National Needs Fellowship (NNF) Program Contacts

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Fiscal Year 2022 NNF Application Deadline:
Tuesday, April 26, 2022, 5pm Eastern
Presentation Topics

• NNF Program Overview
• NNF Request for Applications (RFA)
• Proposal Evaluation Process
• Data Gateway
• NIFA Overview
NNF Program Overview
NNF Purpose and Priorities - RFA p. 6

• Provides funding to faculty to recruit and train new master’s and doctoral students

• Proposed projects must address how the graduate program will meet a designated national need area within the food and agriculture sciences (Targeted Expertise Shortage Areas)

• NNF Program awards are intended to
  • support graduate programs that engage outstanding students
  • Increase the number, quality, and diversity of students in food and agriculture sciences

• Currently not offering Postdoctoral Fellowships in this program
NNF Targeted Expertise Shortage Areas (TESAs) – RFA pp. 9-10

a) Animal Production
b) Plant Production
c) Forest Resources
d) Agricultural Education and Communications
e) Agricultural Management and Economics
f) Food Science, Human Nutrition and Human Sciences
g) Agriculture Biosecurity
h) Data Science
NNF Applicant Eligibility – RFA p. 14

• Land-grant institutions
• Colleges and universities having student populations with significant portions from people of underrepresented communities
• Colleges and universities having demonstrable capacity to train students in food and agriculture sciences
• Research foundations maintained by eligible college or institution
Recruited students’ eligibility – RFA p. 9

• Grantee institutions develop the selection criteria, AND
• Citizens or nationals of the USA as determined with federal law
• Have a strong interest in a TESA degree, are preparing for a career as a food and agriculture or natural resources professional, are registered as full-time students
• Have not completed more than one semester or equivalent hours of full-time study (as defined by institution) in the same academic program at the same degree level
International Study or Thesis/Dissertation Research Travel Allowances (IRTAs) – RFA p. 9

• Must request within the application,

• Funds intended for conducting research at alternate locations or outside the United States
Application Submissions and Award Limitations – RFA p. 12

• Grant package on grants.gov
  • Part IV B of the RFA instructs how to complete forms found in the grants.gov package (SF424, R&R, etc.)

• Institutions are limited to a maximum of $525,000 of awards per competition
  • Each application, in any combination of Grant Category Types, may not exceed $262,500
  • One application per TESA

• Institutions may submit multiple applications
  • (duplicate/multiple submissions not allowed from the same project director)
Project and Grant Types – RFA p. 11-12

• Project types: Education/Teaching projects
  • Single function education
  • Increasing graduates with necessary technical skills for entry-level positions in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences
  • Improving technical competencies needed for workforce to ensure US agriculture remains globally competitive
  • Enhancing diversity of the workforce

• Grant types:
  • Standard grant, Category 1: Master’s level training
  • Standard grant, Category 2: Doctoral level training
  • Standard grant, Category 3: IRTA
Budget Categories, or the way funds can be used – RFA p. 27

• No matching requirements (p. 15)
• No indirect costs (IDC) (p. 28)

• Funds restricted to:
  • Student stipends (as specified per student)
  • Cost of education allowances
  • IRTA funds
Content and Form of the Application – RFA

p. 16

• Explicit instructions in Part IV B detail completion of:
  • Standard form 424 (SF-424) found in the grants.gov application package
  • Research and Related (R&R) forms found in grants.gov application package
  • Information requested in the application’s project summary, narrative, data management plan, and other components of the application.

• See the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for more information.
Proposal Evaluation Process
Evaluation Process – RFA p. 30

Proposals are assigned for review to at least 3 reviewers with expertise in the proposed topic.

Reviewers will produce individual reviews of each proposal, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses.

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.
Evaluation Criteria – RFA p. 31

• Reviews are based on the following points:
  • Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education
  • Proposed Approach
  • Institutional Commitment and Resources
  • Key Personnel
  • Broader Context Impacts
Evaluation Criteria – RFA p. 31

• Funding preferences for applications that propose to:
  • Establish innovative and evidence-based frameworks for graduate training
  • Establish master’s or doctoral degree programs
  • Increase multicultural diversity of scientific and professional expertise
  • Partner with teaching/research/extension or across colleges/institutions or public/private sectors
  • Develop performance measures for evaluating overall effectiveness of graduate training
  • Provide leadership skills opportunities
Estimated Timeline of Competitive Programs

Two months
- Request for Application (RFA) release
- Proposal writing and planning
- Proposals due

Three months
- Proposals under peer review
- Proposal funding notifications

One month
- Awards are finalized and made

On average, a competitive program takes about six months from the proposal due date to an award being made to an institution.

We will keep you updated as much as possible. We appreciate your patience!
NIFA Data Gateway

• Previously funded NNF Program projects: [CRIS report of abstracts](#)
NIFA Overview
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

- Extramural science-funding agency within USDA’s Research, Education, and Economics mission area

- **Invests in and supports** initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture

- Provides **funding and strategic leadership** for programs that ensure groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice
Topics Covered by NIFA Programs

Advanced Technologies
- Bioenergy
- Biotechnology
- Nanotechnology

Animals
- Animal Breeding
- Animal Health
- Animal Production
- Aquaculture

Business and Economics
- Markets and Trade
- Natural Resource Economics
- Small Business
- StrikeForce

Education
- Learning and Engagement
- Minority Serving Institutions
- Workforce Development

Environment
- Climate Change
- Ecosystems
- Invasive Pests and Diseases

Farming and Ranching
- Agricultural Safety
- Agriculture Technology
- Farmer Education
- Organic Agriculture
- Small and Family Farms
- Sustainable Agriculture

Food Science
- Food Quality
- Food Safety

Health
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Wellness

Human Sciences
- Community Vitality
- Family Well-Being
- Youth

International
- Global Food Security

Natural Resources
- Air
- Forests
- Grasslands and Rangelands
- Soil
- Water

Plants
- Crop Production
- Nematology
- Pest Management
- Plant Breeding
- Plant Health

https://nifa.usda.gov/topics
Related education programs

• Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)
  • https://nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/higher-education-multicultural-scholars-program-msp

• Predoctoral Fellowships, Postdoctoral Fellowships
  • https://nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/afri-education-workforce-development
USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimiation-statement

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