



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

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The logo for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), featuring the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, serif font. The letters are set against a background of a stylized, orange and yellow landscape with rolling hills and a sun or moon in the sky.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Food Safety Outreach Competitive Grants Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2023

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 16, 2023

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$9,600,000

AVERAGE AWARD RANGE: \$80,000 - \$550,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-FSMA-009543

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.328

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Food Safety Outreach Program (FSOP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.328.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, February 16, 2023
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (<i>NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month</i>)

Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Stakeholder Input. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and 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 Food Safety Outreach Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This notice identifies the objectives for Food Safety Outreach Program (FSOP) projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions. NIFA requests applications for the FSOP for fiscal year (FY) 2023 to develop and implement food safety training, education, extension, outreach and technical assistance projects that address the needs of owners and operators of small to mid-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially-disadvantaged farmers ([7 CFR § 760.107](#)) small processors, veteran farmers or ranchers, or small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers. These audiences are affected by the food safety guidelines established under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) (www.fda.gov/fsma) as outlined in ([7 U.S.C. 7625](#)).

In FY 2023, FSOP will maintain focus on delivery of customized training to members of the target audiences by continuing to solicit Community Outreach Projects and Collaborative Education and Training Projects. The program will also support outreach to underserved audiences by establishing grant writing skills technical assistance resource awards. Community Outreach and Collaborative Education and Training projects will focus on, but are not limited to, providing on farm or on-site training and/or technical assistance that addresses knowledge and resource gaps for the target audiences in the areas of pre- and post-harvest water testing and sampling, soil amendments, developing supply chain programs, and/or developing food safety plans. The program will also continue to fund projects that develop bilingual, accessible, and culturally appropriate training. Technical Assistance - Grant Writing Skills projects, will focus on developing grant writing skills and providing resources for entities that support individuals or groups that are led by and directly interact with underserved populations including new applicants, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and MSIs to strengthen FSOP applications from these entities.

Applications will be solicited directly from those in local communities, to include CBOs, non-governmental organizations, food hubs, farm cooperatives, extension, and other local groups. Supplemental Collaborative Engagement funding opportunities are available to energize collaboration and coordination among 1890s, 1994s, Insular Areas, Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving (ANNH), Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and CBOs serving underserved populations. Supplemental collaborative funding will be available for Community Outreach, Collaborative Education and Training and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Project types. Successful project awardees will continue to build a national infrastructure for food safety outreach and will be required to interact with Regional Centers in the Northeast, North Central, Southern and Western regions, as defined by NIFA’s Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (www.sare.org). Awardees will be required to report project outcomes to the respective Regional Center. This will ensure that activities and efforts undertaken by all FY 2018-2023 awardees are well-integrated with the national Food Safety Outreach Program infrastructure.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The amount available for grants in FY 2023 is approximately \$9,600,000.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

[Section \(d\) of 21 U.S.C 399](#) established a competitive grant program for food safety training, education, extension, outreach, and technical assistance, which is authorized to be available to owners and operators of farms, small food processors, and small fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers. This resulted in the National Food Safety and Outreach Program (FSOP), which was reauthorized in [Public Law 115-334](#) and codified in [7 U.S.C. 7625](#). Under 7 U.S.C. 7625, the Secretary shall give priority to projects that target small and medium-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, veteran farmers, or ranchers (as defined in section 2279(a) of this title), small processors, or small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

B. Purpose and Priorities

In FY 2023 FSOP, under Assistance Listing 10.328, will maintain and continue to grow the training, education, outreach, and coordination by soliciting new Community Outreach Projects, Collaborative Education and Training Projects, and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects. This Request for Applications (RFA) will solicit proposals for three project types:

- 1) Community Outreach Projects** (award request: \$80,000 - \$150,000) - An additional \$150,000 may be requested for Collaborative Engagement Supplements, for a total budget request of up to \$300,000.
- 2) Collaborative Education and Training Projects** (award request: \$200,000 - \$400,000) - An additional \$150,000 may be requested for Collaborative Engagement Supplements, for a total budget request of up to \$550,000.
- 3) Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects** (award request: \$75,000 - \$150,000) – An additional \$150,000 may be requested for Collaborative Engagement Supplement, for a total budget request of up to \$300,000.

