Extension Projects                          |
| Grant Type:                                  |              | Standard  |
| Application Deadline                         |              | June 14, 2022   |
| Grant Duration:                              |              | 24-36 Months  |
| Anticipated # of Awards:                     |              | 10  |
| Maximum Award Amount:                        |              | \$200,000   |
| Number of Applications Per Lead Institution: |              | Two Standard  |
| Total Funding Per Institution:               |              | \$400,000   |

## **PART II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The amount available for TCEP-SE in FY2022 is approximately \$500,000. The financial award will be issued as a grant.

USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

### **B. Application Restrictions**

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Application for FY2022 is limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the responses to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

### **C. Project and Grant Types**

The following describes the types of *projects* or *grants* that are eligible for funding:

#### 1. Project Types.

##### Single-Function Extension Projects

Single-function Extension Projects conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof. Extension Projects may also include related matters such as certification programs, in-service training, client recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative instructional methodologies appropriate to informal educational programs.

Extension Projects address one or more of the following key strategic actions:

- i. Support informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy of youth and adults;
- ii. Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of food and agricultural science data, information, and programs;
- iii. Build science-based capability in people to engage audiences and enable informed decision making;
- iv. Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness;



- v. Offer non-formal learning programs that increase accessibility to new audiences at the rate at which new ideas and technologies are tested and/or developed at the community-scale; and
- vi. Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nations' food supply, agricultural productivity, environmental quality, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being.

These projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group. These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results.

## 2. Grant Types.

### Standard Grants

Standard Grants supports targeted original scientific Research, Education/Teaching, Extension, or Integrated Projects. An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a state system may submit a grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and to be managed primarily by its own personnel. The applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

### **D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects**

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

## PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the TCEP-SE must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Applications may only be submitted by colleges and universities designated as 1994 Land-Grants by legislation. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

**Table 3:** List of Eligible Colleges and Universities

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Aaniih Nakoda College                        | Little Priest Tribal College              |
| Bay Mills Community College                  | Navajo Technical University               |
| Blackfeet Community College                  | Nebraska Indian Community College         |
| Cankdeska Cikana Community College           | Northwest Indian College                  |
| Chief Dull Knife College                     | Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College             |
| College of the Menominee Nation              | Oglala Lakota College                     |
| College of the Muscogee Nation               | Red Lake Nation College                   |
| Dine' College                                | Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College           |
| Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College     | Salish Kootenai College                   |
| Fort Peck Community College                  | Sinte Gleska University                   |
| Haskell Indian Nations University            | Sisseton Wahpeton College                 |
| Ilisagvik College                            | Sitting Bull College                      |
| Institute of American Indian Arts            | Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute |
| Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College        | Stone Child College                       |
| Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College | Tohono O'odham Community College          |
| Leech Lake Tribal College                    | Turtle Mountain Community College         |
| Little Big Horn College                      | United Tribes Technical College           |
|  | White Earth Tribal and Community College  |

***Duplicate or Multiple Submissions*** – duplicate or multiple submissions of the same proposal by the same PD is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching

***No Match Required*** - The TCEP-SE has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

## PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

### A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part II § 1** of the [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) (Application Guide) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process.

**Table 4.** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

| Steps                        | Action   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Step One: Register           | <i>New Users</i> to <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> must register early with <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> prior to submitting an application ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> ). |
| Step Two: Download Adobe     | Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements)   |
| Step Three: Find Application | Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-009121</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .   |
| Step Four: Assess Readiness  | Contact an Authorized Representative prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.  |

**Table 5:** Help and Resources

| Grants.gov Support   | NIFA Support  |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">Grants.gov Online Support</a><br>Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035<br>Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a><br>Self-service customer-based support: <a href="#">Grants.gov iPortal</a><br><br><i>Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a>.</i> | Email: <a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a><br><br>Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a> |

### B. Content and Form of the Application

The [Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 6:** Key Application Instructions

| <b>Instruction</b>   | <b>References</b><br><b>(All references are to the</b><br><b><u>Application Guide</u>)</b> |
|--|--|
| Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.                        | Part III   |
| Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format. | Part III   |
| Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.                 | Part VII   |
| Follow the submission instructions.  | Part IV  |
| Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.                | Part IV  |

Contact the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.

Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.

**SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet.** See **Part V** and **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

**SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s).** See **Part V § 3** of the [Application Guide](#).

**R&R Other Project Information Form.** See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the TCEP-SE. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates. The PS should not exceed 250 words and:
  - Include the names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and Co-PDs;
  - Include the title of the project (must be descriptive of the program); and
  - Must indicate this is an Extension Special Emphasis proposal.
  
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed eight pages *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to two *1.5 spaced* additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all the following:
  - a. *Extension Plan.* Describe project activities and how, if funded, it will complement the Capacity award. Give details on who will carry out the work and their timeframe for completing each part of the project.

