REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
Community Food Projects
Competitive Grant Program

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year 2023
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	October 7, 2022 5:00 P.M. EST
ANTICIPATED FUNDING:	$4,800,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-CFP-009321
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.225
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE:	Not Required

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

Assistance Listing. The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.225.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	FY2023 - 5:00 P.M. Eastern, October 7, 2022
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

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, and 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 (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Community Food Projects RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This RFA outlines the guidance for applications for CFPCGP for fiscal year (FY) 2023. The amount available for CFPCGP in FY2023 is approximately $4,800,000. The CFPCGP requests proposals for three types of grants, (1) Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA), (2) Planning Projects (PP), and (3) Community Food Projects (CFP).

This RFA is being released prior to passage of a full appropriations act for FY2023. Enactment of a continuing resolution or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the objectives for CFPCGP projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a CFPCGP grant.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A.   Legislative Authority

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) (7 U.S.C. 2034) was authorized by Public Law 104-127 (Title IV, section 401(h), April 4, 1996) which amended the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011) and added §25, Assistance for Community Food Projects (7 U.S.C. 2034). Public Law 88-525.

B.   Purpose and Priorities

The primary goals of the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP), Assistance Listing 10.225 are as follows (7 U.S.C. 2034(b)):

    a. Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service;
    b. Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; and
    c. Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or
    d. Meet specific state, tribal, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to:
        i. Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; planning for long-term solutions; or
        ii. The creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

The CFPCGP is intended to bring together stakeholders from distinct parts of the food system and to foster understanding of national food security trends and how they might improve local food systems. Understanding that low-income individuals experience disproportionate access to healthy foods, projects are to address food and nutrition insecurity, particularly among our nation's most vulnerable populations. Nutrition Security is defined as having consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being. Communities that are partially or fully located in Opportunity Zones are particularly encouraged to apply.

USDA Strategic Plan: The CFPCGP priorities directly align with. USDA Strategic Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans; Objective 4.1; Increase Food Security Through Assistance and Access to Nutritious and Affordable Food.

Modifications for FY2023
1. Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP) is competing one Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) grant award.
2. Grantees of Planning Projects and Community Foods Projects and Planning Projects will cooperate with the T&TA provider for services offered which may include assistance in project development, grantsmanship training, project evaluation, and leadership development. Activities might include, but are not limited to, project director meetings, conference meeting, telephone appointments, workshop training, peer to peer interaction, one on one training, curricula development, webinars, and/or videoconferencing. Refer to T&TA goals for more information in PART I description under (Table 1).

3. This RFA includes revised program descriptions.
4. The evaluation requirements are streamlined for all solicited grant types.
5. Eligibility requirements are clarified for Community Food Projects and Planning Projects.

C.   Program Area Description

In FY 2023 NIFA's CFPCGP intends to solicit applications and fund three types of grants. The grant types are entitled (1) Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Projects, (2) Planning Projects (PP) and (3) Community Food Projects (CFP).

Table 2: Training and Technical Assistance Grant (T&TA) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	LN.A
Program Code Name	Training and Technical Assistance grant
Assistance Listing Number	10.225
Project Type:	T&TA
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	October 7, 2022 at 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated number of awards	One
Period of Performance:	Not to exceed four 4 years
Anticipated Award Amounts:	Award not to exceed $250,000 awarded annually on continuation basis; not to exceed $1M over 4 years
Matching requirements	No Match required

Training and Technical Assistance Grant (T&TA)

In FY2023, NIFA will competitively award one, continuation multi-year grant. Applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. No single T&TA award shall exceed $250,000 in any single year or $1M in 4 years (see Table 2). No matching of funds is required. All T&TA awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards.

1.   Expertise for T&TA should encompass the broad array of community food activities, including a strong comprehensive evaluation, using a scientific, evidence-based evaluation method which leads to an objective assessment of CFP projects according to primary goals the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers; (see PART 1B).

2. The T&TA provider should have broad expertise and have national relevance and scope and provide a one-stop service to CFPCGP applicants requesting technical assistance.

3. Organizations that can demonstrate an involvement in community food and nutrition security issues and programs along with strong training experience, and competence in outcome evaluation are strongly encouraged to apply.

4. T&TA projects must offer CFPCGP grantees and grantees with grantsmanship writing and reporting skills and resources to help them to increase their skills in developing competitive applications that meet CFPCG primary goals. Training and resources should be accessible at various stages in the grant-making cycle and should be culturally appropriate. Additionally, use of innovative technologies, peer-to-peer interactions, webinars and/or videoconferencing, recordings etc., is critical.

5. T&TA projects must offer CFPCGP grantees with relevant technical assistance related to grant application and submission into grants.gov, and evaluation and reporting, ensuring high quality technical reports in NIFA reporting systems as well as a deepened understanding of the financial reporting requirements and post-award prior approval processes included in award terms and conditions.

6. T&TA projects will form regional networks to strengthen relationships; create opportunities for collaboration amongst grantees; and organize an annual CFPCGP project director meeting. This meeting will be attended annually by CFPCGP awardees and NIFA staff.

7. T&TA projects will also organize a CFPCGP Annual Conference. The annual CFPCGP conference will be a learning and outreach event with open attendance to the CFPCGP community including non-grantees interested in community food projects work.

8. T&TA projects will assess CFPGP outreach gaps and conduct outreach to increase awareness and understanding of CFPCGP in underserved states and communities.

