



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2022

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 22, 2022

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$9,400,000

AVERAGE AWARD RANGE: \$50,000 - \$1,000,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-OP-009221

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.333

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: July 11, 2022

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

Assistance Listing: The Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative (UIE) RFA is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.333.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, September 22, 2022,
Letter of Intent:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, July 11, 2022
Applicants Comments:	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 (DEIA). NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. 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 uses 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 (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative (UIE) is a NIFA competitive grant program implemented in 2022 to support research, education and extension activities that facilitate development of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems. The UIE emphasizes activities on several segments of the value chain, including production, harvesting, transportation aggregation, packaging, distribution, and marketing needs. Input on the most urgent program priorities was obtained through public input solicited in Federal Register Notice 2020-08402 as described in Part I B of this request for applications and consultation with the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) for Urban Agriculture. The amount available for UIE is approximately \$9.4 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for UIE projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a UIE grant. This RFA solicits Standard Grants, Collaborative Grants and Conference Grants, whereas project types solicited in this RFA are Integrated Research, Education and/or Extension projects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	6
A. Legislative Authority.....	6
B. Purpose and Priorities.....	6
PART II. AWARD INFORMATION	8
A. Available Funding	8
B. Types of Application	8
C. Project and Grant Types	8
D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects.....	8
PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	9
A. Eligibility Requirements.....	9
B. Cost Sharing or Matching.....	9
PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION	10
A. Letter of Intent.....	10
B. Method of Application	11
C. Content and Form of the Application.....	11
D. Funding Restrictions.....	13
PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	15
A. NIFA’s Evaluation Process	15
B. Evaluation Criteria	16
C. Organizational Management Information	18
D. Application Disposition.....	18
PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION	19
A. General	19
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	19
C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements.....	19
PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION	20
A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget	20
B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards	20
C. Regulatory Information	20
APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT.....	21
APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	22
APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS	23

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines.....	2
Table 2: Program Key Information.....	7
Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials.....	11
Table 4: Help and Resources	11
Table 5: Key Application Instructions.....	12

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Pub. L. 101–624, title XVI, §1672E, as added by section 7212 of [Pub. L. 115–334 \(7 USC 5925g\)](#) authorizes the Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education, and Extension Initiative.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The UIE program supports research, education, and extension work by awarding grants to solve key problems of local, regional, and national importance that facilitate development of urban, indoor, and emerging agricultural systems. The authorization includes the following food value chain stages: production, harvesting, transportation, aggregation, packaging, distribution, and markets. The eight topic areas of interest identified in the authorization include the following:

- assessing and developing strategies to remediate contaminated sites;
- determining and developing the best production management and integrated pest management practices;
- identifying and promoting the horticultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to successful urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems;
- analyzing the means by which new agricultural sites are determined, including an evaluation of soil quality, condition of a building, or local community needs;
- exploring new technologies that minimize energy, improve lighting systems, improve water management, and other inputs for increased food production;
- examining building material efficiencies and structural upgrades for the purpose of optimizing growth of agricultural products;
- developing new crop varieties and agricultural products to connect to new markets; or
- examining the impacts of crop exposure to urban elements on environmental quality and food safety.

Public input was solicited through Federal Register Notice 2020-08402, stakeholder listening sessions, and consultation with the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) for Urban Agriculture to help identify the most urgent needs in the above listed food value chain stages and eight topic areas to focus on in this inaugural year of funding. An analysis of this input has focused this year’s priorities that facilitate the most urgent and critical needs in agricultural production, and markets by:

- identifying and promoting the horticultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to successful urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems
- analyzing the means by which new agricultural sites are determined, including an evaluation of soil quality, condition of a building, or local community needs
- developing new crop varieties and agricultural products to connect to new markets

Priority will be given to proposals that involve the cooperation of multiple eligible applicants. Traditional ecological knowledge may be incorporated into projects in pursuit of the purpose, priorities, and needs articulated by this request for applications

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](#).

