



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, serif font against a dark background with a stylized sun or light source behind the letters.

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

## ***Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program***

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2022  
APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 13, 2022  
ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$3.8 Million  
AVERAGE AWARD RANGE: \$60,000-\$500,000  
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-TCRGP-009143  
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.227  
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

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

**Assistance Listing:** The Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program is listed in the Assistance Listings, formerly Catalogue of Federal Assistance under number 10.227.

**Table 1:** Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
<b>Application:</b>	5:00 P.M. Eastern, July 13, 2022 [Ref to <a href="#">Part I § C of this RFA</a> ]
<b>Letter of Intent:</b>	Not Required
<b>Applicants Comments:</b>	Within six months from the issuance of this notice ( <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 [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the 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 Research Grants Program RFA.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

NIFA requests applications for the Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program (TCRGP) for fiscal year 2022 to enhance research capacity at 1994 American Indian Land-Grant Institutions hereafter referred to as 1994s; and develop research projects of Tribal, state, or national importance. This RFA has several research options set at funding levels designed to provide 1994s with the opportunity to engage in research at the optimum level commensurate with their institutional capacity. All applications must include at least one research collaborator from the approved list of research institutions.

The amount available for grants in FY 2022 is approximately \$3.8 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for TCRGP projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a TCRGP grant.

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

### **A. Legislative Authority**

Legislative authority for TCRGP is contained in section 536 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 as amended and codified at [7 U.S.C. 301 note](#). The term "1994 Institution" means one of the 1994 Institutions defined in section 532 of the same Act.

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

Subject to the legislative authority described in Part I A and the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants to 1994s to conduct agricultural research that addresses high priority concerns of tribal, national, or multi-state significance.

By supporting applied research at the 1994s, TCRGP directly aligns with the [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 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers
3. Strategic Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food
4. Strategic Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

TCRGP also focuses on development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities that are necessary to prepare students to be globally competitive with other students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. 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.

Research Collaboration Requirement: All applications must, by congressional authorization, include one of four research collaborators from the list below. The application must contain a signed collaboration agreement indicating the role the collaborating institution will play. Additional collaborations are optional. The approved collaborators are:

- An 1862 or 1890 land-grant institution.
- The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) headquarters, state, or regional laboratory.
- A Non-land-grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977). Updated requirements and list of certified NLGCA at <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nlgca-list>.
- A forestry school funded under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. The partner must be the McIntire-Stennis-funded department and not another entity.

**Global Engagement.** NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the

agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the U.S.

**Table 2:** Program Key Information

Title	Description
<b>Program Code:</b>	ZY
<b>Program Code Name:</b>	TCRGP
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	10.227
<b>Project Type:</b>	Research
<b>Grant Type:</b>	<b>New Discovery, Area of Expertise, Applied Faculty/Community and Student Led TEK</b>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	July 13, 2022
<b>Grant Duration:</b>	24-36 Months
<b>Anticipated # of Awards:</b>	20
<b>Maximum Award Amount:</b>	\$500,000

### C. Program Area Description

Research Option: Maximum Award

Area of Expertise: Approximately \$500,000

New Discovery: Approximately \$220,000

Applied Faculty/Community: Approximately \$95,000

Student Led Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research: Approximately \$60,000

The TCRGP develops 1994 institutional research capacity to address American Indian priority issues of concern to the tribal community and reservations. Research options are designed to provide opportunities for institutions with varying degrees of research capacity to participate in the program. NIFA encourages post-Doctoral candidates and visiting researchers and scientists be located at the Tribal College and University (TCU) to help build research infrastructure. Release time from teaching to do research is encouraged by NIFA.

Student Participation: All Applications must contain a student component. NIFA will not make an award that does not involve some level of 1994 student participation.

#### Incorporation of Social Sciences and Enhancing Impacts

The TCRGP Program supports social and behavioral science disciplines. TCRGP 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 by engaging in healthy lifestyles and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.



## **PART II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The amount available for TCRGP in FY 2022 is approximately \$3.8 million. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

For the FY 2022 program, there are no restrictions in the number of applications that an eligible institution may submit. NIFA will generally only award any one institution: (1) Up to two awards in the New Discovery Research option, (2) One award for Area of Expertise, and (3) Up to two awards in Faculty/Community and Student Led TEK. There is generally a limit of three awards total to any one eligible institution in response to this RFA (Refer to Part II, C. Project and Grant Types).

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 response 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**

#### **1. Project Types**

- a. Area of Expertise (\$500,000 maximum)

This grant seeks to enhance existing research completed or near completed for TCRGP New Discovery and Applied Faculty/Community grants that have been awarded in the past five years or enhance the area of expertise at the institution that has been funded by other sources. It is designed for 1994 Land Grants that have, or are developing, focused areas of expertise in one or more of the food and agricultural sciences or Traditional Ecological Knowledge. This grant is intended to support a research endeavor where existing research, extension and education resources have already developed some level of expertise in an area that is important to their students and communities. The maximum amount of this grant is \$500,000.