9. T&TA projects will use their expertise in community-based outcome-based reporting to compile project data from CFPCGP grantees to produce an annual report highlighting the impacts the program in improving the access to nutritious foods and reducing food insecurity among limited resource communities. The report is to include the following headings: (i) CFPCGP's outcomes (ii) CFPCGP impacts (iii) CFPCGP geographic reach and program outreach metrics and, (iv) T&TA impact data.

Examples: T&TA services offered may include assistance in project development, grantsmanship training, project evaluation, leadership development, and/or assistance on a particular type of project, for example, youth farm enterprises, urban farms, community gardens, direct marketing, and farm-to-institution methods, or other services. Activities might include, but are not limited to, telephone hotline, workshop training, peer to peer interaction, one on one training, curricula development, webinars, and/or video-conferencing.

Table 3: Planning Project (PP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	LN. B
Program Code Name:	Planning Project
Assistance Listing Number:	10.225
Project Type:	PP
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline:	October 7, 2022, at 5:00 PM EST
Planning Activity Duration:	12-36 Months; Not to Exceed 3 years
Maximum # of Awards Per Applicant:	1
Anticipated Award Amounts:	Average award is $25,000 for 12-36 months. Maximum award is $35,000 over 12-36 months. One-time award.
Matching requirements	1:1 Match is required

Planning Projects (PP) Grant

Planning Projects (PP) applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. Average award is approximately $25,000 for 12-36 months. Maximum award is $35,000 over 12-36 months (see Table 3). This is a one-time award. Applicants are to provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. All PP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards. Grantees of PP will be required to participate in the CPPCGP program evaluation, including required project data collection, sharing of data with the T&TA entity.

Purpose: The purpose of the PP is to complete plans toward the improvement of community food security in keeping with the primary goals of the CFPCGP (see Part I § B of this RFA). Planning Projects are to focus on a defined community and describe in detail the activities and outcomes of the planning project. The PP is to prepare a plan for a successful Community Food Project in keeping with the purpose of CFP program goals. Therefore, the planning grant is expected to model all aspects of the Community Food Projects.

PP Proposals: Preference will be given to PP proposals designed to:
1. Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system;
2. Support the development of entrepreneurial plans;
3. Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and non-profit food sectors;
4. Encourage long-term planning activities, and sustainable, multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the communities, such as food policy councils and food planning associations; or
5. Develop plans for new resources and strategies to help reduce food insecurity in the community and prevent food insecurity in the future through planning strategies to:
   a. Develop creative food resources on food systems
   b. Coordinate food services with park and recreation programs and other community-based outlets to reduce barriers to access; or
   c. Plan to create or leverage existing nutrition education programs for at-risk or vulnerable populations to enhance food-purchasing and food-preparation skills

and to heighten awareness of the connection between diet and health. Extant federally funded programs that can be leveraged include, The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), and EFNEP, and The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed).

6. Additionally, preference will be given to PP proposals that plan to apply a systems approach to address social determinants of health (SDOH) and increase the capacity of communities to increase food security through assistance and access to nutritious and affordable food; and Prioritize nutrition security and critical current and future effects of climate change on food systems. The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program seeks to improve food and nutrition security in limited resource communities through a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) framework. For this RFA, the SDOH framework is defined as conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that can affect health risks and outcomes. Food systems are defined as a range of sectors or subsystems and activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal, and natural environments in which they are embedded. A sustainable food system is one that delivers food and nutrition security equitably in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases to generate food and nutrition security for future generations are not compromised.

Consultation with the Training and Technical Assistance Provider (T&TA):
PP grantees will be ***required*** to cooperate with the T&TA provider for the following services:
    (i)   attend PD meetings
    (ii)   submitting project evaluation reports annually for the life of the grant.
           PP grantees will be strongly encouraged to participate in the optional services provided by the T&TA provider including:
    (i)   technical assistance related to application, project development etc.
    (ii)   grantsmanship training
    (iii)   project evaluation training
    (iv)   leadership/capacity development training.
These optional activities might include but are not limited to conferences, telephone appointments, workshops, peer to peer interaction, one on one training, curricula development, webinars, and/or videoconferencing. Refer to T&TA goals for more information in Part I description under (Table 1).

Examples: PP examples include, but are not limited to, community food assessments, coordination of collaboration development plans, Global Information System (GIS) analyses, food sovereignty studies, and farm-to-institution exploration. All projects must involve low-income participants.

Table 4: Community Food Project (CFP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	LN.C
Program Code Name	Community Food Project
Assistance Listing Number	10.225
Project Type:	CFP
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	October 7, 2022 at 5:00 PM EST
Grant Duration:	Not to exceed 48 Months
Anticipated Award Amounts:	Average award is $298,000 over 36 to 48 months. The minimum award is $125,000 over 12 months and maximum award is $400,000 over 48 months. The purpose of the award is to support the development of a Community Food Project with a **ONE-TIME contribution** of federal dollars to become self-sustaining ([7 U.S.C. 2034(b)](#)).
Matching requirement	1:1 Match is required

Community Food Projects (CFP) Grant

Community Food Projects (CFP) applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. Average award is approximately $298,000 over 36 to 48 months. No single award will exceed $125,000 in any single year or $400,000 over four years (See Table 4). This is a one-time award. Applicants are to provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. Applicants may request one, two, three, or four years of funding, but in all cases, the grant term may not exceed four years for any proposal. A no-cost extension to a fifth year may be requested. All CFP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards. Grantees of CFP will be required to participate in the CPPCGP program evaluation, including required project data collection, sharing of data with the T&TA entity.