The UIE program is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#):

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 Strategic Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers
3. Strategic Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	UIE
Program Code Name:	Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agriculture
Assistance Listing Number	10.333
Project Type:	Integrated only
Grant Type:	Standard, Collaborative, and Conference
Application Deadline	September 22, 2022
Grant Duration:	36-48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	10
Maximum Award Amount:	\$1,000,000

The UIE program seeks applications that address all of the following:

- Explain the magnitude of the most urgent and critical needs or problems for urban, indoor, or emerging agriculture and how they will be addressed in the grant;
- Focus on opportunities to develop and strengthen:
 - income or employment,
 - enhanced quality of life and access to safe nutritious food for urban and Native American communities,
 - estimated or actual economic return for UIE food production systems,
 - private industry investment,
 - site selection and reduce barriers to land access;
- Describe a meaningful approach for blending research and extension expertise and other outreach and implementation approaches throughout the project to address principal objectives;
- Provide evidence that the project is aligned to stakeholder-provided priorities listed above;
- Present expected solutions or improvements and how these will be assessed and measured;
- Address the potential costs of a proposed solution and describe how it can be scaled to be sustainable in the short term and long term; and
- Explain how the project will strengthen urban, indoor, or other emerging agricultural and food-production systems and how results will be adopted or applied at a local, regional, or national level.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for UIE in FY 2022 is approximately \$9,400,000. This will be issued as competitive awards. 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. Types of Application

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Application for FY 2022 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).

C. Project and Grant Types

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

1. Project Types. Applicants must propose Integrated project only (research, extension and /or education). An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, education, and extension) within a project.
2. Grant Types. Applicants must select the appropriate Standard, Collaborative or Conference grant type. Conference grants should focus on bringing together stakeholders to facilitate identifying critical research, education and extension needs that will support development of urban, indoor, and emerging agriculture. Conference awards cannot exceed \$50,000.

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

Eligible entities

Applications may only be submitted by the following entities:

- (A) State agricultural experiment stations;
- (B) colleges and universities;
- (C) university research foundations;
- (D) other research institutions and organizations;
- (E) Federal agencies;
- (F) national laboratories;
- (G) private organizations, foundations, or corporations;
- (H) individuals; or
- (I) any group consisting of two or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (H).

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Applicants for the UIE RFA 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.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions (by the same team and on the same objectives) are 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.

Other Funding Opportunities – The NIFA Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agriculture web page <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/uie-ag> links to other NIFA competitive programs that support urban agriculture. Please review this website and consider applying to one of these programs that may be a better fit for your proposed research, education, or extension project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required – The UIE program has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Letter of Intent

A letter of intent (LOI) is a prerequisite for the submission of an application for this Program. Although a letter of intent does not enter into the review of a subsequent application, the information that it contains allows program staff to estimate the potential review workload and plan the review.

Please use the following guidelines for LOI submission:

1. The Letter of Intent must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:
 - a. Font size must be at least 12 points
 - b. Margins must be at least one inch in all directions
 - c. Line spacing must not exceed six lines of text per vertical inch
 - d. Page size must be letter (i.e., 8.5 inches × 11 inches)
2. The Letter of Intent is limited to two pages.
 - a. On Page 1, provide only the following information:
 - i. the name, professional title, department, institution, and e-mail address of the lead project director (PD) and name, professional title, department, and institution of all collaborating investigators
 - ii. the food value chain stage (production thru markets) and the topic area of interest stated on page 6 under Part I B of this RFA that is most closely addressed in the application
 - b. On Page 2 include:
 - i. a descriptive title
 - ii. rationale
 - iii. overall hypothesis or goal
 - iv. specific objectives
 - v. approach
 - vi. potential impact and expected outcomes
 - vii. To further clarify LOI instructions for Conference Grants, LOIs should also include:
 1. The date(s) of the conference on Page 1
3. When submitting a LOI, NIFA will only accept LOI in the portable document format (PDF). Attach the PDF LOI to an e-mail addressed to the appropriate Program Area e-mail address for Submission of LOI or Program Area Priority Contacts (if there is no specific LOI e-mail listed) indicated in the RFA. In the e-mail subject line, write: Letter of Intent [Program Area Code]-[PD's Last Name].
4. A Letter of Intent is required for all grant types if requested by the program area priority.
5. With the exception of Conference Grant LOIs, submission of more than one LOI to a program is discouraged.

6. Letters of Intent will be reviewed by scientific program staff in order to plan for appropriate expertise for the peer review panel and ensure that the proposed project fits appropriately within the Program Area Priorities

B. 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 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 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements)
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-OP-009221 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	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
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

C. 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 <u>Application Guide</u>)
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 Grants.gov 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 30 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 UIE program. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed 21 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to 4 *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. Introduction;
 - b. Rational and significance;
 - c. Objectives;
 - d. Approach;
 - e. Project timeline;

- f. Cooperation and institutional involvement;
 - g. Data management plan (DMP);
 - h. Logic model;
 - i. Summary of previous work;
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 § 6** of the [Application Guide](#)).