Community Outreach Projects will support the development of new food safety education and outreach programs in local communities and expand upon existing food safety education and outreach programs that address the needs of small, specialized audiences whose education needs have not previously been adequately addressed. Projects will focus on building the capacity of local groups to identify very specific needs within their communities, and to implement appropriately customized food safety education and outreach programs to meet those specific needs. Community outreach project funds that are being used to develop new food safety education programs can be used for FSMA training for applicants with minimal food safety experience that have close ties with target audiences and would like to expand to FSMA trainings within their communities. Community Outreach Projects will also support the growth and expansion of already existing food safety education and outreach programs currently offered in local communities; to include successful Community Outreach Projects. In addition, these projects will enable existing programs to reach a broader target audience, provide technical assistance and/or to expand to new audiences. These projects will enable existing education and training curricula to be modified to ensure they are consistent with new FSMA rules and to ensure that they meet the needs of expanded audiences. New audiences may include those from a variety of agricultural production and processing systems.

Collaborative Education and Training Projects will support the development of multi-county, state-wide or multi-state food safety education and outreach programs. These projects will support collaborations among states not necessarily located within the same regions, but having common food safety concerns, or addressing common commodities. Potential applicants must have an established track record of working with target audiences and must be capable of developing and modifying food safety training curricula to meet new FSMA rules for a variety of agricultural production and processing systems.

Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects will support the development and refinement of grant writing skills and provide grant writing resources for entities that support individuals or groups that are led by and directly interact with underserved populations including new applicants, CBOs, and MSIs to strengthen applications to the Food Safety Outreach Program from these entities. These projects must work collaboratively with the regional centers to ensure broad coverage and outreach to their specific regions and communities to include coordinating and communicating workshops and sessions through the centers as well as utilizing regional center websites, portals, and social media feeds to share toolkits, webinars, and other resources. The grant writing resources developed will significantly increase the number of successful applicants from organizations that support food safety education and training, servicing the FSOP’s target audience.

FSOP encourages (but does not require) projects that develop content suitable for delivery through the [Extension Foundation](#) (formerly eXtension).

Global Engagement. NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation’s future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the United States.

The FSOP is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Goals](#):

1. Strategic Goal 2 - Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
2. Strategic Goal 4 - Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food
3. Strategic Goal 5 - Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications under the following program areas:

1. Community Outreach Projects
2. Collaborative Education and Training Projects
3. Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects

Table 2: Community Outreach Projects Key

Title	Description
Program Code:	A4182
Program Code Name:	FSOP
CFDA Number	10.328
Project Type:	Community Outreach Project
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	February 16, 2023
Grant Duration:	24 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	11
Maximum Award Amount:	\$300,000

Community Outreach Projects

Community Outreach Projects will support the development of food safety education and outreach programs in local communities and the expansion of existing food safety education programs that address the needs of small, specialized audiences whose education needs have not previously been adequately addressed. Projects will focus on building the capacity of local groups to identify very specific needs within their communities, and to implement appropriately customized food safety education and outreach programs to meet those specific needs. Community outreach project funds that are being used to develop new food safety education programs can be used for FSMA training for applicants with minimal food safety experience that have close ties with target audiences and would like to expand to FSMA trainings within their communities. Community Outreach Projects will support the growth and expansion of already existing food safety education and outreach programs currently offered in local communities; to include previously funded, successful Pilot or Community Outreach Projects. In addition, these projects will enable existing programs to reach a broader target audience, provide technical assistance and/or to expand to new audiences.