Purpose: The purpose of the CFP is to support the development of projects with a ONE-TIME infusion of federal dollars to make such projects self-sustaining. CFPs are designed to create community-based food projects with objectives, activities and outcomes that are in alignment with CFPCGP primary goals.

CFP Proposals: Preference will be given to CFP proposals designed to:

1. Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system;
2. Support the development of entrepreneurial projects;
3. Develop innovative connections between the for-profit and non-profit food sectors;
4. Encourage long-term planning activities, and sustainable, multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the communities, such as food policy councils and food planning associations; or
5. Develop new resources and strategies to help reduce food insecurity in the community and prevent food insecurity in the future by:

a. Developing creative food resources on food systems
b. Coordinating food services with park and recreation programs and other community-based outlets to reduce barriers to access; or
c. Creating or leveraging existing nutrition education programs for at-risk or vulnerable populations to enhance food-purchasing and food-preparation skills and to heighten awareness of the connection between diet and health. Extant federally funded programs that can be leveraged include, The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), and EFNEP, and The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed).
6. Additionally, preference will be given to CFP proposals that apply a systems approach to address social determinants of health (SDOH) and increase the capacity of communities to increase food security through assistance and access to nutritious and affordable food; and prioritize nutrition security and critical current and future effects of climate change on food systems. The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program seeks to improve food and nutrition security in limited resource communities through a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) framework. For this RFA, the SDOH framework is defined as conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that can affect health risks and outcomes. Food systems are defined as a range of sectors or subsystems and activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal, and natural environments in which they are embedded. A sustainable food system is one that delivers food and nutrition security equitably in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases to generate food and nutrition security for future generations are not compromised.

Consultation with the Training and Technical Assistance Provider (T&TA):
PP grantees will be ***required*** to cooperate with the T&TA provider for the following services:
   (i)   attend PD meetings
   (ii)   submitting project evaluation reports annually for the life of the grant.
           PP grantees will be strongly encouraged to participate in the optional services provided by the T&TA provider including:
   (i)   technical assistance related to application, project development etc.
   (ii)   grantsmanship training
   (iii)   project evaluation training
   (iv)   leadership/capacity development training
These optional activities might include but are not limited to conferences, telephone appointments, workshops, peer to peer interaction, one on one training, curricula development, webinars, and/or videoconferencing. Refer to T&TA goals for more information in Part I description under (Table 1).

Examples: CFP examples include, but are not limited to, community gardens with market stands, value chain projects, food hubs, farmers' markets, farm-to-institutions projects, and marketing & consumer cooperatives. All projects must involve low-income consumers.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A.   Available Funding

The amount available for the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP) in FY 2023 is approximately $4,800,000 each year. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. This RFA is being released prior to passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2023. Enactment of a continuing resolution or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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. Applications for FY 2023 are limited to the following application types:
1. *New applications:* 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 applications:* Resubmitted 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). Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria. Resubmitting 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). NIFA will not review applications for proposals that exceed the budgetary guidelines.

C.   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
To be eligible for a grant under subsection (b), a public food program service provider, a tribal organization, or a private nonprofit entity, including gleaners, must-

(1) have experience in the area of-

(A) community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-sized farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets in low-income communities for agricultural producers;

(B) job training and business development activities for food-related activities in low-income communities; or

(C) efforts to reduce food insecurity in the community, including food distribution, improving access to services, or coordinating services and programs;

(2) demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;

(3) demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, practitioners, and other interested parties; and

(4) collaborate with 1 or more local partner organizations to achieve at least 1 hunger-free communities' goal.

Eligibility is further explained in the following:

Training and Technical Assistance Grant Eligibility
Eligibility to apply for the CFPCGP Training and Technical Assistance grant (T&TA) is limited to nongovernmental organizations, state cooperative extension services, region food systems centers, Federal, State or Tribal agencies, and institutions of higher education. Training and Technical Assistance Grants proposals are not invited every year.

Community Foods Projects and Planning Projects Grant Eligibility
Types of Institutions/organization eligible to apply for Planning Projects (PP) and Community Food Projects (CFP) are Private Nonprofit entities. "Private Nonprofit entities" are defined as any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which: (i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (ii) is not organized primarily for profit; and (iii) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

To be eligible for a grant, a private nonprofit applicant must meet four mandatory requirements:
1. Have experience in the area of:
   a. Community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-size farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets in low-income communities for agricultural producers;
   b. Job training and business development activities for food-related activities in low-income communities; and
   c. Efforts to reduce food insecurity in the low-income community, including food distribution, improving access to services, or coordinating services and programs.

2. Demonstrate competency to implement a project and provide fiscal accountability. Fiscal Agent. A Fiscal agent is an organization managing financial responsibilities on behalf of the applicant. If an institution/organization cannot accept Federal funds directly, a letter must be included in the application stating that in the event the application results in an award, the award funds must be administered through a fiscal agent on their behalf. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by an authorized representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. This letter is to be included as an attachment to Field 12, Other Attachments (see Part IV § B of this RFA). In the event an application is recommended for funding, NIFA will request that both the applicant or institution/organization and the fiscal agent organization submit complete management information (see Part V § C of this RFA).

3. Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results; and collaborate with 1 or more local partner organizations to achieve at least 1 hunger-free communities' goal. See http://ric.nal.usda.gov/10583 for more information about hunger-free communities goals. Data collection and preparation of reports and other necessary documentation in the form of a Data Management Plan (DMP)is required for this program.
   a. Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see Part V § B of this RFA, Part III § 3.1 of the Application Guide and NIFA's Data Management Plan).
   b. Applicants are to demonstrate willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, and include a plan for dissemination of results through a well written DMP.

4. Partners and Collaboration with one or more local partner organizations to achieve at least one of the hunger-free communities' goal. (See Steps for a Hunger-Free Community).
   a. Partners and Collaborators: Applicants for CFP and PP awards are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit, or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities.
   b. Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators do not need to meet the eligibility requirements. When planning collaborations, see Part III § B of this RFA.
   c. Award recipients may sub-award to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project. See Part IV § C of this RFA.

Applicants for the CFPCGP 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 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 applicants understand the Federal awards process.

B.   Cost Sharing or Matching

Match is required for PP and CFP applications. PP and CFP applicants are to provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. Matching funds must be accurately documented for all project years at the time the application in the R&R Budget and SF-424 forms. Matching funds may include cash and/or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions, fairly evaluated, including facilities, equipment, or services. In-kind contributions are donations of goods, services, or time.

The matching funds, or non-federal share of the funding may come from state government, local government, other non-profit entities, or private sources. Federal money cannot be used to match unless it is expressly authorized to be used for this purpose. Examples of qualifying matching contributions may include direct costs such as: rent for office space used exclusively for the funded project; duplication or postage costs; and staff time from an entity other than the applicant for job training or nutrition education.

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 and Grants 101. **Table 5** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the 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 5: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	*New Users* 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-CFP-009321** search for application here: Opportunity Package.
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess your organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 6: 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 iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov 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

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, or 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 7** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 7: 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 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 CFPGP See Part V of the Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8. The Project Narrative**
    Please Note: The project narrative is not to exceed 15 pages and may be written as 10 pages of text and 5 pages of tables and figures or tables and figures embedded in text for a maximum of 15 pages. Spacing required is 1.5 spacing. The font size for project narrative and for all text on tables and figures are to be no smaller than 11 points, in Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition.

A. T & TA Projects

The Project Narrative for T & TA Projects should include the heading followed by a response for each of the points noted below.

  a. **Community Food Security Issues and Programs.** The proposal should provide a succinct description of community food security issues, programs, and the scope of involvement of the T&TA applicant. Experience in using social determinants of health and systems approaches to reduce food insecurity in limited resourced communities should be noted as should pertinent information regarding demographic and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or type(s) of organizations previously served and/or to be served.

  b. **Organizations Involved.** List all collaborating organizations and individuals who will be assisting and their respective roles in the provision of training and technical assistance. Provide documentation with letters of support showing commitment from organizations and individuals who have agreed to collaborate if the proposal is funded by NIFA (see Key Organizational Support below). This is critical as T&TA becomes a one stop referral for all T&TA needs of applicants.

  c. **Project Goals and Objectives.** List the goals and objectives of the project and a justification for the goals in terms of the types of services that will be provided.

  d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** Discuss how the goals will be achieved. Provide a systematic description of the approach by which the goals will be accomplished. A chart may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

  e. **Timeline.** On an annual basis, identify the major milestones that will indicate progress toward achieving the project goals and objectives. Provide a standardized timeline or systematic description of the approach for accomplishing these major outcomes. A chart may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

  f. **Work plan.** The proposed work plan can be for a period of up to four years. Training and technical assistance should be scheduled so that potential applicant organizations will have ample opportunity to take advantage of the assistance offered with sufficient time to construct and submit a CFP proposal in the foreseeable near future. T&TA for existing grantees should be timed so that grantees can utilize the assistance provided to improve their projects during the grant period. Work plan should include a feasible plan to increase projects from underserved communities and states.

  g. **Evaluation.** T&TA proposals should contain an internal evaluation component to provide enough timely information over the course of the project to improve the training and technical assistance. A plan for the dissemination of project results should be included.

  h. **Sustain CFP-type activities.** The Project Narrative for T&TA Projects does not have to address self-sustainability as such projects are not expected to become self-sustaining following the expenditure of Federal funds. However, T&TA Project applicants may want to address how their training and assistance activities will help sustain CFP-type activities in future years in the areas to be served.

B. Planning Projects (PP)

The Project Narrative for PP should include the heading followed by the response for each of the points noted below.

a. **The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed.** Identify and succinctly describe your approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served. It is strongly recommended that assets of low-income communities be included in the analysis. The needs addressed should directly relate to project goals and objectives described below. It is recommended that this section be no more than one and one-half pages.

b. **The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.** List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed PP and the segments of the local food economy or system they link. Include a description of the relevant experience of each community group or organization, including the applicant organization, that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Planning Projects should address how the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of low-income communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers; It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages. Letters from the key organizations involved in the project, acknowledging their support and contributions, must be provided. A limited number of other support letters – such as those from farmers or schools – where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement. All support letters should be attached in Field 12, Other Attachments (See Part IV, B.3.c., below, Key Organization Support).

c. **Project Goals and Objectives.** List the outcome-based goals and objectives of the project and a justification for the goals in terms of the identified need(s). Be specific. Ensure that low-income residents are actively engaged in planning project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Also include a description of low-income input and decision-making in the formulation of the goals and objectives. Discuss how significant the low-income food security issues are that will be addressed by the proposed project; an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs; discuss how specifically the community named in this description will benefit from the proposed project. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages.

d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** Discuss how the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved. Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by

providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table of up to three pages be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning and implementation; (b) timetables for milestones; and, as relevant, (c) expected numbers of participants involved in each step of the process. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages, although a table may be added as an additional page (within the total 15-page limit) to relate specific activities to goals and outcomes.

e. **Relationship to Program Objectives.** Discuss how project outcomes will address the objectives of the CFPCGP as described in Part I., B., and how the project will make a difference for the low-income community. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

C. Community Food Projects (CFPs)

The Project Narrative for Community Foods Projects Grants must include the following headings followed by the response for each of the points noted below.

a. **The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed**
Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served. Beyond a recitation of statistics, applications should describe local capabilities and assets, such as those identified in a community food assessment, and involvement of low-income communities in the context of project activities and operations.