- b. *Community and Audience*. Provide evidence that the PD and Extension Educator have met with the tribe, stakeholders or an advisory group and understand the needs and concerns of the community.
- c. *A statement of the potential for public good in Indian country*. The public good describes spillover benefits accrued to the entire community beyond the program participants. Public good can mean that participants are empowered to share the knowledge they gain with others, or that participant behavior changes benefit the greater community. Public good can also mean that a project brings resources and technology to a tribal community resulting in improved agricultural or economic productivity for many. For more information see the following: [Identifying the Public Value in Extension Programs](#)
- d. *Project Review and Evaluation*. The evaluation plan should describe how quantitative metrics and success stories will be captured to demonstrate the impact of this project to the Tribal College Extension Program: Capacity Application (TCEP). It should be an assessment of the project’s value to stakeholders and its sustainability.
- e. *Collaborative Relationships*. Detail any collaborative work or plans for cooperation with a Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program, 1862 cooperative extension, Tribal outreach offices or other entities.
- f. *Response to previous review*: The response to previous review must not exceed: 1) a one-page response to the previous review (containing the previous proposal number in the first line) titled “Response to Previous Review” as the first page of the attachment and 2) the 10-page Project Narrative. The one-page “Response to Previous Review” does not count against the 10-page limit of the Project Narrative.

3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

**R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

**R&R Personal Data**. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#)).

**R&R Budget**. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Match – If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. Grants that require matching funds as specified under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA must list in their *budget justification* the matching sources, the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.”](#)

2. Indirect costs (IDC) – Indirect costs are unallowable, and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Costs that are a part of the institution’s indirect cost pool may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

**Data Management Plan.** A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V § B](#) of this RFA, [Part III § 3.1 of the Application Guide](#) and [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#)). If you need help in preparing a data management plan or have questions about what constitutes a data management plan for this role (including questions about data privacy, etc.), please contact the NIFA program contacts listed at the end of this RFA.

**Supplemental Information Form.** See [Part VI](#) of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name TCEP-SE and the program code NK. Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See [Part VI](#) of the [Application Guide](#).

**Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants.** This is required for corporate applicants. See [Part VI](#) of the [Application Guide](#) for a description of the term, “corporation.”

### **C. Funding Restrictions**

**No Indirect Cost (IDC).** IDC is *not* authorized for this RFA.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

## PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

### A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [The NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

#### **Scientific Peer Review Process:**

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. 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.
2. the need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. the need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. the need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
6. the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

***Conflicts of interest.*** NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

## **B. Evaluation Criteria**

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA: A reviewer's written evaluation entails two levels of assessment. First, the reviewer summarizes how well the application addressed each evaluation criterion. After the application has been assessed for strengths and weaknesses of each criterion, the reviewer then evaluates the overall likelihood that the project will have significant outcome and impact. These written reviews are used to begin panel discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer review panel. Through these discussions, peer review panelists come to consensus on the final rating and ranking of proposals. A complete description of NIFA's peer review process can be found at the NIFA website: [The NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. The criteria below are not equal in merit but are listed in descending order of importance. Applications are evaluated primarily for overall merit, with emphasis placed on the proposed approach to advance the quality of outreach extension using sound program management and strong cooperative linkages in order to build institutional capacity:

1. *Potential for Advancing the Quality of Outreach/Extension.* This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in outreach/extension by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions and contribution to current body of knowledge in areas addressed. The proposed project must also show how it will contribute to the legislatively authorized purpose of this program. Potential project impacts must be stated.
2. *Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.* This criterion evaluates the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, project evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan will be reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results, and measurable outcomes from the project. Emphasis is placed on the quality of outreach/extension support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages with the community likely to evolve as a result of this project. The application will also be reviewed to assess the effectiveness in addressing any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches.
3. *Institutional Capability and Capacity-Building.* This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its outreach extension capacity. Elements considered include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic enhancement, plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support and the



level of institutional data provided to show the institution's ability to support the proposed project.

4. *Key Personnel*. This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications and expertise of key persons who will develop and carryout the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of these findings.
5. *Budget and Cost-Effectiveness*. This criterion 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 carryout project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority education, research or outreach/extension.

### **C. Organizational Management Information**

Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

### **D. Application Disposition**

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

## **PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must 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. 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 may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.](#)

*Award Notice.* The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

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

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

## **PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget**

***Delegation of fiscal responsibility.*** Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees 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.

***Changes in Budget or Project Plans.*** In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring);
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award;
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency;
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

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

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **C. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of [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](#).

## APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

### Program Contacts

Erin Riley  
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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
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Prali Chitnis  
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For administrative questions related to:

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email [grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov](mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov)
3. Awards under this RFA, please email [awards@usda.gov](mailto:awards@usda.gov)

### U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

### Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

## APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Acronyms</b> |
|--|-----------------|
| Authorized Representative  | AR              |
| Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education reform Act of 1998 | AREERA          |
| Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance                             | CFDA            |
| Data Management Plan   | DMP             |
| National Institute of Food and Agriculture                         | NIFA            |
| Request for Application  | RFA             |
| Research, Education, and Economics                                 | REE             |
| United States Department of Agriculture                            | USDA            |

### APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to 7 CFR 3430 [Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

| Terms                           | Definitions  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Continuation Award              | An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public. |
| Matching                        | The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.  |
| New Application                 | An application not previously submitted to a program.  |
| Renewal Application             | A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.   |
| Resubmitted Application         | A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.  |
| Resubmitted Renewal Application | A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.   |