Community Outreach Projects should at least include the following:

1. Focus on developing, implementing, or expanding food safety education to non- traditional, niche, or hard-to-reach audiences.
2. Be led by project teams who demonstrate a record of developing and maintaining community partnerships and working successfully to serve the educational needs of the target audiences identified; and
3. Develop and implement customized food safety education and outreach programs for those working with various agricultural production and processing systems, including conservation systems, sustainable systems, and organic farming systems.

Collaborative Engagement Supplements will be available for applications submitted under Community Outreach Projects that support significant collaboration among 1890s, 1862s, 1994s, Insular Areas, ANNH, HSACU, HBCUs, community-based organizations serving underserved populations. Applications that include **significant** collaborations will be funded up to \$300,000 (\$150,000 above the listed budget maximum for Community Outreach Projects).

Table 3: Collaborative Education and Training Projects Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A4182
Program Code Name:	FSOP
CFDA Number	10.328
Project Type:	Collaborative Education and Training
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	February 16, 2023
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	10
Maximum Award Amount:	\$550,000

Collaborative Education and Training Projects will support the development of multi-county, state-wide or multi-state food safety education and outreach programs. For example, these projects will support collaborations among states not necessarily located within the same regions, but having common food safety concerns, or addressing common commodities. Potential applicants must have an established track record of working with target audiences and must be capable of developing and modifying food safety training curricula to meet new FSMA rules for a variety of agricultural production and processing systems. Collaborative Education and Training Projects should at least include the following:

1. Be led by project teams who demonstrate a record of developing and maintaining community partnerships and working successfully to serve the educational needs of the target audiences identified; and
2. Develop and implement customized food safety education and outreach programs for those working with various agricultural production and processing systems, including conservation systems, sustainable systems, and organic farming systems.

Collaborative Engagement Supplements will be available for applications submitted under Collaborative Education and Training Projects that support significant collaboration among 1890s, 1862s, 1994s, Insular Areas, ANNH, HSACU, HBCUs, and community-based organizations serving underserved populations. Applications that include **significant** collaborations will be funded up to \$550,000 (\$150,000 above the listed budget maximum for Collaborative Education and Training Projects).

Table 4. Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Project Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A4182
Program Code Name:	FSOP
CFDA Number	10.328
Project Type:	Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	February 16, 2023
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	4
Maximum Award Amount:	\$300,000

Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects will support the development and refinement of grant writing skills and provide grant writing resources for entities that support individuals or groups that are led by and directly interact with underserved populations including new applicants, CBOs, and MSIs to strengthen applications from these entities. These projects must work collaboratively with the FSOP Regional Centers to ensure broad coverage and outreach to their specific regions and communities, to include coordinating and communicating workshops and sessions through the centers as well as utilizing Regional Center websites, portals, and social media feeds to share toolkits, webinars, and other resources. The training resources will strengthen Food Safety Outreach Program proposals from organizations that support food safety education and training, servicing the FSOP’s target audience. Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects should include the following:

1. Led by project teams that demonstrate a record of developing and maintaining community partnerships and working successfully to serve the educational needs of the target audiences supported by successfully securing competitive federal or state funding with an established track record of collaborating successfully with CBOs, NGOs, or MSIs.
2. Develop and implement novel strategies for recruiting and communicating useful, creative, culturally appropriate, and accessible grant writing training, workshops, courses, webinars, websites, toolkits and other resources for new grant writers and grant writers from minority led and serving CBOs and NGOs and MSIs that serve FSOP’s intended audience.

Collaborative Engagement Supplements will be available for applications submitted under Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects that support significant collaboration among 1890s, 1862s, 1994s, Insular Areas, ANNH, HSACU, HBCUs, and community-based organizations serving underserved populations. Applications that include **significant** collaborations will be funded up to \$300,000 (\$150,000 above the listed budget maximum for Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects).