Most relevant is an explanation of why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application. Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed. The needs addressed must directly relate to project goals and objectives described below. It is recommended that this section be no more than one and one-half pages.

b. **The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.** List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed project and the segments of the local food economy or system they link. Include a description of **the** relevant experience of each community group or organization, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in low-income communities or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in outreach to low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership must reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard.

Ensure that low-income representation is actively involved in planning project goals, objectives, and outcomes. In particular, describe how the communities being served – particularly the targeted residents and organizations – were involved in planning the project and will be engaged in its implementation. Please reference planning

activities, assessments, meetings, or other activities that demonstrate community members as the "center of efforts and key decision-makers" and not recipients of assistance.

c. **Project Goals and Intended Outcomes.** List the goals and intended outcomes of the project. Outcomes must describe specific changes or results that will occur as a consequence of the project and that will constitute "success" for the initiative. These may include benefits caused by program activities such as changes in participants' skills, behavior, or qualities of life, and positive changes in conditions in the community served or reductions in negative conditions. Outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, and must describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people, e.g., residents, participants, will benefit. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages.

d. **Activities to Achieve the Goals.** Discuss how the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved. Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table of up to three pages be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning and implementation; (b) timetables for milestones; and, as relevant, (c) expected numbers of participants involved in each step of the process.

e. **Relationship to Program Goals.** Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the goals of this program as described in Part I. B. Discuss the specific changes that will result among participants or in the communities served that address these CFPCGP priorities. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

f. **Evaluation**. Proposals must contain a strong evaluation component. Innovative evaluation strategies are especially encouraged. Evaluations should focus on "logic models" (the logic model must be attached to Field 12, see Part IV. B) and the measurement of Indicators of Success in meeting the legislative goals and objectives of the CFPCGP. (See Appendix III, Definitions.) Through CFPCGP project operations and an evaluation of them, USDA seeks to determine best practices, including valuable lessons learned; therefore, proposals are encouraged that include both process evaluations (developing and monitoring indicators of progress towards the objectives) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met). In order to allow for sufficient evaluation of projects as described, it is recommended that applicants set aside between five and ten percent of the total project budget for evaluation purposes. Grantees of Planning Projects and Community Foods Projects and will be required to participate in the CPPCGP program evaluation, including required project data collection, and sharing with the T&TA provider annually.

g. **Self-Sustainability.** Describe why a one-time infusion of federal funds will be sufficient for the proposed project. Projects must provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a business plan, to demonstrate that it is likely to become self-sustaining and provide employees with important job skills. Business plan outlines or any other document of evidence for sustainability are limited to five pages and should be included as an appendix. Such evidence in part of the additional seven

pages of the project narrative (see page 17) and should be included as an appendix and attached in Field 12 Other Attachment (see Part IV § B).

1. **Field 12. Other Attachments**
   a. *Response to Previous Review*. This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" Part II § B identifies the type of application(s) that may be submitted in response to this RFA. PDs must respond to the previous review summary on no more than one page titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW" and save file as ResponsetoPreviousReview. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative subject to the page limitations of that section.
   b. *Appendices to Project Narrative.* Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Appendices germane to the project include, market analysis, business plans etc. The addition of appendices must not exceed seven (7) pages and should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.
   c. *Results from Prior CFPCGP Support.* This requirement only applies to applicants who have received prior grant award(s) under this program. If the PD or a co-PD has received CFPCGP, including support in the past five years, information on results from that prior funding is required. This information will be used in the review of the application. PDs must summarize prior results from funding and limit the response to one page per award. For each award, list the NIFA award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project and a summary of the results of the completed work. Save file as Prior CFPCGP Support.
   d. *Key Organization Support.* Attach signed letters from key organizations involved in the project acknowledging their support, contributions, and commitment; title the attachment 'Key Organization Support'. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and decision-making. This section is limited to two-page letters of support for each key organization. (See subsection 1. or 2., as appropriate, of Part IV § B for additional information).
   e. *Matching Funds Documentation.* For CFP and PP applicants, this grant program requires applicants to match Federal funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources as described in Part III § B. For grants that require matching funds as specified under Part III § B, the Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of each entity providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement). However, you are still subject to documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, etc. as specified in 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the Uniform Guidance)," 7 CFR 3430, "Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions," and program-specific regulations, as applicable. In instances where match is required, any resulting award will require the signature of an Authorized Representative. Only when NIFA receives the award signed by the AR will award funds be released and available for drawdown.
   f. *Appendices to Project Narrative.* Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of

appendices must not exceed seven (7) pages for CFP and PP proposals and should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

g. ***Logic Model***. A logic model is required for this CFP program. Title the attachment as 'Logic Model' in the document header and save file as 'LogicModel'. Applicants should seek the help of academic or other experts in evaluation design and implementation, as appropriate and available. A logic model or chart may also be used. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page. See Logic Model Planning Process for more information.