Explain thoroughly how you are building onto existing research at the institution funded by NIFA in the past, or other funding sources, and how this funding will assist the 1994 into becoming a top research institution in the area identified. The Area of Expertise needs to have a clear experimental design, citations, or acknowledgement from elders of

Traditional Ecological Knowledge and evaluation plan. Please describe the impacts and outcomes of the proposed project including any publications, students or community members impacted, and capacity building at the institution. Letters of Commitment from collaborators, community members and elders are required.

b. New Discovery (\$220,000 maximum)

These projects should be on a level of research complexity that could lead to an enhancement in the body of scientific knowledge and problem-solving on relevant Tribal issues. Projects based around Traditional Ecological Knowledge are encouraged. Applicants are expected to possess robust research capacity and faculty expertise to conduct scientific inquiry. Research undertakings should be at a standard where results may help solve problems of a regional, state, or national level. New Discovery projects are also required to offer meaningful research including Traditional Ecological Knowledge involvement for 1994 students. Project periods shall not exceed three years (36 months). The maximum amount for a New Discovery application is generally \$220,000 total for the entire project period.

c. Applied Faculty/Community (\$95,000 maximum)

Funds faculty, community and student research that addresses practical tribal community needs and opportunities. Investigations should result in knowledge or best practices useful to the tribal community and readily available to college extension offices, teaching faculty, and community development organizations. Research may be on skillful adaptations of existing knowledge to address unique community needs requiring a culturally sensitive approach.

d. Student Led Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research (\$60,000 maximum)

Funds for this project type should be based on student research and observations based on Traditional Ecological Knowledge in a research capacity. Please note that NIFA does not have the capability to store culturally sensitive information and data made available to NIFA can be accessed by the public.

## 2. Grant Type

### Collaborative Grant

A Collaborative Grant supports projects with at least one additional partner or a multi-partner approach to enhance research programs. Collaborative Grants should build linkages domestically and internationally to generate a critical mass of expertise, skill, and technology to address research programs related to the food and agricultural sciences. Grants can reduce duplication of efforts and/or build capacity and should be organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management knowledge and skills to organize and carry out the initiative.

**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 TCRGP must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Applications may only be submitted by Tribal Colleges or Universities designated as 1994s under the Equity Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 ([7 U.S.C. 301](#), as amended). Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. 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.

The eligible 1994s are listed below:

(1) Aaniiih Nakoda College.	(2) Bay Mills Community College.
(3) Blackfeet Community College.	(4) Cankdeska Cikana Community College.
(5) Chief Dull Knife College.	(6) College of Menominee Nation.
(7) College of the Muscogee Nation.	(8) Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.
(9) Dine College.	10) Haskell Indian Nations University.
11) Fort Peck Community College.	(12) Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development.
(13) Ilisagvik College.	(14) Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College.
(15) Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College.	(16) Little Big Horn College.
(17) Leech Lake Tribal College.	(18) Navajo Technical University.
19) Little Priest Tribal College.	(20) Northwest Indian College.
(21) Nebraska Indian Community College.	(22) Oglala Lakota College.
(23) Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College.	(24) Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College.
(25) Red Lake Nation College.	(26) Sinte Gleska University.
(27) Salish Kootenai College.	(28) Sitting Bull College.
(29) Sisseton Wahpeton College.	(30) Stone Child College.
(31) Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.	(32) Turtle Mountain Community College.

(33) Tohono O'odham Community College.	(34) White Earth Tribal and Community College.
(35) United Tribes Technical College.	

***Duplicate or Multiple Submissions*** –

For the FY 2022 program, there are no restrictions in the number of applications that an eligible institution may submit. NIFA will generally only award any one institution: (1) Up to two awards in the New Discovery Research option, (2) One award for Area of Expertise, and (3) Up to two awards in Faculty/Community and Student Led TEK. There is generally a limit of three awards total to any one eligible institution in response to this RFA (Refer to Part II, C. Project and Grant Types).

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

***No Match Required*** - The TCRGP 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 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants [Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. The NIFA Grants Application Guide is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

**Table 3.** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
<b>Step One: Register</b>	<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> ).
<b>Step Two: Download Adobe</b>	Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements).
<b>Step Three: Find Application</b>	Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-TCRGP-009143</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .
<b>Step Four: Assess Readiness</b>	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

**Table 4:** Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
<a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov Online Support</a> Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a> Self-service customer-based support: <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> <a href="mailto:iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a> Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a> .	Email: <a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a>  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 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 5: Key Application Instructions**

Instruction	References (All references are to the Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part V
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 90 days of the application deadline.	N/A

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

**SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s).** See **Part V** 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 TCRGP. See **Part V** of the Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates.