The Community Outreach, Collaborative Education and Training, and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills project types have common programmatic terms and conditions to ensure alignment with the FSOP. To fulfill this purpose, the following communication terms and conditions will be followed:

1. Each successfully funded project team must develop a communication plan to describe how they will interact with their respective Regional Centers. The communication plan must describe a strategy for collecting data and reporting the outcomes of all Community Outreach Projects, Collaborative Education and Training Projects, and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects to the respective Regional Centers. Project outcomes that are reported to the Regional Centers may include a variety of qualitative (descriptive) and/or quantitative (metrics) measures. Quantitative and qualitative measures may include, but are not limited to: 1) New or novel education, training materials, and resources for specific target audiences; 2) New or novel delivery mechanisms developed and implemented for specific target audiences; 3) Specific commodities or common food safety issues addressed (Community Outreach and Collaborative Education and Training only); 4) Specific

target audiences, including niche, hard-to-reach, or underserved audiences identified and trained; 5) Best practices identified and applied by specific target audiences; 6) Number of education and training sessions conducted; 7) Number of participants in training and education programs; and 8) Number and percent of participants reporting changes in knowledge and/or behavior as a result of participation in education and training sessions.

2. The Project Director will be responsible for managing all technical and programmatic aspects of the grant and will be responsible for appropriately acknowledging USDA-NIFA's funding support in publications, public announcements, news releases, and other media sources.
3. The Project Directors for the Community Outreach, Collaborative Education and Training Project, and Technical Assistance Grant Writing Skills teams will be responsible for attending annual meetings. During the meeting, Project Directors will report on the progress of their projects, share updates on modified training materials or curricula, and report on interim programmatic outcomes.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The amount available for the National Food Safety and Outreach Program (FSOP) in FY 2023 is approximately \$9,600,000.

USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. 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 application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

C. Project and Grant Types

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

Project Types - Community Outreach Projects, Collaborative Education and Training Projects, and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects.

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Entities are eligible to apply to the National Food Safety and Outreach Program (FSOP) if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The Cooperative Extension Service for a U.S. state or territory;
2. Non-government organizations and/or community-based organizations representing owners and operators of farms, small food processors, or small fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers that has a commitment to public health and expertise in administering programs that contribute to food safety;
3. Federal, State, local, or tribal agencies;
4. An institution of higher education (as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C1862. 1001\(a\)](#)) or a foundation maintained by an institution of higher education;
5. A collaboration of two or more eligible entities.

Applicants for the FSOP 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 is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if a Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) submits multiple submissions. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to the National Food Safety and Outreach Program (FSOP) electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 5** below provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part II § 1** of the [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) (Application Guide) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](#) registration process.

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-FSMA-009543 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 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 iPortal Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 7** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 7: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the <u>Application Guide</u>)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
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** and **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 FSOP. The PS must also clearly identify the project type (Community Outreach, Collaborative Education and Training, or Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills). See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN for the Collaborative Education and Training Projects must not exceed 20 *1.5 spaced* pages of written 12-point font text including tables and figures (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11-point). The Project Narrative for the **Community Outreach Projects and Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects must not exceed a total of 10 pages 1.5 spaced** pages of written 12-point font text including tables and figures (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11-point). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all the following:
 - a. Introduction;
 - b. Rationale and significance;

- c. Objectives;
 - d. Approach;
 - e. Summary of previous work;
 - f. Response to previous review: The response to previous review must not exceed one *1.5 spaced* page 12-point font. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN.
3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

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

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

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

1. 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** of the [Application Guide](#) for additional information.

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

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

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name (*FSOP*) and the program code (*A4182*). Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) of the recipient. Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) ([7 U.S.C. 3310\(a\)](#)) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

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

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

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

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

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

If the applicant wants full IDC (Indirect Cost Rate), 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. 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, please see National Institute of Food and Agriculture (usda.gov) for additional resources. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the De Minimis rate ([2 CFR 200.414](#)). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de Minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total indirect costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described above and in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

If you are interested in serving on the FY 2023 FSOP peer-review panel, you can provide your contact information by visiting [NIFA's Peer Review System](#) and clicking on the "Panelist Recruitment" link in the "Volunteer" section. You will be asked to provide your contact information and expertise.