h. ***Data Management Plan (DMP)***. A DMP is required for this program. Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the DMP. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see Part V § B of this RFA, Part III § 3.1 of the Application Guide and NIFA's Data Management Plan).

i. ***Fiscal Agent Letter*. See Part III.A. If it is necessary to include a fiscal agent letter, then title the attachment as 'Fiscal Agent' in the document header and save file as 'FiscalAgent'. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile).See Part V of the** Application Guide for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates. All biographical sketches must indicate the employment history of each PD and Co-PD for the last 10 years. Applicants must include the current and pending support form as an attachment in the application. Applicants must include the current and pending support form as an attachment in the application listing PD (also known as Principal Investigator (PI)), Co-PD's and any named key personnel to be supported by the grant. The PD and Co-PDs must include a conflict-of-interest form.

j. ***R&R Personal Data.*** This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see Part V § 6 of the Application Guide).

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

2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See Part IV § C of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V 7.9** of the Application Guide for additional information.
3. Domestic Travel - During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend a PD meeting each year. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss their projects, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

Data Management Plan. A DMP is required for this program. **Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan.** 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).

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the Application Guide.
1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program
   a. For Community Food Project applications, enter the program code LN.C
   b. For Planning Projects, enter the program code LN.B (Accurate entry is critical.)
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

Fully negotiated rate. Applicants must use the current negotiated Indirect Cost (IDC) rate established by its cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds). If awarded, the applicant will be required to produce a negotiated IDC rate agreement from the cognizant agency in order to recover IDC. If unable to obtain a negotiated rate from its cognizant agency, the applicant is not permitted indirect cost reimbursement. Rather, the applicant may only be reimbursed for allowable direct costs. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the applicant wants full IDC, but does not have a negotiated rate, and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC (see Sample IDC calculations). Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process. Applicants need only to calculate an IDC rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package in order to obtain a negotiated rate.

Sub-award Restriction. The applicant must perform a substantive portion of the project and no more than **50 percent** of a CFP or PP, as determined by budget expenditures, may be sub awarded. Projects may divide their budget allocations between partners as it fits their work plan.

(For additional knowledge or expertise that is not available within the applicant organization, funds for expert consultation may be included in the "All Other Direct Costs" section of the proposed budget.)

Funding Period Limitation. The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to sub-awards made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

Construction and Renovation.
Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

SAMPLE-APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SCREENING
This checklist is just **suggested** not required and applies to both Community Food Project and Planning Project Grant applications unless where specified.

1.	New Users to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Click Here to Register). For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's Grants Overview provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help applicants understand the Federal awards process.
2.	Application deadline: October 7, 2022 at 5:00 PM Eastern Time Late submissions will not be accepted. Late submission (5:01 pm EST and later). Late application policy: https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/late-application-consideration
3.	Eligibility requirements met. Applicants for CFP and PP must meet the eligibility in **PART III** of the RFA.
4.	**All application documents and attachments must be in a Portable Document Format (PDF)** Only documents and attachments uploaded in PDF format will be considered for review. Follow the submission instructions – provided in Part IV § 1.5 of the application guide.
5.	Correct program Code is used: Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) - Program Code: LN.A
6.	Correct program Code is used: Planning Project (PP) - **Program Code: LN.B**
7.	Correct program Code is used: Community Foods Project (CFP) - Program Code: LN.C
8.	Budget within limits. Budget for Training and Technical Assistance (program code LN.A) not exceeding $250,000. Budget for Planning Project (program code LN. B) not exceeding $35,000. Community Food Project (program code LN.C) not exceeding $125,000 in a single year or $400,000 over four years.
9.	Matching funds are required dollar-for-dollar for all federal funds at the time the application is submitted. Matching funds must be accurately provided in the R&R Budget and SF-424 forms in the application. Matching is required for CFP and PP applications only.
10.	The Project Summary/Abstract must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program
11.	The project narrative is not to exceed 15 pages and may be written as 10 pages of text and 5 pages of tables and figures or tables and figures embedded in text for a maximum of 15 pages. Spacing required is 1.5 spacing. The font size for project narrative and for all text on tables and figures are to be no smaller than 11 points, in Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri.
12.	Any Appendices to Project Narrative must be relevant/germane to the narrative and are not to exceed 7 pages. Examples are given in RFA PART III.
13.	Data Management Plan. A DMP is required for this program. See RFA PART III.
14.	Letters of support as per RFA
15.	Logic Model: A logic model is required for this program; both CFP and PP applications. See RFA PART III.
16.	A letter stating eligibility such as proof of non-profit status is required.
17.	Conflict of Interest form is required.
18.	Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R provided in **Part IV § 1.5 of the application guide**
19.	All biographical sketches indicate the employment history of each PD and Co-PD for the last 10 years.
20.	A current and pending support form is required as an attachment in the application.
21.	Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein
22.	No Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. We will only accept the most recent and on time submission. Submit on time.
23.	Review the entire RFA to ensure all other documents required for your application package are submitted.