**2. Field 8. Project Narrative.**

For all TCRGP research options, the project narrative shall not exceed 15, *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to 2, *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 of the following:

- a. Introduction: Identify the Project Type clearly. Include a clear statement of the

long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities that relate to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. In addition, this section is to include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- i. Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and the relevance to reservation and/or tribal community, stakeholders and ongoing state-federal, or international food and agricultural research, education, and extension programs;
- ii. the role of tribal stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation, as appropriate; and
- iii. indicate likelihood that research capacity will be enhanced at the proposing institution.

b. Objectives: All applications must include a statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.

c. Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply to the proposed effort. This section is to include:

- i. Proposed project activities.
- ii. A clear hypothesis and experimental design or objectives.
- iii. Plans to communicate results to tribal stakeholders and relevant Tribal communities.
- iv. Role of post-Doctoral or visiting scientists if applicable.
- v. Plans to publish results or share with the community.
- vi. Role to be played by the collaborating institution(s).
- vii. Indicate the role of students in this project.
- viii. Discuss possible limitations of the proposed procedures, obstacles, or unintended consequences and how they will be addressed.

d. Project Timetable: The proposal timetable is to include all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project.

***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**.

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- Applicants shall submit a budget for all years of the grant award (either two or three) including a cumulative budget.
- Applicants shall submit a budget narrative for each year and for the cumulative budget.
- Applicants shall include separate budget pages for sub-awards to



collaborating institutions for all years of the award including a cumulative budget.

- The 1994s shall retain 70 percent of the total grant award.
- Budgets must follow the amounts indicated in the chosen Research Option:
  - Area of Expertise - \$500,000
  - New Discovery Research - \$220,000
  - Applied Faculty/Community and Student Research - \$95,000
  - Students Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research - \$60,000

#### Funding Limitations per Institution:

- For each award, the submitting 1994 institution must retain at least 70 percent of the overall award.
- While at least one approved research collaborator is required, there is no requirement to make a sub-award if the collaborator agrees to this arrangement.
- For further information and instructions regarding indirect costs, refer to Part V, section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. For indirect cost funding restrictions, refer to Part IV, C. of this RFA.

Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the **Application Guide** for additional information.

**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, [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 V** of the **Application Guide**.

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program code name (TCRGP) and the program code (ZY). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the Application Guide.

**Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants.** This is required for corporate applicants. See **Part VI § 2** of the **Application Guide** for a description of the term, “corporation.”

#### **C. Funding Restrictions**

The maximum funding period is generally three years. Please see Part II, C of this RFA for the different project types.

**Indirect Cost (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) of the recipient.** Section 1462(a) and (c) of the [National Agricultural Research, Extension, and](#)

[Teaching Policy Act of 1977 \(NARETPA\)](#) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

1. the sum of an institution's negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA.

The maximum allowable IDC rate under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two rates, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee's negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC rate charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If the result of number two is the lesser of the two rates, then the maximum IDC rate allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, may not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

In the event of an award, the prime awardee is responsible for ensuring the maximum indirect cost allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections [408](#) and [410](#) of [2 CFR 200](#).

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 [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

#### **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**

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: [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 quality of research using sound program management and strong cooperative linkages in order to build institutional capacity:

### **1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Research**

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences 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. Providing information how the project will enhance research at 1994 institutions is required.

### **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. The proposed approach will be evaluated based on the soundness of the research concepts which may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of research support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages 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 research 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 or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or

expansion beyond the period of USDA support. 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 research.

### **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.

### **C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

Include this subpart if the program has specific award terms. Highlight any special reporting requirements that differ from the norm (e.g., by report type, frequency, form/format, or circumstances for use). The NIFA Director of Information Policy, Planning, and Training must approve all special requirements. When forwarding applications for award, Program must alert NIFA's Award Management Division (AMD) via the "Competitive or non-competitive proposal recommendation sheet" that the special reporting requirements need to be included as part of the provisions of award.

## **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  
National Program Leader  
Institute of Youth, Family and Community-IYFC  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
[erin.riley@usda.gov](mailto:erin.riley@usda.gov)

Ara Staab  
Program Specialist  
Institute of Youth, Family and Community – IYFC  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S Department of Agriculture  
[ara.staab@usda.gov](mailto:ara.staab@usda.gov)

Prali Chitnis  
Program Specialist  
Institute of Youth, Family and Community-IYFC  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
[prali.chitnis@usda.gov](mailto:prali.chitnis@usda.gov)

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  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061



## **APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

### **Glossary of Acronyms**

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI

Authorized Representative – AR

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA

Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP

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

Tribal College and University – TCU

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.

### 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.