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

1. 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 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](#)).

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

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name “Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agriculture Initiative” and the program code “UIE”. 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.”

D. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs (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

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 outcomes. 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 Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications page](#).

Detailed evaluation criteria for each project types, grant types, are outlined in the Evaluation Criteria. We will use the appropriate evaluation criteria to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. Please note: NIFA is accepting only Integrated projects, and Standard, Collaborative or Conference grant applications for this funding opportunity.

The UIE Program evaluation criteria are listed below and in priority order of importance:

(1) Rational and Significance

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon developing and strengthening urban, indoor, or emerging agriculture. Primary evaluation factor will be the degree to which the proposal clearly explains how the project will strengthen urban, indoor, or other emerging agricultural and food-production systems and how results will be adopted or applied at a local, regional, or national level.

(2) Objectives and Approach

Evaluation factors include assessment of approach for blending research and extension expertise and other outreach and implementation approaches to address principal objectives. The extent the proposal considers the potential costs of a proposed solution and describe how it can be scaled to be sustainable in the short term and long term will be considered in developing the objectives and approach. Project feasibility and probability of success will be evaluated. The extent proposals focus beyond surveys to identify factors that contribute to successful urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems is paramount.

- Project objectives and outcomes are clearly described, adequate, and appropriate. All project components (i.e., research, education, extension) – at least two are required – are reflected in one or more project objectives;
- Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible;
- Proposed research fills knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs to address the stated problem or issue;
- Proposed extension leads to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group; and
- Proposed education (teaching) has an impact upon and advances the quality of food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities and

curricula to meet clearly delineated needs and train the next generation of scientists and educators.

(3) Project Assessment

This criterion relates to projects performance monitoring and performance outcomes. Elements include the soundness of the proposed research and education methodology, performance monitoring, plan of operation, logic model, expected products and results, metrics/targets for expected solutions or improvements, and results dissemination plan. Evaluation will include the extent to which factors identified below Table 2 on page 7 of this RFA are considered in developing performance goals and milestones.

- Expected results or outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame;
- Plan and methods for evaluating success of project activities and documenting potential impact against measurable short and mid-term outcomes are suitable and feasible;
- For extension or education (teaching) activities, curricula and related products will sustain education or extension functions beyond the life of the project; and
- For extension or education (teaching) activities, the resulting curricula or products share information and recommendations based on knowledge and conclusions from a broad range of research initiatives.

(4) Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor and Management Plan

This criterion relates to the collaborating organizations capability to perform the project and to the degree to which key personnel have expertise and management plan in place to successfully carry out the proposed work. The degree to which stakeholder involvement in project development, implementation, and evaluation is demonstrated is also considered.

- Roles of key personnel are clearly defined;
- Key personnel have sufficient expertise to complete the proposed project, and where appropriate, partnerships with other disciplines (e.g., social science or economics) and institutions are established;
- Evidence of institutional capacity and competence in the proposed area of work is provided;
- Support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation are sufficient;
- A clear plan is articulated for project management, including time allocated for attainment of objectives and delivery of products, maintenance of partnerships and collaborations, and a strategy to enhance communication, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team;
- Data management plan is appropriate, clearly described, and feasible;
- Stakeholder involvement in project development, implementation, and evaluation is demonstrated, where appropriate;

(5) Budget Justification

This criterion relates to how well the total budget supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry

out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and 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 resources, optimizes research and educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity.

- The budget clearly allocates sufficient resources to carry out a set of research, education (teaching), and/or extension activities that will lead to desired outcomes, with no more than two-thirds of the budget focused on a single project component.

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, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. 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.
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
8. 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

Name	Email	Telephone
Ganesh Bora	Ganesh.bora@usda.gov	816-489-0944
Mathieu Ngouajio	Mathieu.ngouajio@usda.gov	202-570-1915
Jessica Shade	Jessica.Shade@usda.gov	
Olivia Moreno	Olivia.moreno@usda.gov	202-603-9186

Administrative Contacts

Name	Email	Telephone
Susan Moser	susan.moser@usda.gov	515-414-9706

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
3. Awards under this RFA, please email 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

Authorized Representative - AR
Data Management Plan - DMP
Indirect Costs - IDC
Letter of Intent - LOI
National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 - NARETP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture - NIFA
Portable Document Format - PDF
Project Director - PD
Project Narrative - PN
Project Summary - PS
Request for Application - RFA
Research, Education, and Economics - REE
Total Federal Funds Awarded - TFFA
The Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative - UIE
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.

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.