The Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative (UIE)

Frequently Asked Questions

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GENERAL PROGRAM QUESTIONS
What is the Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative (UIE)?
The Urban, Indoor, and other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education and Extension Initiative (UIE) is a NIFA competitive grant program implemented in 2022 to support research, education and extension activities that facilitate development of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems. The UIE emphasizes activities on several segments of the value chain, including production, harvesting, transportation aggregation, packaging, distribution, and marketing needs.

What are the UIE 2022 program priorities?
As indicated on page 6 of the RFA the 2022 program will focus on the following priorities three needs:
• Identifying and promoting the horticultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to successful urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production systems
• Analyzing the means by which new agricultural sites are determined, including an evaluation of soil quality, condition of a building, or local community needs
• Developing new crop varieties and agricultural products to connect to new markets

Applications should focus on at least one of these priorities

**What systems are relevant to UIE?**
The 2018 Farm Bill listed the following systems as relevant to UIE:
• community gardens and farms located in urban areas, suburbs and urban clusters;
• rooftop farms, outdoor vertical production and green walls;
• indoor farms, greenhouses and high-tech vertical technology farms;
• hydroponic, aeroponic and aquaponic farm facilities; and
• other innovations in agricultural production, as determined by the Secretary.

**What kinds of projects will be considered?**
The Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture program REQUIRES all proposals to detail Integrated Projects. An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, education, and extension) within a project. For this program, each proposal must include a research component. Additionally, the projects should have either an extension component or an education component or both as relevant to project objectives. Any one component cannot exceed 67% and has to be minimum 33% of the project activity and budget.

• Research activity means a scientific investigation or inquiry which results in the generation of knowledge.
• Education activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters.
• Extension activity means a series of educational activities with identified learning objectives that deliver science-based knowledge to people outside of the traditional classroom, enabling them to make practical decisions.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**When is the full proposal due?**
The full proposal is due by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on September 22, 2022.

**Do I need to submit a letter of intent?**
All UIE letters of intent were due by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on July 11, 2022. If you missed that deadline you will not be able to submit a full proposal.

**What aspects should I focus my application on?**
Your application must:
• Explain the magnitude of the most urgent and critical needs or problems for urban, indoor or emerging agriculture and how they will be addressed in the grant
• Focus on opportunities to develop and strengthen:
• Income or employment
• Enhanced quality of life and food access for urban and Native American communities
• Estimated or actual economic return for UIE food production systems
• Private industry investment
• Site selection and reduce barriers to land access
• Describe approach for blending research and Extension to address principal objectives
• Provide evidence that the project is aligned with stakeholder-provided priorities
• Present expected solutions or improvements and how these will be assessed
• Address the potential costs of a proposed solution and describe how it can be scaled
• Explain how the project will strengthen urban, indoor or emerging ag systems and how results will be adopted or applied at a local, regional or national level

Am I eligible to apply?
Applications may only be submitted by the following entities:
• State agricultural experiment stations
• Colleges and universities
• University research foundations
• Other research institutions and organizations
• Federal agencies
• National laboratories
• Private organizations, foundations, or corporations
• Individuals; or
• Any group consisting of two or more of the entities described above

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

How do I apply?
Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically on Grants.gov; no other method or response is accepted.

What will my application be evaluated on?
The Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agriculture evaluation criteria are listed below and in order of importance:

1. Rationale and Significance
2. Objectives and Approach
3. Project Assessment
4. Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor and Management Plan
5. Budget Justification

How are applications evaluated?
All full applications accepted into the UIE Program will be subjected to NIFA competitive peer review process. This includes a panel of experts active in research, education, and/or extension related to UIE. NIFA’s goal is to create a balanced panel with the necessary expertise to cover the range of the
applications, while also maintaining diversity in geographical location, institution size and type, professional rank, gender, and ethnicity. Panelists must be dedicated to high quality, fair reviews, and be able to devote sufficient time to the review process. The panel assesses all proposal and rank them based on merit. Final ranking is used to make funding recommendations.

How should I format my application?

Are there page limits to the application?
Yes, certain parts of the application have page limits:

- The Project Narrative must not exceed 21 1.5 spaced pages of written text and up to 4 1.5 spaced additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman)
- Biographical sketches are limited to 2 pages in length
- The data management plan is limited to 2 pages in length

What should my project narrative include?
Your project narrative must include the following:

- Introduction
- Rational and significance
- Objectives
- Approach
- Project timeline
- Cooperation and institutional involvement
- Data management plan (DMP)
- Logic model
- Summary of previous work

Is a data management plan required?
Yes, data management plans (DMP) are required, and they are important to fully understand the scope of the proposal. Data management plans are explicitly considered in the peer review process. A well designed and scripted management plan is critical for complete review. Applicants should clearly articulate how the Project Director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. For guidelines on preparation and inclusion of a DMP in your application, see Data Management Plan for NIFA-Funded Research, Education and Extension Projects.

Is a logic model required in my application and where can I find a template?
A logic model is required for integrated project applications. For additional information on logic models, please visit the Logic Model Planning Process page.
Can I apply to fund a conference?
Yes, this program accepts conference grants. Conference grants should focus on bringing together stakeholders to facilitate identifying critical research, education and extension needs that will support development of urban, indoor, and emerging agriculture. Conference awards cannot exceed $50,000.

What is the allowed budget and length/duration of the awards?
UIE project budgets range from $50,000 - $1 million, and the grant duration is from 36-48 months.

Note that conference grants are capped at $50,000, and last for 12 months.

Does this program require cost sharing or matching?
The UIE program has NO matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.