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) before recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the reviewers' identity, 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

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate applications for **Community Outreach Projects** submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Objectives

This criterion is used to assess how well the Community Outreach Projects:

- a. Identify and justify specific food safety education and training needs and other resources for various target audiences within local communities;
- b. Support the establishment, development, growth and/or expansion of new or already-existing food safety education and training programs within communities, and ensure that they are consistent with new FSMA guidelines;
- c. Leverage partnerships with non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, extension, food hubs, farm cooperatives and/or others who typically work with owners and operators of small and/or medium-sized farms, beginning farmers, underserved farmers, small processors, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers; and
- d. Previously funded Community or Pilot Projects should identify significant outcomes and impacts of the successful project and include a strong justification and detailed plans for expansion to a larger audience.

2. Methods

This criterion is used to assess the procedures for:

- a. Modifying curricula to address a traditionally underserved niche audience;
- b. Further developing and expanding already-existing community-based food safety education and training programs and other resources. Programs may be expanded to reach a greater number of participants, or to reach new audiences not currently targeted by the existing programs;
- c. Developing a communication plan for interacting with respective Regional Centers and for reporting project outcomes to the Regional Centers; and
- d. Developing a plan for evaluating the outcomes of the project, collecting outcome data, and reporting project outcomes to the respective Regional Centers.

3. Key Personnel and Project Management

This criterion is used to assess management of the proposed project, including the roles and responsibilities of key project staff, which include:

- a. Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of key staff in the overall management of the project;
- b. Developing a timeline that includes benchmarks for key events that address the project objectives;
- c. Identifying key personnel responsible for collecting project outcome data, reporting project outcomes, and interacting with staff at the respective Regional Centers;
- d. Developing strong partnerships with those in local communities that enable them to address the needs of non-traditional, niche, and hard-to-reach audiences; and
- e. Coordinating food safety education and training efforts with local communities involved in the project.

4. Budget and Budget Justification

This criterion is used to assess how well the proposed budget:

- a. Adequately supports project activities that are consistent with the proposed objectives;
- b. Incorporates innovative approaches for making use of currently available resources within local communities, while supporting development and implementation of new resources that are critical for meeting the food safety education and training needs of target audiences; and
- c. Allocates and justifies resources to key personnel responsible for managing and conducting the project activities.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate applications for **Collaborative Education and Training Projects** submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Objectives

This criterion is used to assess how well the **Collaborative Education and Training Projects**:

- a. Support the development of multi-county, state-wide, or multi-state food safety education and outreach programs and other resources that are consistent with the FSMA guidelines;
- b. Encourage collaborations among counties and states sharing common food safety concerns, commodities, or production and processing practices; and
- c. Leverage partnerships with non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, extension, food hubs, farm cooperatives and/or others who typically work with owners and operators of small and/or medium-sized farms, beginning farmers, underserved farmers, small processors, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

2. Methods

This criterion is used to assess the procedures for:

- a. Building and maintaining partnerships among collaborating counties and states that are not necessarily located in the same regions. For example, Collaborative Education and Training Projects would support collaborations between California and Florida;
- b. Developing a communications plan for interacting with respective Regional Centers and for reporting project outcomes to the Regional Centers; and
- c. Developing a plan for evaluating the outcomes of the project, collecting outcome data, and reporting project outcomes to the respective Regional Centers. Both quantitative and qualitative measures may be used in the evaluation. Measures may include, but are not limited to, new or novel education and training materials developed or modified for use by specific target audiences, new or novel delivery mechanisms developed and implemented for specific target audiences, specific commodities or common food safety issues addressed, specific target audiences, including niche, hard-to-reach, or underserved audiences identified and trained, best practices identified for specific target audiences, number of education and training sessions conducted, participants reporting changes in knowledge and /or behavior as a result of participation in education and training sessions.