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, and consumers) 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, <u>not</u> 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 evaluation criteria below for Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) applications, listed in priority order of importance, to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to: (1) (a) meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;
2. Likelihood that proposed T&TA project will support CFP grants in improving community food security using a SDOH framework and systems approach and become self-sustaining;
3. Likelihood that proposed T&TA project will support PP grantees to increase conversion of planning grants into competitive community food project applications;
4. The experience of the applicant and other organizations to be involved in the proposed project. Applicants should demonstrate a history of or the capability for involvement in other similar T&TA programs. The relevant qualifications of staff involved in the proposed project should be provided;
5. How well the proposed project meets CFPCGP training needs of grantees and likelihood that proposed methods will increase their grantsmanship, project design, and reporting skills. Including how well proposed activities are culturally appropriate and accessible;
6. How well the proposed project meets technical needs of grantees specific to NIFA's application screening criteria provided in the RFA and likelihood that proposed methods will increase timeliness and quality of grantees reports through NIFA's reporting systems;
7. Quality of proposed plans to organize, deliver and report on a CFPCGP annual project directors meeting;
8. Achievability of T&TA plans to assess CFPCGP gaps and provide outreach to increase awareness and understanding of CFPCGP in underserved states and communities;
9. Experience of applicant in forming regional networks to strengthen relationships; create opportunities for collaboration amongst grantees and likelihood of success organizing an annual CFPCGP national conference;
10. Experience of T&TA applicant in program evaluation and production of annual reports. (Report headings would include (i) CFPCGP's outcomes (ii) CPCGP impacts (iii) geographic reach and program outreach metrics and, (iv) T&TA impact data);
11. The timeline for accomplishing the planning, scheduling, delivery, and dissemination of results of T&TA is realistic and achievable; and
12. Budget is appropriate. While the size of the budget is not an evaluation criterion, the reviewers are to comment whether it matches logically with the program activities described in the narrative.

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria below for Planning Project (PP) applications, listed in priority order of importance to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (b) increase the self-reliance of low-income communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;

2. How significant are the low-income food security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project; is there an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs; How specifically will the community named in this description benefit from the proposed project;

3. The appropriateness of the goals, objectives and outcomes of the project and how these will be achieved to invest in building the capacity of the applicant and its partners in food security efforts and policies. Proposed project activities are designed to address one or more of the following outcomes, which will be given equal weight: (i) Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system; (ii) Support the development of entrepreneurial projects; (iii) Innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; (iv) Long-term activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations; or (v) Develop new resources and strategies to help reduce food insecurity in the community and prevent foods insecurity in the future.

4. The relevance of the organization's experience that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. Applicant organizations demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in low-income communities or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in outreach to low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard; and

5. The timeline for accomplishing project goals, objectives and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria for Community Food Projects (CFP) below, listed in priority order of importance, to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. The appropriateness of the goals, purposes, and outcomes of the project and how these goals will be achieved to invest in building the assets of the community, and the capacities of the applicant and its low-income partners. Evidence that members of low-income communities are engaged in planning and implementing solutions to advance food security in their

community. Proposed project activities are designed to address one or more of the following preferences, which will be given equal weight:

    a. Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system;

    b. Support the development of entrepreneurial projects;

    c. Develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors;

    d. Encourage long-term activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations; or

    e. Help reduce food insecurity in the community and prevent foods insecurity in the future;

    f. Apply a systems approach to address social determinants of health and increase the capacity of communities to build a more sustainable, resilient, equitable, and nourishing food systems in the communities; and

    g. Prioritize nutrition security and critical current and future effects of climate change on food systems.

2. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the primary goals of the CFPCGP which are to:

    a. Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service;

    b. Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities;

    c. Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; and

    d. Meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to:

        i. Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project;

        ii. Planning for long-term solutions;

        iii. The creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

3. How significant are the low-income food security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project and is there an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs. T

4. The relevance of the experience of the organizations that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. The applicant organization demonstrates a history of, commitment to, and direct involvement in food security projects in low-income communities or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in actively engaging low-income participants. Applicants must demonstrate the knowledge of best practices in the field and the use of them in their plans or projects.

5. The benefits of the program accrue primarily to the low-income population. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflects the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed plans or activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community and a demonstrated dedication to building the capacities of low-income residents will be considered as important

as academic or professional credentials in this regard. Professional salaries are in balance with compensation given to low-income residents for their participation in the initiative.

6. The viability of activities for Community Foods Project in achieving the community's self-sufficiency with a one-time infusion of federal funds. Evidence is to be provided to demonstrate that the project, only for CFP, is likely to become self-sustaining, e.g., a market analysis or the outlines of a business plan. Other pending or awarded projects should identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project after federal funding has ended. Proposed budgets for CFP must match proposed activities. While the size of the budget is not an evaluation criterion, reviewers are asked to comment on whether the budget matches logically with the program activities described in the narrative.

7. The strength of the proposed project's evaluation component and how it will contribute to CFPCGP evaluations on a national basis, including sharing project results, with the training and technical assistance provider using identified formats such as "exemplary practices" format.

8. The timeline for accomplishing project goals, objectives and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

9. Additional evaluation criteria for Resubmitted Applications only: Evaluate responsiveness to previous comments and recommendations by reviewers including the response to the previous review panel summary.

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.

Federal Financial Management Requirements. Grantees are expected to comply with applicable federal financial management requirements included in the award's terms and conditions and 2 CFR Part 200. Below is a list of major requirements. Failure to comply could trigger significant audit liability and require global reconstruction of the grantees accounting system.

Separation of Funds. To avoid commingling of funds, grantees must establish a unique account(s) in their accounting system to capture and accumulate funding and related costs of the grant, apart from other federal and non-federal grants, projects and cost centers.