3. Key Personnel and Project Management

This criterion is used to assess management of the proposed project, including the roles and responsibilities of key project staff, which include:

- a. Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of key staff in the overall management of the project;
- b. Developing a timeline that includes benchmarks for key events that address the project objectives;
- c. Identifying key personnel responsible for collecting project outcome data, reporting project outcomes, and interacting with staff at the respective Regional Centers;
- d. Developing strong partnerships with those in local communities that enable them to address the needs of non-traditional, niche, and hard-to-reach audiences; and
- e. Coordinating food safety education and training efforts with local communities involved in the project.

4. Budget and Budget Justification

This criterion is used to assess how well the proposed budget:

- a. Adequately supports project activities that are consistent with the proposed objectives;
- b. Incorporates innovative approaches for making use of currently available resources within local communities, while supporting development and implementation of new resources that are critical for meeting the food safety education and training needs of target audiences; and
- c. Allocate and justify resources to key personnel responsible for managing and conducting the project activities.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate applications for **Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Project** submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Objectives

This criterion is used to assess how well the Technical Assistance – Grant Writing Skills Projects:

- a. Implement novel strategies for recruiting attendees and promoting grant writing skills events and resources to ensure potential participants are aware of the opportunities and tools to develop successful FSOP proposals;
- b. Develop useful, creative, culturally appropriate, and accessible grant writing skills training opportunities and resources; and
- c. Leverage partnerships with non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, extension, food hubs, farm cooperatives and/or others who typically work with owners and operators of small and/or medium-sized farms, beginning farmers, underserved farmers, small processors, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

2. Methods

This criterion is used to assess the procedures for:

- a. Establishing a broad outreach and communications plan for recruiting and promoting events and tools utilizing the FSOP Regional Centers;
- b. Creating interactive curricula or resources to reach, support, and engage non-traditional grant writers;
- c. Working closely with respective Regional Centers to report project outcomes; and

- d. Developing a plan for evaluating the outcomes of the project, collecting outcome data, and reporting project outcomes to the respective Regional Centers.

3. Key Personnel and Project Management

This criterion is used to assess management of the proposed project, including the roles and responsibilities of key project staff, which include:

- a. Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of key staff in the overall management of the project;
- b. Developing a timeline that includes benchmarks for key events that address the project objectives;
- c. Identifying key personnel responsible for collecting project outcome data, reporting project outcomes, and interacting with staff at the respective Regional Centers;

4. Budget and Budget Justification

This criterion is used to assess how well the proposed budget:

- a. Adequately supports project activities that are consistent with the proposed objectives;
- b. Incorporates innovative approaches for making use of currently available resources within local communities, while supporting development and implementation of new resources that are critical for meeting the training needs of target audiences; and
- c. Allocates and justifies resources to key personnel responsible for managing and conducting the project activities.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to review applications for **Collaborative Engagement Supplements** submitted under Community Outreach Project, Collaborative Education and Training Project, and Technical Assistance-Grant Writing Skills Project types in response to this RFA.

1. Collaborations with 1890s, 1994s, 1862s, Insular Areas, ANNH, HSACU, other HBCUs, and CBOs serving underserved populations.
 - a. Collaborations must be seamless and interdependent for overall programmatic success.
 - b. Budget should adequately reflect the proposed effort and activities from collaborating institutions.

C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

D. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

Delegation of fiscal responsibility. Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans. In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. Regulatory Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Jodi Williams, Ph.D.

Jodi.Williams@usda.gov

Courtenay Simmons, Ph.D.

Courtenay.Simmons@usda.gov

For administrative questions related to

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture

2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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

Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving – ANNH

Authorized Representative – AR

Data Management Plan – DMP

Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities – HSACU

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

Continuation Award

An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.

Matching

The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.

New Application

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Renewal Application

A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.

Resubmitted Application

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

Resubmitted Renewal Application

A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.

Underserved Target Communities

Socially Disadvantaged Communities are:

1. American Indians or Alaskan Natives,
2. Asians or Asian-Americans,
3. Blacks or African Americans,
4. Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and
5. Hispanics.