Budget Categories. To reduce the risk of material budget fluctuations changing the grant's scope and of applying indirect cost rates to prohibited cost categories, grantees must establish unique object codes in their accounting system to capture and accumulate costs by budget category (e.g., salaries, fringe benefits, consultants, travel, participant support costs, and subcontracts).

Consistent Treatment of Costs. Grantees must treat costs consistently across all federal and non-federal grants, projects, and cost centers. For example, grantees may not direct-charge federal grants for costs typically considered indirect in nature, unless done consistently. Examples of indirect costs include administrative salaries, rent, accounting fees, and utilities. In most cases, the cost to develop an accounting system adequate to justify direct charging of the aforementioned items outweighs the benefits. As a result, use of an indirect cost rate is the most effective mechanism to recover these costs and not violate federal financial requirements of consistency, allocability and allowability. Additional guidance on indirect cost calculations can be found at Indirect Costs.

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 statue or award-specific requirements, NIFA Policy Guide applies to all NIFA awards.

C.   Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award. All awardees are expected to contribute to the data collected by the Training and Technical Assistance providers. Each awardee conducts an evaluation, and the project director is expected to ensure the evaluation data is provided to the Training and Technical Assistance provider.

Grantees are also to use REEport, NIFA's electronic, web-based inventory and reporting systems to submit an initial project initiation which documents expected products and outcomes of the project. Additionally, annual progress report documenting realized project outcomes must be submitted to the electronic system. The web-based system facilitates an electronic workflow between grantees and NIFA for project accomplishments to be easily searchable and allows for public access to information on Federally funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements, including those specific to the annual and final technical reports, are included in the award terms and conditions.

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
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For administrative questions related to
1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
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
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education reform Act of 1998 - AREERA
Authorized Representative - AR
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance - CFDA
Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program - CFPCGP
Community Food Projects - CFP
Data Management Plan - DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture - NIFA
Planning Project - PP
Training and Technical Assistance – T&TA
Request for Application - RFA
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.

Community Food Assessment:
> A collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, so as to inform change actions to make the community more food secure.

Community Food Project:
> A community-based project that (A) requires a one-time contribution of federal assistance to become self-sustaining; and (B)(i) is designed (I) to meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (II) to increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; (III) to promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (B)(ii) to meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to (I) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (II) planning for long-term solutions; or (III) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Exemplary Practices:
> High quality community food security work that emphasizes food security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship, and economic and social equity.

Expert Reviews:
> Individuals selected from among those recognized as uniquely qualified by training and experience in their respective fields to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their respective area(s) of expertise.

Food Planning Association:
> A state, regional, or local entity that conducts long-term planning activities related to food, nutrition, or agriculture issues and addresses the needs of low-income people in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and consumers.

Food Policy Council:
> A representative, multi-stakeholder, inter-agency body at the state, regional, or local level that is sanctioned by a government entity to address a broad range of food, nutrition, or agriculture issues in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Food Security:
> Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times.

Gleaner:
> An entity that (a) collects edible, surplus food that would be thrown away and distributes the food to agencies or nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry; or (b) harvests for free distribution to the needy, or for donation to agencies or nonprofit organizations for ultimate distribution to the needy, an agricultural crop that has been donated by the owner of the crop.

Hunger-Free Communities Goal:

Any of the 14 goals described in House Concurrent Resolution 302, 102nd Congress, agreed to October 5, 1992.

Indicators of Success:

A way of evaluating across projects to get indications of success for the entire CFP program. It is structured according to the fields of Whole Measures for Community Food Systems. Value-based practices reflect a vision for whole communities seen through the lens of community food system development; Healthy People, Strong Communities, Thriving Local Economies, Vibrant Farms and Gardens, Sustainable Ecosystems, and Justice and Fairness. Measures of these values were co-developed with CFP grantees. Each project is asked to report on IOS each year.

Logic Model:

A systematic and visual way to present and share an understanding of the relationships among resources available to operate a program and includes planned activities and anticipated results; and the presentation of the resources, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

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.

Nutrition Security:

Nutrition security is defined as having consistent access to the safe, healthy, affordable food essential to optimal health and well-being with a strong focus on equity. It complements efforts to address food security among all Americans; but is different in two distinct ways. This definition recognizes we are all not maintaining an active, healthy life, and emphasizes taking an equity lens to our efforts to ensure access, availability, and affordability to foods and beverages.

Planning Project:

An activity initiated by an eligible organization to assess food security in a defined community and develop plans aimed to improve community food security.

Private Non-Profit Entity:

Any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which: (i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (ii) is not organized primarily for profit; and (iii) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.

Sustainably Produced Food:

Foods that are produced in ways that limit "food miles," and address social and economic justice issues as well as land stewardship. USDA's definition of sustainable development is defined as, "Economic, environmental, and social sustainability of diverse food, fiber, agriculture, forest, and range systems." USDA will balance goals of improved production and profitability, stewardship of the natural resource base and ecological systems, and

enhancement of the vitality of rural communities. [Special Reference Briefs Series no. SRB 99-02, Updates SRB 94-05 September 1999, revised August 2007, Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Value Chain:

Adding value to a product, including production, marketing, and the provision of after-sales service, and incorporating fair pricing to farms. It also involves keeping the final pricing to customers within competitive range. Value chain development, therefore, is a process of building relationships between supplier and buyer that are reciprocal and win-win; instead of always striving to buy at lowest cost.